

I am largely in support of the new bridge, as a sensible and affordable way to relieve congestion on our existing bridges. My only hesitation is over what the bridge will do to surface street traffic around the Vancouver end. I live in SE Vancouver, near SE 1st St. and 172nd Ave., and I am concerned about increased traffic through my neighborhood. Mill Plain and 164th Ave in particular are often already congested during rush hour. I am concerned that the new bridge will only direct more traffic down these streets, making them less usable for drivers that are just trying to get around their own neighborhoods = Becky Neal question

These concerns and cautions are most appreciated. I wish the east county corridor had benefit of current traffic predictions so with an appropriate 'pinch of salt' let's look at numbers put together by the RTC in 2008 for an east county bridge. Transportation planners in 2008 were predicting traffic on the north shore would grow to the following evening peak hour volumes. New traffic introduced by the ECB is shown in brackets. Following these big numbers I've added the number of lanes needed to accommodate hourly volumes. Freeway lanes move 1,800 vehicles per hour per lane and arterials moving 1,700 vehicles per hour per lane.

SR-14 west of 192nd
EB 3577 (1018) – 2
WB 3871 (1613) – 2+

SR-14 east of 192nd
EB 3938 (1046) – 2+
WB 2937 (458) – 2

North of the ECB on 192nd
NB 1421 (1063) – 1
SB 1408 (696) – 1

Unfortunately transportation planning estimates available at this time do not share how NB 192nd traffic is dispersed more than a few blocks north of SR-14. We know that an arterial has the capacity to move 1,700 to 1,900 vehicles per lane (vph). This suggests that 192nd traffic will be increased by about two thirds of one lane (1063 vph). Total traffic (1063 vph) demand on 192nd is about one full lane of traffic. 192nd is a four lane road suggesting traffic will be free flowing with the ECB.

230 'new' vehicles per hour are anticipated NB on 164th at SR-14 due to the ECB. Only 38 'new' SB vehicles are expected on 164th due to the ECB. NB totals are (if I read the number correctly on the graphic) are expected to be about 2,500 vph. The SB total is expected to be 1,500 vph. I do not necessarily believe these numbers as the prediction that the ECB will only add a few hundred peak hour movements on 164th. If we believe what the RTC predicted in 2008 impacts to 164th are minimal.

However, traffic predictions do NOT go far enough north to predict Mill Plain impacts will be or what the impacts will be on NB 164th more than a few blocks north of SR-14.

With regards to these arterials it is important to understand the AGGREGATE of vehicular movements on arterials within a dozen miles of the proposed bridge. This level of detail is expected to be studied soon after the public vote prods policy makers to action. Unfortunately we only have the 2008 RTC (which included WSDOT, Clark County and City of Vancouver input and review) to guide us today. Updating this material and expanding the area considered in transportation planning estimates is both expected and encouraged.

Please remember that the primary function of the ECB is cross river mobility. This is expected to reduce congestion on I-205 by 15% to 20%. Also, the estimates for the ECB peak afternoon hour in forty years are:

NB 3963 vph

SB 2375 vph

With arterials having a capacity of 1,700 to 1,800 vehicles per hour per lane the ECB will be at capacity in forty years. This suggests that the 19nd corridor (and East Clark County) will need to encourage less car usage which is best done with aggressive bus transit utilization. If policy makers are able to develop an integrated and coordinated system within the metropolitan area then the ECB will have long term viability and the calls for another bridge will likely not be heard in the East County until the later few decades of this century. Without the ECB one can only predict more and more congestion.