

March 21, 2024

Honourable Rob Fleming
Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
PO Box 9055
Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E2 via email: Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister

Re: Request for reconsideration of the proposed pedestrian overpass in North Cowichan

On behalf of North Cowichan Council, I am writing to address the proposed Active Transportation Overpass Project intended to provide a safe pedestrian crossing over Highway 1 between Beverly Street and James Street/York Road. While we acknowledge the intent to enhance safety and connectivity for our community, particularly considering the new Quw'utsun Secondary School opening, Council, after careful consideration and deliberation, has resolved to request you to consider alternative solutions that we believe align more closely with our community's vision and objectives.

At the March 6, 2024, Council meeting, Council passed the following:

That the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure:

1. be advised that a pedestrian overpass is not supported as the preferred option for pedestrian and cycle crossing of the Trans-Canada Highway near the new high school,
2. be requested to consult with North Cowichan in having Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure retain the services of an urban design firm to oversee the design of a highway crossing by a progressive transportation engineer that considers an at grade solution, with the goals of:
 - a. facilitating a downtown-appropriate active transportation connection between east and west sides of the Trans-Canada corridor,
 - b. achieving safety and traffic flow objectives,
 - c. not adversely impacting local businesses, and
 - d. being consistent with community goals of creating aesthetic, vibrant and human-scale 'complete street environments.
3. be requested to reallocate the money that would be used for the construction of an overpass into the at grade intersection solution.
4. be requested to undertake public consultation with an at grade solution for community input.

Our understanding is that construction of the Active Transportation Overpass Project would not begin until after the 2024/25 school year and that there is still time to consider alternatives before a final decision is made. To be clear, our intention with this motion is not to delay the Ministry's plans to improve connectivity and safety across the Trans-Canada Highway near the new Quw'utsun Secondary School, nor is it to jeopardize any infrastructure funding that may have been designated for our community. We envision any consultation with an urban design firm, and residents could be done in a timely manner this spring so as not to cause an unnecessary delay.

We will share this motion and seek support from our regional partners, including School District No. 79, the City of Duncan, Cowichan Valley Regional District, and Cowichan Tribes, to ensure a collaborative and regionally integrated approach to this matter.

We look forward to engaging with the Ministry and other stakeholders in exploring an alternative solution and invite your collaboration and support in achieving a project outcome that aligns with our shared goal of enhancing our community's livability, connectivity, and safety.

Sincerely



Rob Douglas
Mayor

mayor@northcowichan.ca

cc: Cindy Daniels, Chief, Cowichan Tribes
Peter de Verteuil, CAO, City of Duncan
Robyn Gray, Superintendent, School District 79
Danielle Myles-Wilson, CAO, Cowichan Valley Regional District
North Cowichan Council
Cathy Schmidt, Board Chair, School District 79
Michelle Staples, Mayor, City of Duncan
Aaron Stone, Board Chair, Cowichan Valley Regional District
Ted Swabey, CAO, North Cowichan
Dana Thorne, CAO, Cowichan Tribes