



Stickle Road and Highway 97 Intersection Improvement Project

Community Engagement

May 26 – June 10, 2016

Engagement Summary Report

September 2016

Prepared by
Kirk & Co. Consulting Ltd.

Kirk&Co.

About Kirk & Co. Consulting Ltd.

Kirk & Co. is a recognized industry leader in designing and implementing comprehensive public and stakeholder consultation and engagement programs. Utilizing best practices, consultation and engagement programs are designed to maximize opportunities for input. Kirk & Co. independently analyzes and reports on public and stakeholder input.

The views represented in this public engagement summary report reflect the priorities and concerns of engagement participants. They may not be representative of the views of the public and other stakeholders because participants self-selected into the Stickle Road and Highway 97 Intersection Improvement Project community engagement, and therefore do not reflect a random sample.



Stickle Road and Highway 97 Intersection Improvement Project

Community Engagement May 26 – June 10, 2016

Engagement Summary Report

Table of Contents

1. Background	1
2. Public Engagement to Date	1
3. Community Engagement: May 26 – June 10, 2016	2
3.1 Purpose	2
3.2 Engagement Participation	2
3.3 Engagement Topics	2
3.4 Notification	3
3.5 Engagement Methods	3
4. Engagement Results	4
4.1 Feedback Forms	4
4.2 Open-Ended Submissions	7

Appendix 1 – Notification Materials

Appendix 2 – Display Boards and Feedback Form

1. Background

Located near Swan Lake, north of Vernon, the Stickle Road and Highway 97 intersection provides local access for residents and businesses. It is currently an at-grade intersection with full movements on and off Highway 97 in each direction.

There are on-going safety concerns at the existing intersection, with higher than average collision and severity rates compared to other, similar intersections. Drivers experience long wait times at the intersection during morning and afternoon peak periods.

It is anticipated that Highway 97 traffic volumes will continue to increase. Approximately 27,000 vehicles per day use Highway 97, which goes up to 31,000 during the summer. By 2039, it is anticipated that this will increase to 36,500 vehicles per day (42,000 during the summer).

The project includes reconfiguration of the intersection at Stickle Road and Highway 97 in order to improve safety and connectivity. The revised intersection improvement design also involves connecting the south end of the existing Stickle Frontage Road to 20th Street, north of Vernon. Project design is expected to be completed by fall 2016.

2. Public Engagement to Date

In April 2015, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure held an open house to provide First Nations, local governments, the public, and stakeholders with the opportunity to learn more and provide feedback on the design of the Stickle Road and Highway 97 Intersection Improvement Project. A revised design was presented at a second open house in July 2015, which included a Protected T intersection to allow left turns from Stickle Road East back onto Highway 97.

On May 26, 2016, an Open House was held in Vernon at the Prestige Hotel and Conference Centre. The community was invited to provide input regarding the proposed improvements and revised design for the Stickle Road and Highway 97 intersection. Ministry staff were available to answer questions regarding the project.

How Input Will Be Considered

Community input will be considered, along with technical, environmental, financial information and further input from local governments, in refining the design for the Stickle Road and Highway 97 Intersection Improvement Project.

3. Community Engagement: May 26 – June 10, 2016

3.1 PURPOSE

Community engagement was conducted by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure between May 26 and June 10, 2016 to seek input from the public regarding the proposed revised design for the Stickle Road and Highway 97 intersection.

Engagement materials, including an online feedback form and materials for the public open house were posted online at www.gov.bc.ca/okanaganvalleycorridorprojects.

3.2 ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPATION

There were a total of **382** participant interactions during the community engagement period:

- 234 people attended a public open house on May 26, 2016
- 120 completed feedback forms were received (71 hardcopy and 49 online)
- 28 open-ended submissions were received through email or mail

3.3 ENGAGEMENT TOPICS

The community engagement period focused on providing information and collecting feedback regarding the revised intersection improvements for the Stickle Road and Highway 97 intersection. The display boards and feedback form provided a background on the improvement objectives and the primary concerns regarding the intersection. Updated design information and renderings were presented to explain new changes to the project design. The revised design is a product of ongoing engagement and discussions with the community and local government.

The public was encouraged to engage and provide their opinions regarding the revised plan, specifically relating to their levels of agreement to the plan, preference for format of construction updates, and any additional comments that they wished to express.

3.4 NOTIFICATION

Notification of engagement opportunities included:

- **News Release:** A news release, inviting the public and media to the May 26 open house was distributed to Okanagan media sources by Government Communications and Public Engagement on behalf of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- **Newspaper Advertising:** A print advertisement regarding the public open house was featured in the Vernon Morning Star on May 18, 20, 22 and 25
- **Social Media:** One tweet was sent from @TranBC (16.5k followers) to notify of the open house and three tweets were sent from @govTogetherBC (1k followers) regarding the engagement period
- **Stakeholder Emails:** Email invitations were sent to key stakeholders
- **Engagement Website:** All engagement materials were available on the project website on May 26, 2016 (www.gov.bc.ca/okanaganvalleycorridorprojects)

A copy of the notification materials can be found in Appendix 1.

3.5 ENGAGEMENT METHODS

3.5.1 Display Boards and Feedback Form

The open house presentation display boards provided information regarding current conditions at the intersection, improvement objectives, past and present public engagement activities, as well as technical information relating to the revised intersection improvements. Additionally, the display boards provided details regarding proposed environmental mitigation. The feedback form explained the revised intersection improvements and provided an opportunity for participants to provide their feedback regarding the revised design.

A copy of the open house presentation/display boards and feedback form can be found in Appendix 2.

3.5.2 Online Engagement

All community engagement materials were available on the website www.gov.bc.ca/okanaganvalleycorridorprojects, including electronic copies of the display boards, an online feedback form that could be submitted electronically, as well as detailed information related to the Stickle Road and Highway 97 Intersection Improvements. Of the 120 feedback forms, **49** were received online.

3.5.3 Open House

234 people attended a public open house on May 26, 2016. The display boards were provided to attendees in print form, and also displayed around the room, where Ministry team members were available to answer questions. Attendees were encouraged to fill out the feedback form during or after the session.

4. Engagement Results

4.1 FEEDBACK FORM

The following are results from the **120 feedback forms received** at the open houses, online, and by mail.

Not all respondents answered every question.

1A. Please indicate your level of agreement with this revised design for the Stickle Road and Highway 97 Improvement Project.

Level of agreement (118 responses)	Number of Respondents
Strongly agree	14
Somewhat agree	12
Neither agree nor disagree	2
Somewhat disagree	11
Strongly disagree	79

1B. Please provide reasons for your level of agreement (as indicated above):

Themes from reasons for level of agreement (112 responses)	Number of Mentions
1. Participants stated a preference for a triggered traffic light at the Highway 97 and Stickle Road intersection, voicing concerns that the proposed design does not include a traffic light.	72
2. Participants voiced concerns regarding negative environmental impacts resulting from the project, in particular the loss of the existing wetland habitats as a result of construction and the new design.	48
3. Participants noted general concern regarding the project.	46
4. Participants expressed concern regarding the proposed extension of 20th Street, stating that traffic will increase and disrupt residents on this street. Some participants commented that the new senior's complex at 20th Street and Deleenheer Road will be impacted, and that 20th Street will require additional maintenance resulting from increased traffic.	30
5. Participants commented that the proposed design will increase congestion, particularly in shopping areas and on 58th Street.	21
6. Participants requested a reduction in the Highway 97 speed limit around Vernon.	20
7. Participants voiced concern regarding the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, and the need for improved routes such as a pedestrian overpass.	16
8. Participants commented that they felt their opinions were not being considered.	16
9. Participants commented that the proposed project will negatively impact neighbourhoods, including increased truck traffic on residential streets.	16
10. Participants indicated general support for the project, including support for no traffic light.	11
11. Participants voiced concern regarding access northbound on Highway 97 from the Silver Star RV Park.	9
12. Participants requested an overpass or roundabout instead of the proposed design or a traffic light.	6

2. Please indicate how you would like to receive construction updates for the Stickle Road and Highway 97 Intersection Improvement Project. Please select all that apply:

Of **95** respondents who responded to this question:

- **44** requested *email updates*
- **22** selected *I do not want to receive construction updates*
- **17** requested *roadside changeable message boards*
- **12** requested *advertisements* in local papers
- **7** requested *social media updates* (Facebook, Twitter)
- **6** requested *website updates: www.gov.bc.ca/okanaganvalleycorridorprojects*
- **6** requested *mailed community notices*
- **4** requested updates through *local TV stations*
- **3** requested updates through *local radio*

3. Please provide any additional comments you may have regarding the Stickle Road and Highway 97 Intersection Improvement Project:

Themes from additional comments (60 responses)	Number of Mentions
1. Participants stated a preference for a triggered traffic light at the Highway 97 and Stickle Road intersection, voicing concerns that the proposed design does not include a traffic light.	24
2. Participants noted general concern regarding the project.	11
3. Participants indicated general support for the project, including support for no traffic light.	9
4. Participants voiced concerns regarding negative environmental impacts resulting from the project, in particular the loss of the existing wetland habitats as a result of construction and the new design.	8
5. Participants commented that they felt their opinions were not being considered.	7
6. Participants requested a reduction in the Highway 97 speed limit around Vernon.	7
7. Participants voiced concern regarding the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, and the need for improved routes such as a pedestrian overpass.	6

4.2 OPEN-ENDED SUBMISSIONS

28 individuals provided open-ended submissions through email and mail. The following key themes summarize open-ended feedback:

Themes from open-ended submissions (28 responses)	Number of Mentions
1. Participants stated a preference for a triggered traffic light at the Highway 97 and Stickle Road intersection, voicing concerns that the proposed design does not include a traffic light.	21
2. Participants noted general concern regarding the project.	15
3. Participants voiced concerns regarding negative environmental impacts resulting from the project, in particular the loss of the existing wetland habitats as a result of construction and the new design.	15
4. Participants expressed concern regarding increased traffic on 20th Street due to the proposed extension, commenting on its effect on residents of this street, including the senior's complex to be constructed on 20th Street and Deleenheer Road.	11
5. Participants commented that the proposed design will increase congestion, such as in shopping areas and on 58th Street.	10
6. Participants commented that the proposed project will negatively impact neighbourhoods, including increased truck traffic on residential streets.	9
7. Participants requested a reduction in the Highway 97 speed limit around Vernon.	6
8. Participants indicated general support for the project, including support for no traffic light.	5
9. Participants commented that they felt their opinions were not being considered.	5
10. Participants voiced concern regarding access northbound on Highway 97 from the Silver Star RV park.	5

