

# DAILY COMMERCIAL NEWS

## AND CONSTRUCTION RECORD

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Infrastructure

### **Canadian Construction Association sees gateway projects as “good news for construction”**

#### **Federal government’s \$33 billion Building Canada Plan includes investment in Gateways and Border Crossing Fund**

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The federal government’s drive to strengthen Canada’s gateways for commercial trade is good news for Canadian construction, the industry believes.

“The idea of gateways has really taken off and is a priority,” says Jeff Morrison, government relations and public affairs director for the Canadian Construction Association.

The Building Canada Plan includes funding for the Asia-Pacific Gateway initiative and the Gateways and Border Crossings Fund. This massive investment is designed to improve the flow of goods between Canada and international markets.

“We have already seen through the Pacific Gateway vision and investment results in new bridges, road upgrades and infrastructure improvement projects,” Morrison said. “With the gateway improvements such as roads and bridges there are opportunities for construction.”

The recently announced first provincial-federal Building Canada Plan agreement provides \$2.2 billion over seven years to British Columbia for overall infrastructure improvements. That includes roads, bridges, tunnels, ports, public transit and the Pacific Gateway.

“With the Pacific Gateway, we have seen improvements as far east as Manitoba,” adds Morrison.

In order to boost Canadian commerce with the Asia-Pacific region, increases in North American-bound container imports from Asia and export reliability, both policy and infrastructure improvements are needed.

The federal government has also signed two memorandums of understanding to develop

both the Atlantic Gateway Strategy and Ontario-Quebec Continental Gateway and Trade Corridor. Ontario and Quebec represent 60 per cent of Canada's exports and gross domestic product.

The Atlantic Gateway is seen to have the potential to become a strategic and globally competitive transportation hub for moving international commerce on the North American east coast.

"Infrastructure is needed to establish the gateways and there is the potential [for construction]," adds Morrison.

The Conference Board of Canada recently released a report which looked into addressing transportation network gaps to help improve Canada's "continental gateway advantage." The report says Canada has a geographic advantage when it comes to gateway potential, since it is the closest geographically to both Europe and Asia among the three NAFTA countries.

To capitalize on this "geographic advantage" federal and provincial governments "need to be more agile" in their infrastructure funding decisions, the report says.

Improved transportation management skills, common hours and standards for truck drivers within NAFTA and reduction of administrative requirements, to global best practices, will also strengthen gateways, declares the Conference Board.

Andy Manahan, Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario executive director, concurs with the general theme of more co-ordinated infrastructure planning between Canada and the provinces as well as with NAFTA partners.

He also believes more can be done on the policy side of gateway and corridor functionality.

"The province could probably do more to reduce the administrative burden and update outmoded regulations."

## **Major Gateway projects**

Canada's Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative is an integrated package of policy and investments to improve infrastructure for commercial trade with Asia.

This gateway area includes the British Columbia Lower Mainland, Prince Rupert ports, their principal road and rail connections stretching across Western Canada and south to the United States, key border crossings, and major Canadian airports.

Highlights of some major construction projects slated for this gateway include:

- South Fraser Perimeter Road, Deltaport Connector — \$365 million

This project includes 40 kilometres of four-lane road, connecting Deltaport to Highway 1 and the Golden Ears Bridge. This will provide a designated east-west truck route to enhance international freight movement.

- Pitt River Bridge and Mary Hill Interchange — \$90 million

The planned seven-lane bridge will connect trade-related and transportation facilities on both sides of the Pitt River and enhance the movement of international goods through the Lower Mainland.

- Roberts Bank Rail Corridor Road/Rail Grade Separations — \$75 million

This will create up to nine road/rail grade separations, along with road closures, reconfigurations, and traffic management measures, to increase road and rail capacity. The impact on communities along this 70-km corridor, connecting international container and coal terminals with the North American rail network, will be reduced.

- North Fraser Perimeter Road, United Boulevard Extension, \$65 million

This includes extending a four-lane roadway, constructing a four-lane overpass and constructing a bridge over the Brunette River. Will enhance connections between ports and rail yards.