BRIDGING TO TOMORROW
Frequently Asked Questions

September 2016

The Bridging to Tomorrow initiative includes the construction of the North Commuter Parkway and the new Traffic Bridge, both of which will provide significant benefits to the citizens of Saskatoon and the province.

Who is building the North Commuter Parkway and Traffic Bridge?
Graham Commuter Partners (GCP) was awarded the contract in October 2015.

What is the total estimated cost of the project over the 33 years?
The estimated cost of the project is $497.7 million. This includes capital, operating, maintenance and rehabilitation over the 33 year period (including an estimated 2% inflation on operating, maintenance and rehabilitation costs).

How is the project being funded?
Through the PPP Canada Fund, the federal government will provide an investment of up to 25% of eligible costs up to a maximum of $66 million. The Province will contribute $50 million to the project. The City of Saskatoon will contribute the remaining funds to complete the project.

What is the estimated construction schedule for the project?
Construction started on the Traffic Bridge in late 2015. Work on the North Commuter Parkway began in early 2016. Substantial completion, meaning both bridges will be open and operational, is October 2018.

What regulatory approvals were required prior to construction?
Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Transport Canada, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment, Saskatchewan Water Security Agency, and Meewasin Valley Authority.

How can I stay updated on the Bridging to Tomorrow project over the next 3 years?
The webpage at saskatoon.ca/bridging is consistently updated and contains monthly project updates, links to live webcams at each site, quarterly video updates, time lapse video, as well as other information about the project. Updates are also posted on the City's Social Media Accounts: "Saskatoon City News" on Facebook and "@cityofsaskatoon" on Twitter. If there are important updates residents need to be aware of, the City will communicate via a direct mail-out or by invitation to an Open House event.

North Commuter Parkway Details

How much traffic will use this Parkway?
Over 20,000 vehicles per day are projected to use the bridge in its first year. At a population of 400,000, about 50,000 vehicles will use the Parkway each day.

Will the Parkway be a freeway?
No, the Parkway is an arterial road and bridge. The operating speed of the roadway and bridge west of Central Avenue is expected to be 70 km/hr. The operating speed of the proposed roadway east of Central Avenue is expected to be 50 km/hr.

How many lanes of traffic will be included?
Marquis Drive and McOrmond Drive will increase from 4 to 6 lanes at each end leading up to the 6-lane bridge. McOrmond Drive will be 5 lanes from the east side of the bridge to the intersection with Central Avenue, and 4 lanes from the intersection with Central Avenue east to the intersection with Fedoruk Drive. Central Avenue will be 4 lanes.

Will heavy commercial trucks be allowed on this bridge?
The Parkway is neither a designated truck route, nor a freeway. The Traffic Bylaw (Bylaw 7200) states that commercial hauling should follow designated truck routes—except for local deliveries which require trucks to take the most direct route from a designated truck route to their destination.

Will the Meewasin Valley Trail continue under the bridge portion of the Parkway?
The Meewasin Valley Trail currently runs adjacent to Wanuskewin Road on the west side of the river in this area. This project will include a pedestrian crosswalk at the intersection of Wanuskewin Road and Marquis Drive. The Meewasin Valley Trail does not currently extend this far north on the east side of the river, but provisions are being made to provide for a future trail crossing of the Parkway on the east side of the river.

How long will the Parkway last before it needs replacement?
The bridge section will be designed and constructed to a minimum life cycle of 75 years, as required by the Canadian Highway Bridge Design Code. The associated roadways will be designed and constructed to a minimum life cycle of 50 years. Regular maintenance work will be required to keep the infrastructure in good condition.

Is this project also known as the 33rd Street Bridge?
No. As part of the City's long-term growth plan, a bridge is proposed which would link 33rd Street and Preston Avenue. This is what's referred to as the 33rd Street Bridge.

What is the Saskatoon Perimeter Freeway?
The Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways is currently conducting preliminary planning to determine a route for a high-speed freeway around most of the City of Saskatoon. This general location study will be used for future planning. No timeline or project cost has been established for construction.

Traffic Bridge Details

How many vehicles will travel on the bridge each day?
The Traffic Bridge will accommodate average traffic volumes estimated to approach 11,000 vehicles per day, with capacity to serve over 20,000 vehicles per day.

How many pedestrians will use the bridge each day?
On a typical weekday (in March 2010 prior to the bridge's closure), the City counted: 151 pedestrians, cyclists and skateboarders between 7am and 9am; 107 pedestrians and cyclists between 11:30am and 1:30pm; and 184 pedestrians and cyclists between 4pm and 6pm.

How will the City ensure the land around the bridge, the riverbank, and the river itself is protected during the demolition and construction process?
The construction process is designed to protect the river and surrounding area. Additionally, the City has worked and will continue working with, a number of regulatory authorities to obtain required approvals and permits related to environmental protection. These include the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Transport Canada, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment, Saskatchewan Water Security Agency, and the Meewasin Valley Authority.

What is the environmental impact of removing the original bridge?
The original protective coating on the bridge's steel superstructure was lead-based paint. Much of the coating has long been oxidized (i.e. turned to rust); therefore a containment system to collect and dispose of the paint and rust flakes will be utilized.

Why was the existing Traffic Bridge closed?
The Traffic Bridge was closed on August 24, 2010 after preliminary results from the scheduled comprehensive inspection showed serious corrosion and deterioration of some steel members underneath the deck.

How did the City decide to replace the existing bridge with a new modern steel truss bridge for all modes of transportation?
A Traffic Needs Assessment and Functional Planning Study was completed, and extensive public consultation took place. A conceptual design, based on the approved functional plans, was developed and approved by the City and its technical advisor, Stantec Consulting.

Did the City consult with the public on what type of new bridge to build?
Yes, extensive public consultations were held. The consultations made it clear that the new bridge must accommodate all modes of transportation (i.e. vehicular, pedestrian and cycling traffic.) Three Open House events were held between June and October 2010.

What will the new Traffic Bridge look like?
The new Traffic Bridge design will be similar to the design of the old bridge, but will be

wider to accommodate emergency vehicles. GCP will use conventional weathering steel with a protective coating within the splash zone for the truss elements of the new Traffic Bridge. This will result in a two tone colour between the lower and upper portions of the structure until the patina can form on the exposed portions of the weathering steel. This process will eventually turn the entire bridge into one brown colour tone.