

# A CRITIQUE OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE - SUNSHINE COAST FIXED LINK STUDY

PREPARED BY THE THIRD CROSSING SOCIETY

DECEMBER 17, 2015

While we are pleased to see a serious study being undertaken by the Ministry, the terms of reference are restrictive. These restrictions may limit the usefulness of the pending study.

We have studied the request for proposals and its terms of reference with extreme care including reviews with our consulting engineers. Our conclusion is that very large benefits – perhaps large enough to offset the majority of the costs of the fixed links themselves – will not be considered by the study, as it is defined in the RFP.

The major issue is that the focus is entirely about transportation between the lower mainland and the Sunshine Coast. There is no mention of the benefit of connecting our coastal and interior communities. That benefit is the number one source of the funding that will pay for the road.

From the outset, (Section 3, Ministry Situation/Overview - page 6 of the RFP) the focus of the study is clearly “a road connection to the lower mainland”. While the “Powell River to Highway 99 road link” is mentioned it is in the context of “a fixed link between the Sunshine Coast and the Lower Mainland”. (page 7). This theme is repeated numerous times throughout the RFP. The overview concludes that a Multiple Account Evaluation (essentially a business case) and a “mobility performance assessment” will be required for each option. The major benefit and the major source of funding is excluded from the equation.

Section 3.1 (page 8) – calls for the preparation of a “Forecast Demand Estimate” and cites MoTI permanent count locations on Highway 101 as a baseline volumes

To be clear, the major advantage to the Province, and the way the vast majority costs will be funded primarily by savings at B C Ferries, is to build two roads: the link to the lower Sunshine Coast and the Third Crossing. This will eliminate one ferry, downsize a second and improve a third in a major way. Congestion at Horseshoe Bay will disappear and positive new opportunities will develop.

An amendment to the study terms of reference is required.

