



GREATER VANCOUVER BOARD OF TRADE

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Greater Vancouver Board of Trade
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Greater Vancouver Board of Trade’s Submission to Transport Canada’s Ports Modernization Review

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade (GVBOT) submits this response to the Transport Canada’s Ports Modernization Review. This review of Canadian Port Authorities (CPA) is critical to ensuring Canada’s Gateway is modernised and utilised to its full potential, in order to remain globally competitive.

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Canada is, and has always been a trading nation. Since the pre-confederation, we have depended on international trade to grow our economy and provide prosperity. For more than 130 years, the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade has worked to assist businesses to thrive and create wealth for our region through trade and economic development. When businesses can compete and succeed, they create the jobs and tax dollars required to fund the services that we all count on, such as health care and education.

As the economic epicentre of the world shifts from our southern neighbour eastward, Canada must ensure that it adjusts to this new reality and increases its exports to these markets, strategically positioning its Gateway to do so. The Greater Vancouver region is Canada’s trading hub and gateway to these growing markets, facilitating the movement of Canada’s goods to the Asia Pacific.

The economic significance of Canada’s Pacific Gateway is undeniable and meaningful efforts must be made to sustainably grow the gateway sector and maintain its competitiveness. The Regional Export Framework, produced by the World Trade Centre Vancouver - a subsidiary of the GVBOT, found that B.C’s Asia-Pacific Gateway is estimated to support over \$34.3 billion in Canadian GDP and nearly 307,010 jobs in Canada during 2016. Further, the economic footprint of the Asia-Pacific Gateway contributed over \$1.9 billion to the federal government, nearly \$1.6 billion to the province of B.C. and approximately \$261.7 million to municipal governments within the Greater Vancouver area.

At the centre of the Gateway sector, is the Port of Vancouver, along with the terminals, rail services and other stakeholders that allow our country’s exports reach world markets.

## **Facilitating the movement of goods and passengers**

There are significant bottlenecks in our trade corridors and infrastructure that prohibit future growth and competitiveness of the Gateway.

Greater Vancouver and British Columbia serve a crucial role in facilitating Canada's Pacific Gateway. Ideally located to serve growing Asian markets, the region is a nexus of import-export activity for the entire country. As Canada continues to take advantage of free trade agreements with the fastest growing trade blocs around the world, the Gateway is poised to get Canadian goods to markets. There are however, significant impediments to the growth of the Gateway.

Whilst GVBOT and our Members have been pleased to see significant financial commitments towards some 'bottleneck-eliminating' projects outlined in Gateway 2030, through the National Trade Corridor Fund, making progress on the remainder of the projects listed will go a long way to maximize potential benefits for the local, provincial and national economy. These investments will go a long way in ensuring our region remains competitive and sustainable. We were pleased to see the announcement of additional funding in the Fall Economic Update.

A full list of the remaining Greater Vancouver Gateway Council projects that remain to be funded are available within the [appendix](#) of this document. The GVBOT believes funding should be deployed where there is the greatest potential to capitalise on emerging markets, with expected exponential benefits to the Canadian economy.

As shown above, the Pacific-Gateway is a necessity for the economic prosperity of the whole of Canada. Sluggish deployment of infrastructure projects hampers our ability to develop the infrastructure necessary to tap into new global markets and slows our national growth projections. Given recent global uncertainty and geopolitical risks with our most important trading partner, leveraging the Gateway to diversify our markets and exports is key to stability and prosperity across the country.

The GVBOT recommends the federal government take leadership in developing a national transportation strategy in collaboration with all key stakeholders; provinces, Indigenous governments, municipalities and industry. The strategy should enhance national trade corridors and drive the development of long term trade-enabling infrastructure of national importance, such as Centerm Expansion, and the protection of industrial lands.

## **Indigenous peoples**

The GVBOT remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring a mutually-beneficial and respectful relationships with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples. The Port and local operators have developed strong linkages and partnerships with local First Nations.

Even with those strengthened relationships, there is a need for the federal departments to provide policy guidance to ensure there are consistent standards and expectations for engagement. Additionally, improvements could be considered to integrate Indigenous representation into the governance framework of CPA.

## **Environmental Considerations**

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency is considering changing the marine terminal entry *Section 24 (c)* of the *Regulations Designating Physical Activities* (the Project List). The GVBOT does not support expansion of the current designated "Project List", which would require any new or expanded marine terminal designed to handle ships larger than 25,000 DWT to become a designated project. This requirement would have unintended consequences of making expansions cost-prohibitive, thereby reducing Canada's competitiveness and delaying investments. The requirement places unnecessary burden on the Gateway sector with little benefits accrued to protecting the environment. The changes, if implemented, would have a significant negative impact on the competitiveness of Canada's ports, particularly Canada's largest, the Port of Vancouver. New or expanded terminals on existing port-terminal sites are considered redevelopments and not greenfield developments, therefore do not warrant being designated projects.

The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority has a robust Project and Environmental Review process that it has successfully undergone with private sector tenant proponents in its role as a crown agent. The process has been timely and successful, allowing the attraction *and retention* of new private sector investment within the Gateway.

The GVBOT was pleased with the establishment of the Ocean's Protection Plan. We must all share a duty in protecting our beautiful coasts. Although Canada is a world leader in marine safety, the GVBOT is of the opinion that there needs to be continued action and collaboration on this front. One such example that has been raised is the increasing cross-jurisdictional collaboration between federal departments and agencies. Transport Canada regulates oil spill response but the Canadian Coast Guard is the designated first responder. This can create confusion and delays in establishment of Incident Command.

## **Governance & Conclusion**

The GVBOT believes the current system of port governance has served the community well<sup>1</sup>. The strength of the system is reflected in the growth in traffic and revenues. While there are some divergent views about some specific aspects of the governance of CPA, on the West Coast, stakeholder groups including users, have worked well together in multiple areas especially advancing projects of regional significance.

We encourage the government to focus any reforms and regulatory changes around strengthening the ability of Canada's ports to grow and compete globally. Effective, competitive, and efficient ports are key to the national interest. Ports and Gateway industries are an essential asset in the economic development and future growth of our country. As Canada seeks to diversify its trading relationships, the continued development our West Coast ports is essential. Any changes contemplated should bear in mind first and foremost the need to ensure Canada's interests and economic future are advanced.

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<sup>1</sup> GVBOT is a member of the user nominating committee for the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority Boards of Directors.

## Appendix

### Gateway 2030 Projects

1. Western Lower Level Route Expansion
2. Overpasses/Upgrades along the BI line
3. North Fraser Way Intersection Improvements
4. Hwy 91 Six-Laning
5. Portside Rd Overpass and Upgrades
6. Blundell Rd Four-Laning
7. Arthur Dr Bridge Replacement
8. Deltaport Way Widening
9. Piper Ave Closure
10. New West Grade Separation and Closures
11. Whistle Cessation
12. Westminster Hwy Overpass
13. Tilbury/80th St interchange
14. Brunette Interchange Upgrades
15. Patullo Bridge Replacement
16. Old Yale Rd Overpass
17. Plywood and Grade Rd Interchange Hwy 17
18. Allen Way Interchange
19. 96 Avenue Overpass
20. RCIS Road and Network Improvements
21. Whistle Cessation (Surrey/Langley)
22. Hwy 1 Six-Laning
23. Bell Road Overpass
24. Moray Channel Bridge