VICTORIA, BC – Professor Jamie Cassels, Q.C., has been retained by the City of Victoria to act as an independent fairness monitor for the Johnson Street Bridge replacement project. Mr. Cassels will monitor the evaluation, short-listing, and award of the contract for the replacement of the new bridge to ensure that the procurement process is properly and fairly followed. Mr. Cassels will submit written reports directly to City Council and to the firms participating in the procurement process at the conclusion of the short listing and after the award of the contract.

As a lawyer and law professor with the University of Victoria, Professor Cassels has over 30 years of experience and academic expertise in contract law and civil litigation, including the law related to tendering. During that time he also served as Dean of the Faculty of Law (1999-2001) and Vice President Academic and Provost of the University of Victoria (2001-2010). Professor Cassels was selected following a competitive process.

Third-party fairness monitors are common practice for large public sector infrastructure projects. Fairness monitoring ensures the integrity of the tendering process. It provides assurance to the public and to bidders that the procurement process is fair. It also provides some protection to the City from unintended errors that can lead to project delays, cost increases, and liabilities. The City of Victoria has used a fairness monitor in the past to oversee the tendering process for the Dockside Green development.

The City’s request for qualifications for the Johnson Street Bridge replacement contract closed last week with eight submissions received from teams interested in the contract to build the new bridge. Each submission will be reviewed and three firms will be short-listed. The names of the three short-listed teams will be shared in early May once the review is complete.

A request for proposals will be issued to the three shortlisted teams in early May. The fairness monitor will observe and monitor all meetings and correspondence between the City and bidders during this process.

The contract to build the new bridge is expected to be awarded this fall. Construction of the new bridge is expected to support an estimated half billion in development activities and create approximately 900 jobs over the next four years.

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