

# B.C. on the Move: Engagement Meeting Notes

NOVEMBER 20, 2014

2:30 PM

POWELL RIVER

<b>ATTENDEES/AFFILIATION</b>	Cory Carr, Powell River Chamber of Commerce Jack Barr, Powell River Chamber of Commerce Kim Miller, Powell River Chamber of Commerce Mark Hassett, Powell River Chamber of Commerce Shawn Cator, Powell River Regional Airport
<b>MOTI REPRESENTATIVES</b>	Renée Mounteney, Deputy Director South Coast Region, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Clint Monson, Area Manager/Development Tech, Powell River Area, MoTI
<b>NOTE TAKER</b>	Christel Guenette, Kirk & Co. Consulting Ltd.
<b>KEY THEMES (3-6)</b>	
1) <b>Ferries:</b> Participants stressed the importance of ferries as an extension of the highways. Ferries should improve service and affordability. The community felt unfairly treated relative to the rest of the province.	
2) <b>Transportation planning:</b> Participants noted that an alternate route to open up the Sunshine Coast to the Lower Mainland, would help to promote Powell River's economy.	
3) <b>Airports:</b> Participants recognized the need to extend the airport runway, and improve the terminal to accommodate larger planes. Supporting alternate forms of transportation, would encourage people to come to the area.	
<b>CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES</b>	
Powell River Chamber of Commerce:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The structure of the BC Ferries unfairly burdens a specific base of taxpayers and must be changed.</li> <li>The current tax and toll system for BC's marine highways is discriminatory.</li> </ul>	
Powell River Regional Airport:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The airport provides a valuable service but doesn't generate a lot of revenue. It is self-sustaining but does not generate enough income to make improvements to the airport.</li> <li>In order to accommodate a GPS approach, some changes need to be made (i.e. tree removal and relocating hydro poles).</li> </ul>	
<b>MOVING FORWARD – STRATEGIES</b>	
1) Moving People and Goods Safely and Reliably	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants from the Powell River Chamber of Commerce noted that shoulder widening is important to accommodate cyclists travelling to and from ferry terminals.</li> </ul>	
2) Growing the Economy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants from the Powell River Chamber of Commerce noted that the South Coast is a key investment area that has the potential to become a "bedroom community". As such, the South Coast could be used as a more efficient and affordable transportation corridor that will directly tie into goals of economic development.</li> <li>Participants from the Powell River Chamber of Commerce noted that additional ferry service would be needed once the first LNG plant is opened.</li> </ul>	
3) Connecting and Strengthening Communities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants from the Powell River Chamber of Commerce noted a feasibility study that was completed regarding a fixed link between Gabriola Island and Vancouver Island; the participant noted that they would like to see the feasibility study expanded to cover the entire province.</li> <li>Participants from the Powell River Chamber of Commerce felt discriminated against or burdened compared to the interior ferry services which are free to use. The participant indicated that inequity in the system needs to be addressed as some services are 100% subsidized and others are user paid. Any funds spent on ferries are an investment in the communities, which benefits the economy.</li> <li>Participants from the Powell River Chamber of Commerce noted that residents access services through Vancouver. A connection to Squamish would be beneficial for the area.</li> <li>Participants from the Powell River Chamber of Commerce noted that residents access services (i.e. doctors) in Vancouver. It is important that a reliable route to Vancouver is constructed.</li> <li>Participants from the Powell River Chamber of Commerce described a roadway that could link Powell River to Squamish. The first link would be from Squamish to Gibsons. With the population of Vancouver expected to grow, air quality issues will continue to increase. If there was a roadway from the Sunshine Coast to Vancouver, more people would move to the area which would entice developers to build in the region. This would create a boost to the economy of the Sunshine Coast. 80% of the route is already constructed through roadways and would need a few bridges built to link these roadways. Part of the 10-year transportation plan could include starting to build some of these links. The proposed route is different than</li> </ul>	

what was proposed 12 years ago.	
4) Maximizing Collaboration and Investment with Partners and Stakeholders	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants from the Powell River Chamber of Commerce would like to see more partnerships with the federal government. As tax payers, residents of the West Coast are entitled to breaks. East Coast ferries are subsidized per capita which needs to be extended to the West Coast ferries.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The participant from the Powell River Regional Airport noted that due to regulation changes, the airport is in need of a runway extension. This would also allow larger planes to land at the airport. Due to the location of the airport, the cost of extending the airport is high as a lot of structural fill is needed to build up each end of the airport runway.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The participant from the Powell River Regional Airport indicated there are maintenance business opportunities that the airport could take advantage of.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The participant from the Powell River Regional Airport noted that in order to bring in bigger planes, a runway length of 4,500 feet is needed. The current runway is approximately 3,600 feet long.</li> </ul>	
<b>TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS</b>	
<u>Powell River Chamber of Commerce:</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BC Ferries must be returned to the MoTI as part of the highway system with the same financing structure as any other highway project, or toll highways.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highway service to the ferry-dependent communities must be affordable and reliable with a schedule reflecting the needs of the community.</li> </ul>	
<u>Powell River Regional Airport:</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A runway extension is necessary to bring the airport up to new regulations.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To accommodate an increase in airport traffic, a new terminal building is needed.</li> </ul>	
<b>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/DISCUSSION</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A participant asked whether the Minister of Transportation would receive the information presented during this session. Participants were concerned that consultants would make decisions and then inform the government of these decisions.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants expressed concern that consideration would not be given to comments made during this consultation session and would once again be neglected in any plans.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants noted that Powell River is part of the longest highway network (Highway 101) that extends to South America which was omitted from the discussion guide.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A participant noted that the Powell River Chamber of Commerce is preparing a submission that will address a number of issues as it relates to the province's key goals.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A participant noted that BC Ferries was the last item included in the discussion guide. It should be prioritized as the most important and biggest issue for BC's transportation.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants noted that PEI had a population of 350,000 when the Confederation Bridge was built to link PEI to the mainland. This was subsidized. Vancouver Island has a population of 750,000 which warrants a fixed link.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A participant questioned whether BC Ferries would be included in the 10-year transportation plan. Ms. Mountney responded she was unsure how it would come out in terms of the 10-year plan.</li> </ul>	