

B.C. on the Move: Engagement Meeting Notes

NOVEMBER 14, 2014

12:30 P.M.

CHILLIWACK

ATTENDEES/AFFILIATION	Samantha Peters, Chawathil First Nation Band
MOTI REPRESENTATIVES	Renée Mounteney, Deputy Director South Coast Region, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Ashok Bhatti, District Manager, Transportation, Lower Mainland District, MoTI
NOTE TAKER	Christel Guenette, Kirk & Co. Consulting Ltd.
KEY THEMES (3-6)	
1)	Highways and side roads: The participant expressed the need for improvements to shoulder widths to improve safety to pedestrians and cyclists, and to accommodate parking along the road.
2)	Highways: The participant noted the need for lighting along Highway 7
3)	Highways: The participant expressed the importance of protecting and improving the fish habitat along the Highway.
4)	Transit: It was noted that interconnectivity to communities via transit is important to allow residents to seek employment or access services in bigger city centres.
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES	
MOVING FORWARD – STRATEGIES	
1)	Moving People and Goods Safely and Reliably
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant noted that a number of residents walk and cycle along Highway 7. Motorists park along the highway to access the river and recreation affecting the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. By parking alongside the road, these cars also narrow the road for other motorists. Constructing a parking lot would take these cars off the roads, making it safer for all users. Chawathil's Chief mentioned lighting along Highway 7 around the bluffs (between Chawathil Administration Office and the Haag scale) would allow motorists to see debris that has fallen onto the road. This would prevent damaged tires, accidents and pileups. Scaling work could also be done at this location. The participant noted that bridges in the region do not always have pedestrian or cyclist lanes and that oftentimes, people have been hit walking along the highway bridges. This is especially challenging at the Hope, BC sign where tourists will walk over to take pictures. The participant noted that Ross Road alignment needs reconfiguration. An on/off ramp would assist motorists in accessing Highway 1. The Chief's comments were conveyed regarding building a pedestrian overpass over Highway 1 to keep pedestrians and children coming home from school from crossing the highway.
2)	Growing the Economy
3)	Connecting and Strengthening Communities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant noted that community members regularly use the bridge to walk or cycle into Hope. Tourists and/or cyclists will park at Seabird Island and cycle to Hope and back. Accommodations are needed to ensure these people can travel to Hope safely. Chawathil's Chief had conveyed the importance of bus service to Hope to connect residents to the rest of the Fraser Valley. This would help enable residents to gain employment in bigger centers and to have access to services there.
4)	Maximizing Collaboration and Investment with Partners and Stakeholders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant noted that when Highway 7 was first constructed, culverts and infrastructure to allow for drainage and water connectivity were installed. In recent years there has been a loss of fish habitat due to the development of Highway 7 and CP Rail. Chawathil would like to see environmental initiatives to return the water connectivity and return fish bearing streams back to being fish bearing. Chawathil would like to see formal work done to improve drainage systems that would be friendly to fish and their habitat. The participant noted that Chawathil has a severe case of Japanese Knotweed growing on MoTI's right of way. An initiative has been created to engage with the community to work on control, management and eradication of the knotweed. An integrated management committee has been formed between First Nation, non-profit organizations and the province. Part of the initiative includes reintroducing native plants to the area. MoTI has committed \$1,000 to the project but additional funds will be needed to complete the plan. The participant noted that Chawathil owns a gravel pit which could be utilized by MoTI either by utilizing the gravel or as a depository for material extracted by MoTI while working on roads.
TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR	

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widening of highway shoulders to ensure the safety of pedestrians and motorists 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building a positive relationship with the province to understand priorities and work towards common goals 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lighting along Highway 7 around the bluff between the Chawathil Administration Office and the Haag scale to ensure motorists can see debris that may have fallen on the road. 	
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/DISCUSSION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant noted that the Band would appreciate a written action plan developed to address issues discussed at this engagement meeting. The participant stressed the importance of receiving a formal response of things discussed during the meeting in order to be accountable to the community. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant noted that this was an opportunity for the province and the Band to enhance their relationship and would like to continue to engage with the province to continue enhancing their relationship. This could be seen through a formal written agreement, development of communication protocols and commitments to understand the priorities of the Band and Province in working towards common goals. This is a priority for the community. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant noted that improving relations between the First Nation and the government in the areas of safety, infrastructure improvements and the environment are a priority to Chawathil. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant explained the process of using Bocashi products to treat Japanese Knotweed. Bocashi is a product that works like yogurt. It is a culture that breaks down the root. It acts like compost and is heat activated and thus works well in late spring and early summer. It's a natural way to control the roots without contaminating the ground or water. Chawathil is currently waiting for consent from the community to proceed. The biggest barrier to proceeding is funding. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renée Mounteney noted that scaling crews do work on an annual basis. They have the usual rock faces that need scaling that are addressed first. Follow up may be required to evaluate areas not normally scaled. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A subsequent meeting to allow for Chawathil's Chief and Council to participate in the discussion was requested. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant noted that budgets for upcoming plans could be found in the MoTI service plans. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant expressed interest in synergizing with the federal government on projects and asked how this could be initiated. Renée directed the participant to the Build Canada website in order to apply for funding through there. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant noted that partnerships with smaller communities were important to allow equal access to all. 	