

June 23, 2011

City offers preview of fire truck passing on upgraded Hwy 19A

At its meeting, June 21, Council adopted a motion to demonstrate a fire truck passing a City truck at the June 25 opening of Highway 19A.

The attached photo shows the City's largest fire apparatus (2.6 metres wide) passing a full-size SUV/truck (2.0 metres wide) on the narrowest part of the highway bounded by the median and the curb.

"Council wishes to demonstrate that the Hwy19A upgrade allows adequate passing room for emergency vehicles as correctly identified by staff, the roadway design team and by the traffic engineer," says City Manager Andy Laidlaw.

In a report to Council this April, the City Manager quoted correspondence from independent traffic engineer Richard Drdul, which stated: *"Although the sizes of fire trucks and other emergency vehicles vary, almost all are 2.6 m wide or less. A typical automobile is 1.8 m wide, and a large pickup truck is 2.0 m wide. If a large pickup truck pulls to the side of the road on Highway 19A and stops, a fire truck would be able to pass with approximately 0.5 m of clearance."*

Half a metre is equivalent to 19.5 inches, and *"this photo shows the fire truck has room on the median side, so even if a vehicle is not pulled over tight to the curb, a distance of one foot should be reasonably maintained for clearance,"* Laidlaw says.

The longest stretch of uninterrupted centre median along the Hwy19A upgrade is about 340m.

Laidlaw emphasizes that the design of the highway upgrade achieves the objectives of providing a slower, safer, more scenic route. This part of Hwy 19A is not a designated truck route, which means large trucks are prohibited from using this road, unless they're making local deliveries, and access for continuous high-speed emergency vehicle response was never part of the plan the Hwy 19A upgrade, he adds.

The Hwy 19A upgrade was built on time and on budget and meets the objectives it was designed to address – for public safety and other community values, Laidlaw concludes.

A public demonstration of the fire truck passing a full-size truck is scheduled to occur at the beginning of the Hwy 19A opening ceremony at 11 a.m., Saturday, June 25.

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Contact: Andy Laidlaw, City Manager

250-286-5708