

FAQs - Proposed Quayside to Queensborough (Q2Q) Bridge

Why couldn't a ferry service be put in place instead of a bridge like at Granville Island?

Metro Vancouver has previously done a study of potential water crossings in the region and found that, outside of peak summer periods, the demand for such a service across the North Arm in New Westminster would be low outside of peak periods. Due to strong currents in the river at this location, a smaller ferry would not be suitable and a large passenger ferry would be required, resulting in significant operating costs for a relatively low demand. The agreement with the province for the provision of \$6.3 million in "Development Assistance Compensation" (DAC) funds from the casino require that a permanent connection between Queensborough and Quayside be constructed and a ferry system would not meet this condition for provincial funding.

Why was the initially proposed location upstream of the existing rail bridge moved to the downstream side?

As an operator will be required to be on duty during Q2Q's operating hours to open the bridge for over height marine traffic, and a qualified operator is available on the railway bridge, Q2Q must be located close to the railway bridge so that the operator can visually confirm that the bridge is safe to open. Although an earlier proposal was to connect the bridge to the Quayside boardwalk near Submarine Park upstream of Southern Railway of BC's rail bridge, the proposed bridge's location was moved downstream after Port Metro Vancouver, Transport Canada and the Council of Marine Carriers determined it was a safer location and would result in fewer risks to marine traffic to navigate the channel. The federal government has jurisdiction over navigable waters and the City must comply with their direction on navigation issues.

Why can't the bridge be located downstream away from residences at Poplar Island?

A crossing at Poplar Island would require two bridges and be over twice as long as the proposed location at the rail bridge, the narrowest point on the North Arm, increasing costs well beyond what is available. Operating costs would also be significantly greater, as the location would be too far away for the Southern Railway bridge operator to observe, requiring a second bridge operator for the anticipated 2-3 openings per day at a cost of over \$200,000/year. Poplar Island is a remote location, which is strongly discouraged from a personal safety and security perspective, and is the subject of land claims negotiations with BC's First Nations.

Why are elevators being proposed and not ramps?

To meet the 14.5m height requirement that would reduce the number of openings to an acceptable level for bridge users, long ramps would be needed on each side of the river to provide accessible connections to the bridge. Ramps generally have a larger footprint and are more visually intrusive than elevators, with a higher construction cost and more environmental impacts due to the need for a large number of piles to support the ramps. They are also not as accessible as elevators, particularly for those with mobility challenges who do not have access to motorized devices. There is also a risk of some cyclists and skateboarders proceeding at higher speeds with ramps and therefore potential for conflict at the landing areas.

How may the existing view be altered?

Every effort will be made to minimize the elevator and stair structure during the design process. The elevator is proposed to be constructed of semi-transparent glass and the stairs of aluminum. Movable components of the bridge and the elevator will be as far as practical from any residence and approach causeways will be about four metres wide.

What is being done for safety and nuisance concerns?

A thorough Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) review will be completed as part of the design stage, which will include safety, nuisance and loitering considerations. The Quayside esplanade is currently serviced by our police force on foot patrol and bikes, in both a proactive and through responding to calls for service. As the Quayside area has a higher level of foot traffic and events in the summer, there is an increase in the amount of patrols in the area during this time.

The Queensborough Perimeter Trail also receives police foot patrol and bike patrols, again with an increase during the summer months. With the proposed bridge connection and the flow of foot traffic to and from both areas our officers are anticipating an increase in the amount of time spent in these areas and welcome the increased ease of access to the Queensborough trail system.

Will the bridge operate 24 hours/day?

Although specific operating procedures are still under review, it is currently expected that the bridge will operate from early morning to late evening, but not overnight. Operating hours and procedures will seek to accommodate the needs of most bridge users within available operating budgets when there is a reasonable demand. Factors that must be considered include user demand, safety and security and the staffing costs associated with the required bridge operator. The bridge arms would remain in the open position overnight, with safety gates preventing access during that time.

Will there be any noise and light impacts on properties?

Design specifications for the bridge will require that any noise and light intrusions into nearby residential properties be minimized.

Will the bridge increase parking demand?

Q2Q will be part of an extended greenway network focused on walking and cycling. For those who wish to drive to access this network, there are a number of locations distributed throughout the City for Greenway parking.

What is the timeline on the bridge?

The Province has recently indicated the deadline for use of the DAC funds can be extended to 2020 (from 2017). The extension will allow extra time to study designs, complete community consultation and make decisions on the implementation of the bridge, however a completion date prior to 2020 is expected.

What are the next steps?

The City is working with community stakeholders, including Quayside and Queensborough Communities, and Port Metro Vancouver, which is the regulator responsible for reviewing the Q2Q, to undertake comprehensive community consultation. Port Metro Vancouver requires that this review include a broad range of supportive studies, including potential environmental, community and property impacts, before design specifications can be approved. Each property in the vicinity of the proposed bridge alignment will be notified by mail of how and when they can participate in this review.