

## Snapshots from the Sea-to-Sky . . .

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### How do they know where they are?

Small white signs that carry a combination of numbers are strategically positioned along the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project. These “station numbers” form the basis of a numbering system for design drawings and provide construction crews with map locations on the ground. They are part of a linear reference system (LRS) adopted by the project. All work activities and drawings use this stationing system. With the LRS in place, information from other computer systems such as the geographic information system (which captures, stores and analyzes geographic data) can be overlaid with other design drawings. Historically ‘photo lithography’, where maps were separated into layers was driven by nuclear weapon research starting early in the 20th century. By the 1960s, this computer technology became widely used for general purpose mapping.

**P.S.** *There's a Canadian connection to modern computerized geographic information systems. In the 1960s Roger Tomlinson developed the first of it's kind Canadian GIS, acknowledged as the biggest advance in geography since the Egyptians used a dot grid to map the Nile River 4000 years ago. A benefit of GIS is its ability to overlay maps containing different information, storing geographic data and providing tools for searching, analyzing, and displaying data in new ways.*



*The numbers themselves indicate a progressive distance from an arbitrary starting station. The first stationing position on the Sea-to-Sky Highway is approximately 98+450, located at Westport Road. The location shown in this photo is 26,100 metres (or 26.1 km) north of that point, at Porteau Cove.*

**The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project** *Improving safety, reliability and capacity*

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