



March 11, 2005

Southwest Calgary ring road moves forward

Calgary... The southwest portion of Calgary's ring road is one step closer to being built.

Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, and Chief Sandford Big Plume of the Tsuu T'ina First Nation signed a framework agreement on March 11 regarding the future construction of the ring road on Nation lands. The framework agreement builds on the agreement-in-principle signed in April 2004 and defines the areas of negotiation required toward a final agreement.

"The framework agreement is an important step forward because it allows us to proceed to a final agreement quickly and for construction to start as soon as possible," said Oberg. "The ring road will assist traffic movement in the rapidly growing southwest part of Calgary and provide the Nation with economic development opportunities."

The framework agreement sets a Nov. 1, 2005 deadline for a draft final agreement and a Sept. 1, 2006 deadline for ratification. The framework agreement also defines major areas of future negotiation including: transfer of control of Nation lands to the Province; compensation for the lands; design of the ring road; access to the lands; access points to the ring road; and the construction schedule.

"A tremendous amount of progress has been made," said Chief Big Plume. "The Tsuu T'ina want to get to work to get this road under way to build a better future for Tsuu T'ina and Calgarians."

Tsuu T'ina citizens will approve the final agreement by referendum and the final agreement must be in place before construction starts. However, the Province can start preliminary work such as engineering planning studies and getting environmental approvals while the final agreement is being negotiated.

Dr. Oberg also announced that the project description will be posted on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's on-line registry within the next two weeks and the public will have 30 days to submit comments.

- 30 -

Backgrounder attached

Media enquiries may be directed to:

Bart Johnson
Director of Communications
Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation
(780) 415-1841

Morten Paulsen
Media Relations
Tsuu T'ina First Nation
(403) 208-2275

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000

Background

March 11, 2005

Southwest Calgary Ring Road

Agreement-in-Principle (signed April 30, 2004)

- The agreement committed the Province and the Tsuu T'ina First Nation to begin negotiations regarding the transfer of Nation lands to the Province for future construction of the southwest Calgary ring road and utility corridor.
- The agreement also defined basic principles for the negotiations and general guidelines regarding the proposed road and utility corridor.

Framework Agreement

(signed March 11, 2005)

- The agreement defines specific areas of negotiation towards a final agreement such as: transfer of control of Nation lands to the Province; compensation for the lands; design of the ring road; access to the lands; access points to the ring road; and the construction schedule.
- The agreement sets a Nov. 1, 2005 deadline for a draft final agreement and a Sept. 1, 2006 deadline for ratification. These deadlines may be extended upon agreement between the Province and the Nation.

Draft Final Agreement

(to be negotiated by Nov. 1, 2005)

- The draft final agreement will define the Nation lands to be transferred to the control of the Province.
- The agreement also will define compensation to the Nation for the lands, final design of the ring road, access points to the ring road, and construction and road opening schedules.
- Nation citizens must approve the final agreement by referendum.
- The final agreement must be ratified by Sept. 1, 2006 and be in place before construction starts.

Project Description

- The proposed ring road would be a divided, multi-lane freeway connecting Highway 22X to Glenmore Trail. The freeway would have limited access via interchanges.

Environmental Approval Process

- The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency process will determine if an environmental impact assessment is necessary and the scope of the assessment.
- The department will hire a consultant to complete the assessment and identify areas that require mitigation measures. The study also determines what needs to be done to comply with federal and

- provincial regulations.
- Construction cannot begin until all environment-related authorizations and approvals are granted. However, engineering studies and design work can commence while the environmental approvals are being sought.

Questions and Answers

When will construction start?

A firm date is not available at this time. Construction will start once the final agreement and all environmental approvals are in place and a final engineering design is available.

What will the project cost?

Land compensation negotiations need to be further along and an in-depth engineering study needs to be done before costs can be estimated with an acceptable degree of accuracy.

When will the project be complete?

A firm date is not known at this time, but Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation aims to complete the project by late 2008 or early 2009.

Will the project be built using a public-private partnership (P3) model?

Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation will consider using its P3 process for this project, in consultation with construction, engineering, maintenance, and financing partners. Part of the process involves determining whether the project is an acceptable candidate for a P3.

What will the Tsuu T'ina Nation receive in compensation for its land?

The Nation will receive a combination of land (at least 4,200 acres) and cash, the amounts of which are subject to further negotiations.

What happens if a final agreement is not reached by Nov. 1, 2005?

The deadline may be extended upon agreement between the Province and the Nation. However, both the Province and the Nation are highly motivated to meet the deadline and expect to do so.

Is an environmental impact study necessary?

Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation submitted a project description to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. The agency will post the description on its on-line registry within the next two weeks and invite the public to comment on the description within 30 days of the posting. The agency will determine if an environmental assessment is necessary and set the terms of reference for the assessment.

What issues will the environmental assessment examine?

The terms of reference will be determined by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. Typically, such assessments look at a project's potential impact on soil, water courses, air quality, and wildlife habitats. The assessments also recommend ways to mitigate environmental impacts. Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation is committed to protecting the environment and recently adopted an international standard Environmental Management System (EMS). The EMS commits the department and its construction and engineering partners to develop environmental management plans for projects.

Will the public have input into the project's design and construction?

Yes. Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation will begin a functional planning study later this year. Functional planning studies include a public consultation process and are part of any new construction project.

Why isn't the City of Calgary a party to the framework agreement and the negotiations?

The proposed ring road will be under provincial jurisdiction and the Province is responsible for costs relating to its development. Thus, any transactions will be between the Province and the Tsuu T'ina First Nation. However, the city is providing technical and legal support to the Province and the Nation during negotiations and is part of the planning process. When the final agreement is reached, the city will become more involved in terms of connections to city land and existing city roads.

Alberta Government Home | Ministries Listing | Infrastructure and Transportation Home Page | Home Page | News Releases | [Top of Page](#)

Send us your comments or questions

Copyright(c); 2004 Government of Alberta

Return to Government Home Page

Return to [Government Home Page](#)