

B.C. on the Move: Engagement Meeting Notes

NOVEMBER 6, 2014

1:00PM

BURNS LAKE

ATTENDEES/AFFILIATION	Janice Nooski, Wet'suwet'en First Nation Shannon Haizimsque, Wet'suwet'en First Nation Cindi Ashe, Burns Lake Indian Band Chief Fred Sam, Nak'azdli Band
MOTI REPRESENTATIVES	Scott Maxwell, Acting Regional Manager Northern Region, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Carl Lutz, District Manager, Transportation, Bulkley-Stikine District, MoTI
NOTE TAKER	Selina Bull, Kirk and Co. Consulting Ltd.
KEY THEMES (3-6)	
1)	Highways: Participants expressed concerns with safety on Highway 16, especially as trucking traffic increases in the region. They agreed that there could be measures implemented that would improve safety on the corridor.
2)	Highways and side roads: Participants agreed that speed reader boards have had a positive impact on highway safety in the region and indicated that they would like to see that continue.
3)	Highways: Participants agreed that extra capacity on Highway 16 was needed to increase safety along the corridor.
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant from Burns Lake Indian Band noted that the main artery between Prince George and Prince Rupert (Highway 16) is heavily congested, especially between Vanderhoof and Prince George. The participant noted that with the port growing, traffic and safety hazards (especially arising from the heavy trucking traffic) will only get worse unless there is something done to address these challenges.
MOVING FORWARD – STRATEGIES	
1)	Moving People and Goods Safely and Reliably
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief of the Nak'azdli Band noted that the band does not receive enough funding to maintain the roads on reserve. A participant from Burns Lake Band stressed safety concerns on the Highway 16 corridor, especially with increasing truck traffic and port activity in Prince Rupert. She inquired as to whether MoTI had plans to four-lane the corridor to deal with congestion and safety. The Chief of the Nak'azdli band agreed with these safety concerns along Highway 16, and noted that the highway was particularly bad in the Bednesti area. A participant from Burns Lake Band noted that the passing lanes that have been added are good but that they are not having a great impact on her safety concerns. A participant from Wet'suwet'en First Nation noted a concern with the apparent difference in road maintenance and plowing standards between different districts, for example, between Bednesti and Vanderhoof. The participant inquired if there were different maintenance standards for different areas. Scott Maxwell noted that there are different contractors and different micro-climates along Highway 16 which could account for apparently different maintenance standards. A participant from Wet'suwet'en First Nation indicated a pedestrian safety concern for the community because Highway 16 divides it. The participant noted that it was dangerous for children to cross the highway and expressed an interest in starting the process to see if a pedestrian crossing could be arranged. Participants agreed that speed reader boards had made a good impact in the region and that they would like to see safety to increase through these measures. A participant from Wet'suwet'en First Nation noted a safety concern with signage visibility. The participant indicated that often the signs are not large enough to be easily legible for older drivers.
2)	Growing the Economy
3)	Connecting and Strengthening Communities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief of the Nak'azdli Band noted a concern that there is not enough space on the roads for pedestrians or cyclists. The participant inquired whether roads are widened when they are upgraded. The Chief of the Nak'azdli Band inquired as to where First Nations fit into the plan in terms of isolated communities. This participant indicated a concern with the alternate access route (North Germansen Road, a Forest Service Road), which has occasionally been shut down due to the bad state of the road.
4)	Maximizing Collaboration and Investment with Partners and Stakeholders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief of the Nak'azdli Band inquired which Ministry designates roads. Scott Maxwell noted that MoTI is independent and that a road is either maintained by MoTI or by Forestry.
TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS	

<u>Wet'suwet'en First Nation:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant from Wet'suwet'en First Nation indicated a need for an expansion of the Burns Lake Airport in order to cut down on unnecessary travel.
<u>Nak'azdli Band:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief of the Nak'azdli Band indicated that safety would be improved on Highway 16 if there were more pull-out opportunities (not necessarily rest-stops, but somewhere simply to pull off the road).
<u>Regional:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants agreed that improving safety on the Highway 16 corridor, especially as heavy trucking traffic increases, was vital to their communities.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/DISCUSSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief of the Nak'azdli Band noted a concern with the construction of the new road between Fort St James and MacKenzie. He indicated that he thought the base material might be acid rock.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In response to participants' concerns about maintenance and plowing of certain sections of Highway 16, Scott Maxwell noted that the entire corridor had been reclassified as a "Class A" highway.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant from Wet'suwet'en First Nation inquired whether any key corridors had already been identified for improvements in this process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant from Wet'suwet'en First Nation asked what the distinction was between road maintenance classes. Scott Maxwell noted that main distinctions are simply response time and frequency of patrols. Class A has max accumulation of 4 centimeters. Other is how often they have to patrol the road.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant from Wet'suwet'en First Nation inquired as to funding allocation for this plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief of the Nak'azdli Band asked when there would be any reporting back. Scott Maxwell indicated that the plan is expected to come out in early 2015.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant from Wet'suwet'en First Nation noted a concern with signage at Priestly Hill on Highway 16, namely that occasionally drivers try to pass in passing lanes that are actually for the traffic in the other direction. The participant noted that occasionally the signs are covered in snow.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant from Wet'suwet'en First Nation asked who monitors Drive BC webcams and whether the Ministry was considering placing more throughout the corridor. Carl Lutz indicated that the main purpose of the webcams was to allow the public, as well as the maintenance contractors, to see the road conditions, and noted that the Ministry has added 6 or 7 new webcams in the district recently. Participants expressed general interest in the Drive BC website.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief of the Nak'azdli Band asked whether the maintenance contractors are subjected to yearly performance evaluations.