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## FACTSHEET

Apr. 20, 2006

Ministry of Transportation

### **THE FACTS ABOUT THE SEA-TO-SKY HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

The Province is committed to ensuring a full and open dialogue when undertaking major projects. The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project has been no different. The extensive environmental mitigation undertaken is entirely consistent with our provincial commitment to a sustainable Olympics. In reviewing the route of the improved Sea-to-Sky Highway through West Vancouver, the Ministry of Transportation addressed the following priorities:

- **Safety**

Public safety is always the ministry's top priority. Studies show the four-lane overland route will be much safer than the evaluated tunnel option. In fact, a two-lane tunnel would have twice as many fatal crashes. The improvements we are making will save lives.

- **Commitment to Community Consultation**

The ministry conducted extensive consultations for more than three years, including over 30 meetings in West Vancouver with the District of West Vancouver staff and council, including five public open house meetings. The Minister of Transportation also met with council and personally toured the Eagleridge bluffs prior to making the decision 18 months ago.

- **Reducing the Visual Impact**

The ministry's project design goes to great lengths to provide visual screening, green landscaping and environmentally friendly materials that will minimize visual impact.

- **Fiscal Responsibility**

The four-lane overland route for the Eagleridge Bluffs section of the highway is currently projected to cost \$130 million. In contrast, the tunnel option would cost \$200 million, representing over 1/3 of the total project budget for just one kilometre of improvement.

- **Addressing Environmental Impacts**

The federal government conducted a fair, independent review of the overland route and a tunnel option. The assessment concluded that both options would have environmental impacts. However, the overland route would not cause significant environmental harm and could be built to minimize those effects. A tunnel option would potentially drain the Larsen Creek watershed and impact the fish-bearing Nelson Creek. West Vancouver took the Province to court challenging the environmental assessment, and lost. West Vancouver must now repay legal fees to the provincial and federal governments.

- **Protecting the Baden Powell Trail**

The Baden Powell Trail is 42 kilometres long. The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project will relocate only 400 metres of the trail. The vegetation in the area will be restored, preserving the trail for community and tourist use. A tunnel option would also impact the Baden Powell Trail.

- **Addressing Highway Capacity for the Future**

The four-lane overland route will meet the area's traffic needs for 50 years, or twice as long as the tunnel option. The overland route is the right choice for the longer-term interests of West Vancouver and the whole Sea-to-Sky corridor. The successful traffic management plan employed on the rest of the Sea-to-Sky corridor will be employed during the construction of the overland route with minimal impact to traffic and local residents.