

## **Managing growth pressures**

June 21, 2007

### **Grande Prairie bypass unclogs city arteries**

Industry invited to bid on first project for the new bypass

Grande Prairie... Start of construction on the Grande Prairie bypass is one step closer, as the Alberta government invites industry to competitively bid on the first project, a new overpass. The new two-lane overpass bridge will accommodate eastbound traffic from the future Highway 43 bypass over Highway 2. Westbound traffic will use the existing two-lane overpass bridge.

"The new overpass bridge marks the start of the Grande Prairie bypass," said Luke Ouellette, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. "This is a tremendous move forward and the initial work of the overpass and first few kilometers of the bypass will provide an immediate reduction in the volume of industrial traffic through the City of Grande Prairie. When completed, the 14-kilometre bypass will mean reduced congestion and increased safety for Grande Prairie motorists."

The cost of the overpass construction will be determined following the completion of the tender process, set to close July 12. Construction could begin as early as fall 2007, pending the results of the bidding process, with work on the overpass structure completed by fall 2008.

"The bypass is a critical infrastructure investment that will go a long way to improving traffic congestion in and around Grande Prairie," said Mel Knight, Minister of Energy and MLA for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

The overpass would open to traffic following the completion of three kilometres of roadway connecting 116 Street (Range Road 63) with the new overpass structure and the existing eastbound Highway 43 lanes. Land negotiations for the Highway 43 bypass right-of-way are currently underway and construction timelines on the roadwork will be set after the negotiations are finalized.

"Moving the large transport vehicles around the outskirts of the city will help relieve some of the pressures on our local roads and help make driving safer for all motorists," said Gordon Graydon, MLA for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

As part of the initial bypass work, the Government of Alberta is also finalizing an agreement with CN Railway to construct a new bridge over the railway track east of the Highway 43 and Highway 2 interchange.

New highway construction is one of the actions under Premier Ed Stelmach's plan to manage growth pressures. Other priorities for the government are to govern with integrity and transparency, improve Albertans' quality of life, build a stronger Alberta, and provide safe and secure communities.

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