Highway 63 Twinning / Improvements and Bridge Functional Planning Study From South of the Peter Lougheed Bridge to Fort Hills

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Highway 63 is a critical economic corridor connecting Fort McMurray, Fort McKay, and many resource extraction sites. This major northern industrial hub provides economic stability, critical energy resources, and a sense of pride to Albertans. This study will develop functional plans for Highway 63 from south of the Peter Lougheed Bridge to Fort Hills to improve highway operations and safety.



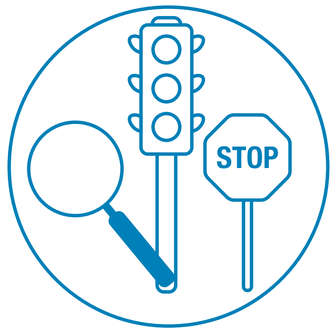
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REVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

This project will include a review of existing conditions through the following activities:



Review whether twinning, widening, climbing/passing lanes or other improvements are necessary / feasible.



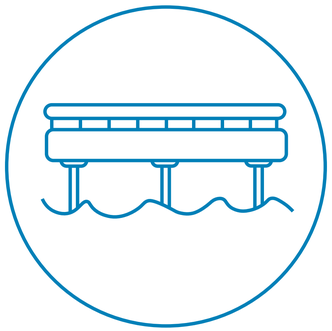
Analyze intersections to determine whether existing traffic control (including traffic signals) requires improvements.



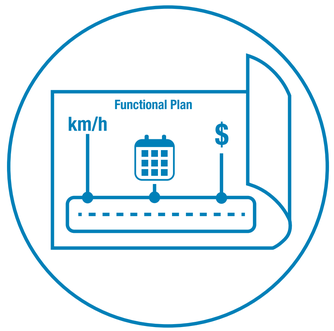
Review speed limits to determine if changes are required.



Review accesses with low usage to determine if alternatives are available.



Complete bridge planning activities to align with roadway improvement recommendations



Identify interim and ultimate stage plans for all aspects of the project, providing short-term and long-term solutions.



Engage Indigenous communities, local / industry stakeholders, and members of the public over the course of the project to ensure feedback is gathered during the planning process.

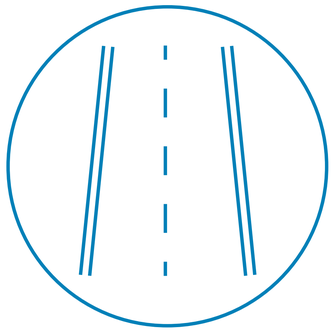
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WHAT IS A FUNCTIONAL PLANNING STUDY?

Functional planning studies develop long-range technical planning documents that assess current and future traffic conditions to determine:



How a highway will need to be maintained or upgraded to meet current and future planning needs (e.g., will twinning be necessary, will a bridge replacement be required in the future, etc.).



What Right-of-Way will be required to meet future requirements.



How access to and from the highway will be managed (e.g., where should service roads be located (if any), should underused accesses be closed or consolidated with others, do new accesses need to be added, etc.).



How changes could benefit the local community (e.g., economic benefits, safer travel, reduced travel times).



Whether there are any concerns regarding existing or planned configurations.

Why are these plans important?

Planning for maintenance and upgrades early and identifying the required Right-of-Way helps future-proof the transportation network by ensuring required land is available, and development can be planned with future highway upgrades in mind.

How are the Functional Plans used?

The functional plans will inform future development and improvements in the study area. Some recommendations may enter design and then construction immediately, while others may never be completed. Whether a recommendation is carried out is dependent on many factors including evaluation of priority based on needs and risks. assessment of impact for improvements, and funding availability.

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HOW ARE WE ENGAGING?

Stakeholder Engagement

We will be engaging with local stakeholders, industry representatives, businesses, and utility operators over the course of the project to hear their feedback. This is being done through one-on-one and small group engagement opportunities.

Indigenous Engagement

First Nations and Métis communities will be engaged to understand potential impacts or concerns to consider early in project planning. Notification letters will be provided to local First Nations and Métis communities.

Public Engagement

Opportunities for the public to provide feedback and engage with the project will be provided over the course of the project at key milestones and will continue through 2027.

HOW CAN I CONTACT THE PROJECT TEAM?

Should stakeholders, Indigenous communities, or members of the public have questions or wish to provide feedback outside of scheduled engagement opportunities, the project team can be reached via email at: **hwy63functionalplanning@gmail.com**

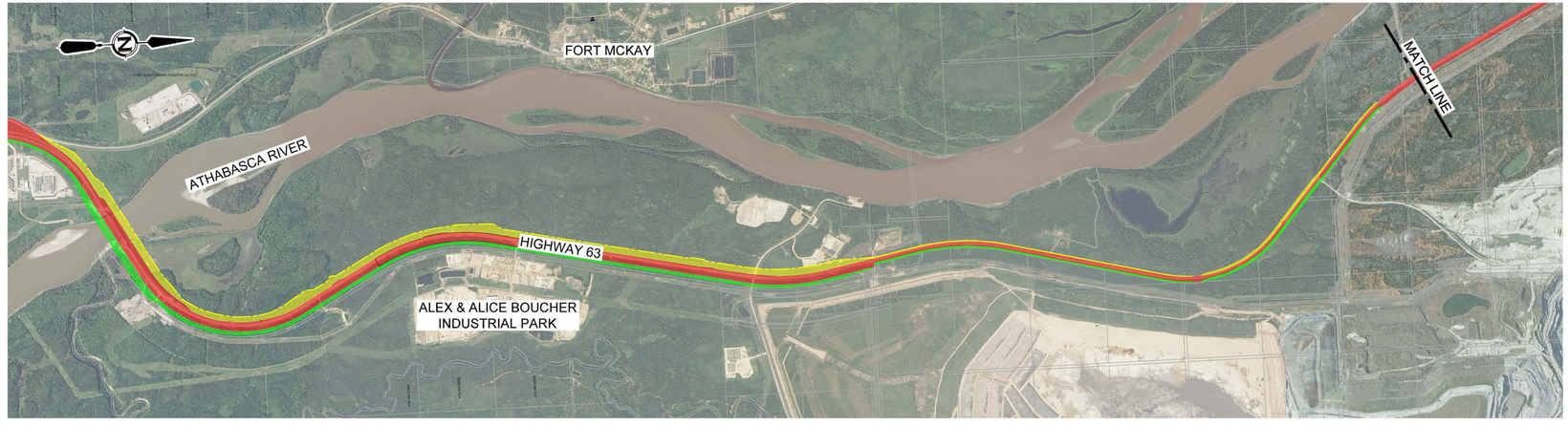
For more information about the project visit:
alberta.ca/highway-63-and-true-north-road-between-peter-lougheed-bridge-and-fort-hills-planning-study

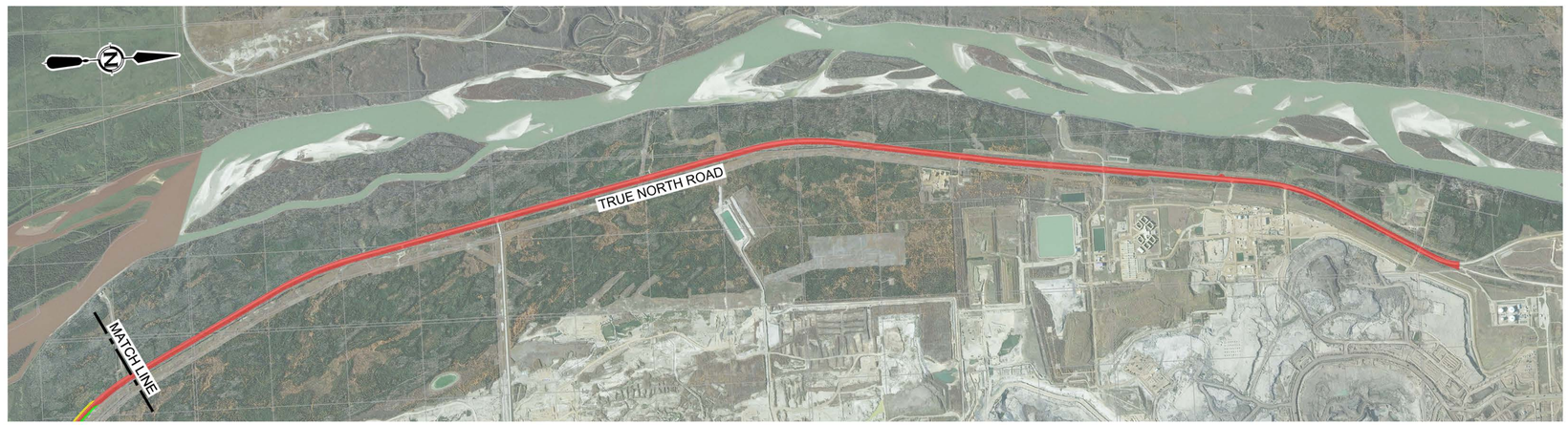
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RIGHT OF WAY NEEDS

The existing Highway 63 Right-of-way (ROW) varies from 100-120 m for the first 9 km, then varies between 50-75 m for the remainder of the project limits. Potential options for ROW expansion are shown below and are dependent on the scale of grade widening required and subject to a review and are subject to a review of various constraints such as utilities, federal reserve land, environmental and heritage considerations, and mining surface leases. Regardless of any interim improvements recommended, it will be important to protect enough ROW to accommodate the ultimate vision for the highway.

Road Classification	Typical ROW width
4-Lane Rural Divided	130 m
2-lane Rural Undivided	60 m





THE RIGHT-OF-WAY LIMITS AND PROPERTY LINES SHOWN ARE CONCEPTUAL AND DEVELOPED FOR FUNCTIONAL PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY. THEY DO NOT REPRESENT FINAL DESIGN, LAND ACQUISITION REQUIREMENTS, OR APPROVED OR FUNDED PROJECTS BY ALBERTA TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC CORRIDORS. ALL INFORMATION IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

LEGEND
- EXISTING ROW
- ADDITIONAL ROW (OPTION ONE)
- ADDITIONAL ROW (OPTION TWO)

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Do you have any feedback that you would like to share with the project team regarding the conceptual alignment? Please share it below using one of the provided sticky notes.

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Project Kick-Off

Late 2025 - Early 2026

Data Gathering

Current and future conditions will be reviewed to understand current road conditions and identify any concerns.

Traffic Counts

Traffic counts will be reviewed and assessed.

Geotechnical Desktop Study and Review

A site visit and desktop review will be conducted to identify any geotechnical constraints.

Utility Coordination

Utility owners and operators will be engaged early to identify potential conflicts.

Hydrotechnical Desktop Study and Review

A desktop review will be conducted to identify any drainage needs and inform bridge planning.

Alternative Development and Assessment

Spring - Summer 2026

Traffic Forecasting and Collision Analysis

Multiple traffic models will be developed to forecast what traffic could look like in the future and will be used to inform planning work. Recent collision data will be analyzed, considering factors such as collision type, time of day, and road conditions. The results will show the non-animal collision frequency, rate, and trends that could be attributed to physical characteristics.

Review of Intersection Operations

Operational factors such as collision statistics, access, design, and lighting will be reviewed at multiple intersections including: Boucher Industrial Park, Elk Avenue / Caribou Avenue, Crane Avenue, and Gate 6.

Roads Concept Development

Multiple design options will be developed and assessed based on evaluation criteria.

Bridge Concept Development and Hydrotechnical Analysis

A bridge concept will be developed considering integration with the roadway, bridge size, location, and structure type. Concept development will also consider future highway plans like twinning or widening.

Multiple Account Evaluation

Once developed, the design options will be reviewed through a structured decision-making process known as a Multiple Account Evaluation. Through this process, each of the options will be reviewed based on several factors such as:

- **Financial** – reviews an option's financial considerations such as estimated construction costs and land acquisition costs / requirements.
- **Environmental** – reviews an option's potential environmental impacts and associated mitigations.
- **User Benefits** – reviews an option's benefits such as the potential for reduced travel times and reduced collision risk.
- **Community Sustainability** – reviews an option's potential impact on the local community
- **Economy** – reviews an option's potential economic impacts such as employment opportunities and accessibility improvements.

Environmental Evaluation, Permitting and Historical Resources

Environmental evaluation, including a field assessment, will be completed to identify potential interactions with valued components within the project footprint, develop mitigations, and outline the anticipated regulatory permitting requirements. A historical resource assessment will also be completed.

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Recommended Alternative
Fall 2026 - Spring 2027

Development of Preferred Functional Plan
From the work completed during the Alternative Development and Assessment Phase, a preferred concept for both the roadways and the bridge will be developed and refined.

Drainage Plan
A stormwater drainage plan will be developed for the recommended option. This plan will review potential impacts and required mitigations.

Utility Impact Assessment
The locations of existing and planned utilities, potential relocation requirements, and ways to mitigate utility impacts will be reviewed.

Interim Stage Analysis
Building upon the preferred concept, options for staging construction and / or completing interim improvements will be developed, including an estimation of costs.

Reporting and Completion
Spring 2027 - Winter 2028

Functional Planning Report
A final report will be compiled outlining the recommended option, alternative options considered, and the work completed during the planning process.

Public Consultation Report
Feedback gathered through public consultation will be compiled and shared through a final report.

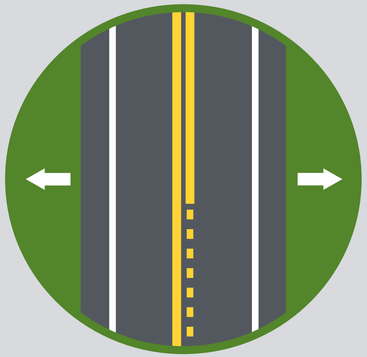
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DETERMINING IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS

What is the difference between widening and twinning?

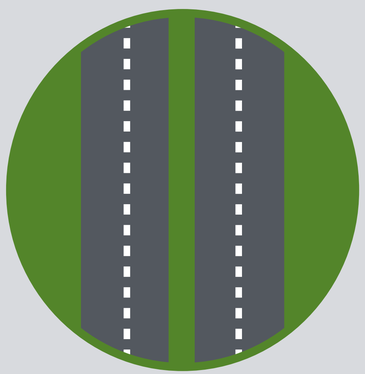
Both widening and twinning are completed to increase capacity and improve safety.

WIDENING



Widening increases the width of a roadway's existing surface, which could range from a wider shoulder to accommodate oversized loads to alternating segments of climbing and/or passing lanes throughout the project limits.

TWINNING



Twinning expands an existing highway by building a second road parallel to an existing roadway, which creates a physical separation between different directions of traffic.

How are we assessing requirements, and whether to widen or twin?
Different service level classifications have different traffic thresholds that must be reached to warrant twinning based on traffic volumes. The portion of Highway 63 being reviewed is categorized as Service Class Level 2, which means that it is an intraprovincial route that connects major regions and communities with populations of more than 5000 people.

While traffic volumes are currently lower than the threshold for twinning, traffic modeling will be completed to project how much traffic volumes are expected to grow along the corridor over the next several decades and other factors will be reviewed to determine the recommended solution.

Other factors that will influence the recommended improvement include:

- Traffic Volumes
- Collision History
- Types and size of vehicles using the roadway

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TRAFFIC VOLUMES

The most recent traffic volumes along the corridor are displayed in the figures below, along with the identified collision clusters.



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What is your user experience on this highway that you would like to share with the project team? Please share it below using one of the provided sticky notes.

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BRIDGE INFORMATION

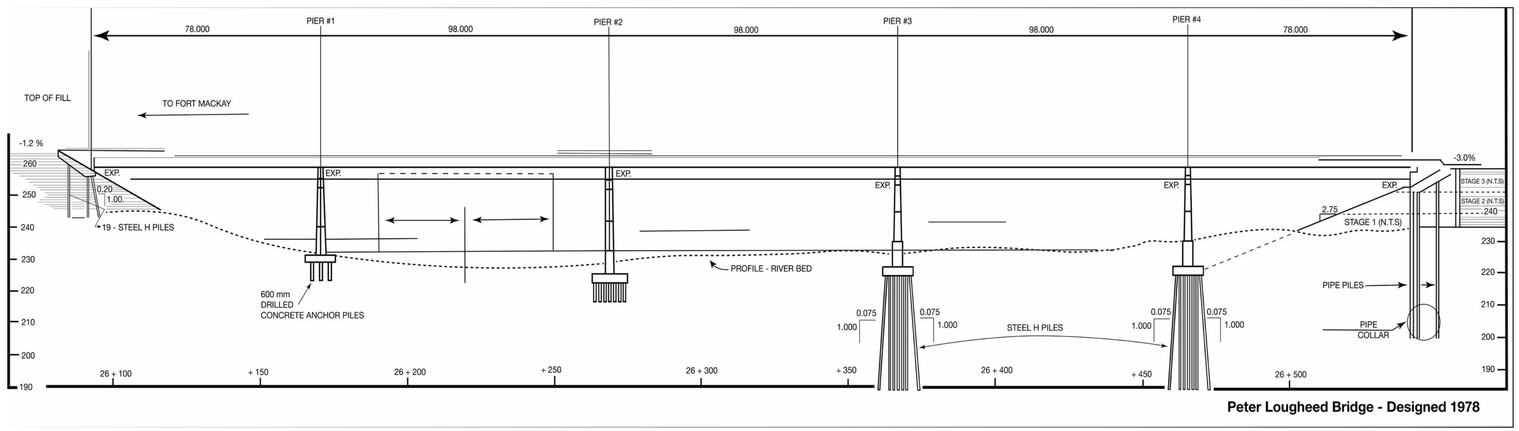
The Peter Lougheed Bridge crosses the Athabasca River as part of Highway 63 approximately 5 kilometers south of Fort McKay. The bridge opened to traffic in 1981 and is frequently used by commuter traffic travelling to several oil and gas operations in the area and to the Fort McKay First Nation (FMFN) Reservations.

How is the Peter Lougheed Bridge being considered in the Functional Planning Study?

The functional planning study is currently reviewing four options for the Peter Lougheed Bridge that would support future growth and improvements to the highway overall. These include:

- **Rehabilitating the existing bridge and maintaining existing geometry** – No new bridge would be constructed, and the existing bridge would be rehabilitated to provide improvements and ensure it continues to meet current highway and safety standards.
- **Widening the existing bridge to accommodate 4 lanes of traffic** – The existing bridge has two lanes of traffic (one in each direction). The existing bridge could be widened to four lanes of traffic (two in each direction) to increase capacity.
- **Building a new bridge parallel to the existing bridge and rehabilitating the existing bridge** – A new bridge could be constructed parallel to the existing bridge and rehabilitation of the old bridge could occur.
- **Building a new 4-lane bridge structure and demolishing the existing bridge** – In some cases, it can be more cost effective to demolish an older structure than to go through the process of rehabilitation. In this case, the existing bridge could be demolished, and a new bridge would be constructed with the capacity for 4 lanes of traffic (two in each direction).

The options above are currently being reviewed to determine what the most cost effective and efficient option, and how that option would fit into the broader plans for Highway 63. Factors such as cost, efficiency, overall value, and needs of industry and the local community are being considered as part of this review.



Peter Lougheed Bridge - Designed 1978

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Do you have any feedback that you would like to share with the project team regarding the Peter Lougheed Bridge? Please share it below using one of the provided sticky notes.

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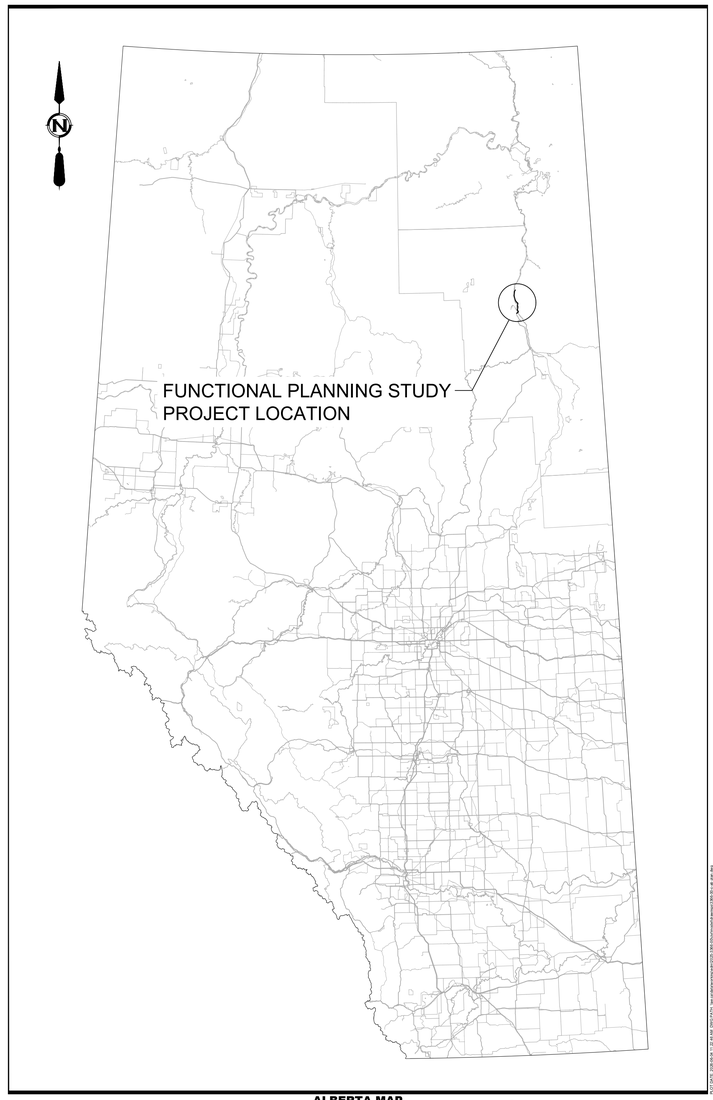
NEXT STEPS

Planning Work

- Feedback gathered through stakeholder, Indigenous, and public engagement activities will be reviewed and considered as the project team progresses the functional planning study.
- Both roadway and bridge concepts will be developed using information from engagement and the various studies and reviews completed through the Alternative Development and Assessment Phase.

Engagement Opportunities

- Engagement opportunities will occur over the course of the project. These opportunities will be communciated and advertised as information becomes available and schedules for engagement opportunities are finalized.



ALBERTA MAP

FUNCTIONAL PLANNING STUDY
HIGHWAY 63:12 PROJECT LOCATION

Associated Engineering GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE. LOCAL FOCUS.

Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors

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THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

We invite you to share your feedback regarding today's session through the evaluation form linked below.

SCAN ME TO COMPLETE THE FORM

Should you prefer to complete a paper copy of the evaluation form, please as one of the Project team members, and one can be provided to you.