

Route 11 twinning to begin this summer

Work in Shediac area includes twinning, interchange upgrades

ERIC LEWIS TIMES & TRANSCRIPT



Denis Lebel, federal minister of infrastructure, communities and intergovernmental affairs, announced funding for Route 11 yesterday.

PHOTO: ERIC LEWIS/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

Work will begin this summer on twinning a section of Route 11 in Shediac.

After years of discussion from various governments, the first phase of twinning the highway that connects Shediac to Miramichi and beyond was announced yesterday afternoon by provincial and federal officials.

A \$60-million, three-year project will see an overhaul of on- and off-ramps and the twinning of 6.8 kilometres of highway from Route 15 to the south side of the Shediac River.

Premier David Alward and federal Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs Denis Lebel announced the project at a press conference in Dieppe. The federal government's share of \$27 million is coming from the New Building Canada Fund, and the province is kicking in the other \$33 million.

The twinning of Route 11 has been a hot topic for communities along the highway – Shediac, Bouctouche, Richibucto, Rexton, Elsipogtog First Nation and Miramichi – for years.

The section of highway mentioned yesterday is the first step of Phase 1 of twinning Route 11, between Shediac and Bouctouche.

The 6.8-kilometre stretch and the highway bypass upgrades will be done over three construction seasons and is expected to be completed in fall of 2017.

“It’ll be a lot easier, it’ll be a lot more accommodating for people around the area” said Shediac Deputy Mayor Laura Gallant.

She noted that anyone travelling south into Shediac, from Richibucto or Bouctouche, currently has to take the exit into Shediac Cape to get into the Town of Shediac. That exit is often missed, but the new roadwork project will add a dedicated Shediac entrance.

“We’re glad that they’ll have an exit for Shediac,” she said.

“We hope to see a lot more people coming into Shediac from those areas to do their shopping,” she said, adding that the town has many major retailers and restaurants to choose from. “We’re a tourist town, but we’re trying to get it more into a 12-month town and not just in the summertime. So we’re striving to accomplish that.”

Richibucto Mayor Roger Doiron said work to Route 11 has been a long time coming.

“If we can improve the road infrastructure in our region, it’s a good thing,” he said, adding that he is eager for the day construction reaches his town.

Bouctouche Mayor Aldéo Saulnier was also pleased to hear that work on Route 11 was finally beginning.

“It’s great news,” he said. “We’re all excited about it.”

Lebel said the project has many benefits.

“We are proud to invest in infrastructure upgrades to this section of Route 11, which will focus on promoting economic growth and improving mobility in the Shediac region of New Brunswick, and increasing safety for all those who use the highway system,” he said in a press release.

Alward said Route 11 has been the number 1 infrastructure priority for his government.

“And if we look at the specifics of phase number 1 between Shediac and Bouctouche, that is the section of highway that is the heaviest travelled, more than 20,000 vehicles a day; the greatest safety issues have been there,” said Alward. “That’s why we’re investing there first. That’s why the investment will be of a full four-lane highway between Shediac and Bouctouche. The plan is for phase number 2 to be in the Glenwood area of Miramichi.”

New Brunswick’s Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Claude Williams said much of the preliminary work required for twinning Route 11 between Shediac and Bouctouche

– geotechnical work and land purchasing, for example – is already complete.

The total cost of twinning Route 11 between Route 15 and Miramichi has been estimated at about \$1 billion.

The first step in the Shediac area includes one new highway interchange, modifications to three others and a new grade separation, along with the twinning.

Williams noted that it's the Shediac interchange at Route 15 where so much traffic meets, flowing from Moncton, Cap-Pelé, Scoudouc, Prince Edward Island, Shediac and further north.

“This is the interchange where all the traffic is happening,” Williams said.

“So that's why this is a short distance, but it's the complexity of all the interchanges where everything connects around there. So it's not just fixing 6.8 kilometres of two-lane highway.”

The New Building Canada Fund will provide \$53 billion over the next decade in infrastructure money to provincial, territorial and municipal infrastructure.

Over the next 10 years, New Brunswick will see approximately \$866 million in federal funding, including almost \$394 million under the New Building Canada Fund.