

B.C. on the Move: Engagement Meeting Notes

NOVEMBER 19, 2014

2:30 PM

MERRITT

ATTENDEES/AFFILIATION	Heather Fader, Shackan Indian Band Peter Hilton, Upper Nicola Band Brian Holmes, Upper Nicola Band Chief Percy Joe, Shackan Indian Band Chief Harvey McLeod, Upper Nicola Band Chief Lee Spahan, Coldwater Indian Band
MOTI REPRESENTATIVES	Paula Cousins, District Manager, Thompson Nicola District Office, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Brent McDonald, Area Manager and District Development Services, MoTI
NOTE TAKER	Carrie Peacock, Kirk & Co. Consulting Ltd.
KEY THEMES:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Highways: Participants expressed safety concerns regarding an increase in truck traffic on Highway 5A between Merritt and Kamloops, and requested trucks be banned from the route. 2) Highways and side roads: Participants expressed safety concerns regarding the transportation of dangerous goods on roads through their communities. If a truck should tip over, the dangerous cargo would contaminate the area and the adjacent watershed. 3) Highways and side roads: Participants requested better enforcement of traffic using Highway 1, Highway 8 and Coldwater Road, during Coquihalla closures. These roads are not designed to handle the heavy truck traffic volumes. Better communication and improvements are needed to support the traffic. 4) Highways: Participants requested a designated suitable chain-up area on the Coquihalla (at Box Canyon). Truckers are currently installing chains on the highway. 5) Trucking: Participants requested increasing CVSE officers' patrol of trucks, and expressed concerns regarding the potential deregulation of the trucking industry. 6) Transportation planning: Participants confirmed that First Nations want to be more involved in highway projects (and possible employment opportunities). 	
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic and safety implications of Coquihalla Highway closures on communities are concerning. • Enforcing regulations related to commercial truck traffic and truck cargo is an ongoing challenge. 	
MOVING FORWARD – STRATEGIES	
1) Moving People and Goods Safely and Reliably	
Coldwater Indian Band:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Spahan requested something be done to improve the tight corners leading up to the very narrow Kingsville Bridge. Two semis collided there. Paula Cousins, MoTI, confirmed that the RCMP had been asked to increase traffic speed patrols near the bridge on Coldwater Road. • Chief Spahan expressed concerns about uncertainty related to who was in charge of the scene of the last bus incident. Traffic was diverted through Kingsville. The highway was shut down in both directions. The participant noted they had requested permanent signs to reduce speed limits through the community. The previous accident involved a lumber truck and animal part truck, and the cargo tipped into the creek. The participant noted the community's requests to be compensated were ignored. Paula Cousins noted her understanding was that Coldwater had discussed traffic control issues with the local MOTI representative. Closing a highway in both directions would have been a last resort. She agreed to follow-up with the local representative on the issues raised and a MoTI representative would contact the Chief. • Chief Spahan noted that after the last bus crash, traffic was diverted through Coldwater. Traffic was so bad that residents could not even turn through the traffic line up to get home. The Chief noted the police were called but did not respond. The Chief noted that trucks are supposed to be banned from the area, but no one is stopping them. Paula Cousins noted that traffic control should be set up after an incident. She agreed to ask someone to come speak with the Chief about the issues raised. Secondary issues from diverting traffic after a major incident were not always carefully considered. • Chief Spahan referenced an incident in the summer in which a truck carrying scrap metal (and engines) tipped into the adjacent swamp. The on-site environmental clean-up crew suspected that oil and antifreeze leaked from the engines in the scrap metal load. The Chief requested a follow-up report on the incident. Paula Cousins, agreed to follow up. 	
Shackan Indian Band:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant from the Shackan Indian Band expressed concerns regarding road closures on Highway 8, which often diverted truck traffic through the community. She questioned what could be done to address the road closures. Paula Cousins confirmed that when the Coquihalla closed, traffic moved to Highways 1 and 8. In the event a lengthy closure is anticipated, a CVSE officer will be sent out to patrol. Backup corridors are not designed for high volumes. She confirmed that increased CVSE presence could be requested, as/when needed. • Chief Joe expressed concerns regarding traffic speeding on Highway 8, in areas where speeds should not exceed 80 km/hr. From the Lower Nicola there are very few areas to pass. The community is considering not allowing through traffic. There is no right of way through Shackan Reserve. Paula Cousins acknowledged the issues raised, noting that efforts would be made to address them. The RCMP could be asked to pick up enforcement of traffic speeds when the Coquihalla traffic is diverted to Highway 8. 	

- Chief Joe noted that two large trucks had difficulty getting past each other at a narrow corner in the community. As rail and road were involved at the corner, agreement would be needed from DFO, MOTI and CP Rail to make an improvement. Paula Cousins noted that it would be costly to straighten the corner out.
- Chief Joe expressed concerns regarding the increase in speed on the Coquihalla, noting that people are speeding at 140 km/h. Paula Cousins indicated that if there is an increase in incidents, the province would reassess the speed limit increase. Ms. Cousins noted that the average speed limit was 127 km/h before the change, and this has not changed. People need to be encouraged to adjust their speed to current road conditions. The Province committed to a variable speed limit – at Snowshed Hill and the Summit, speed limits will be based on road conditions and can be changed as needed.
- Chief Joe noted that, for trucks, speed is more likely the issue to monitor, rather than weight.
- Chief Joe requested chain-up areas be added on the Coquihalla. More passing lanes and pullouts may also be needed at some locations. Paula Cousins noted that a larger chain up area is being considered.

Upper Nicola Band:

- Participants from the Upper Nicola Band confirmed that the community is very concerned regarding the transportation of dangerous goods, and is communicating with CVSE. Speed reader boards have been set up at Nicola and Quilchena. Paula Cousins invited representatives to let MoTI representatives know if they needed CVSE presence near their community.
- Participants from the Upper Nicola Band expressed concerns regarding the increase in truck traffic on Highway 5A, noting that they seem to be avoiding the Coquihalla to reduce fuel costs or avoid brake checks. The Highway 5A route passes through the community, in places where there are children just a few meters from the road. Paula Cousins noted that data suggested under 10% of trucks travelling between Merritt and Kamloops use Highway 5A. The CVSE group monitors truck traffic, and MoTI has been piloting the use of a portable weigh scale to weigh trucks.
- Participants from the Upper Nicola Band expressed concerns regarding the transportation of dangerous goods through the community. If a truck tipped over, the cargo could be a concern for contamination to the community and the adjacent watershed.
- Participants from the Upper Nicola Band noted that their office received incident reports of accidents on Highway 5A. The community voiced its concerns on the use of Highway 5A, and the transport of oil or gas. Eliminating access to truckers on 5A could be considered, however the community will continue to encourage government to communicate. It would be helpful to know when highway maintenance projects are being done. Paula Cousins confirmed that the use of roads for “oil and gas” transport was targeted in the north east. The Rural Highway and Safety Review was released in July 2014 and could be provided, upon request. The review prompted some new initiatives including new signage indicating slow traffic to keep right. Efforts are being made to restrict trucks to the right two lanes of the Coquihalla. She acknowledged concerns regarding changes to commercial trucking regulations, noting that the province was reviewing permitting requirements.
- Participants from the Upper Nicola Band noted that enhancement to Highway 5A should have made traffic movements safer. Instead the highway has only encouraged more truck use.
- Participants from the Upper Nicola Band questioned how much is spent annually on highway safety and enforcement through CVSE. There should be more safety campaigns arranged, and a greater CVSE presence. Paula Cousins explained that the investment in infrastructure is different from operating budgets. When the Coquihalla has storms, the CVSE goes out to ensure chains are used. There has been success in the Kamloops area in keeping CVSE numbers at the current level. CVSE does one large provincial road check each year in Hope. The local CVSE does “fit campaigns” once a month in the area (they bring in inspectors to focus on a specific issue such as load security, brakes, etc.). A statistics report of the CVSE campaigns can be emailed to the band, upon request.
- Participants from the Upper Nicola Band questioned if MoTI was considering a user-pay strategy. For example, tolls were initially on the Coquihalla, and the ferry system remains user paid. A lot of highways in Europe are tolled.
- Participants from the Upper Nicola Band questioned if the MoTI had a plan in the event of a dangerous goods spill. Paula Cousins, MoTI, noted that every carrier is required to have an emergency response spill plan. If there is a dangerous good involved in a highway incident, Ministry of Environment brings in regional experts who attend the scene with specific kits and devices. The carrier is also required to have the appropriate kits.
- Participants from the Upper Nicola Band questioned if user fees were part of the transportation strategy going forward. Paula Cousins confirmed that user fees would be a higher level political decision.
- Participants from the Upper Nicola Band questioned why this community was not notified when work was done on the road from Stump Lake. Paula Cousins agreed to look into this.
- Participants from the Upper Nicola Band suggested more pullouts or passing lanes on Cardio Hill southbound leaving Kamloops, for opportunities to pass.
- Participants from the Upper Nicola Band suggested that extra pullouts are good for safety. As Douglas Lake Road is a Class 3 road (and a school bus route), the snow should be cleared twice daily before school bus use. A few times when there has been a lot of snow, it hasn't been plowed. Paula Cousins confirmed that Class 3 roads were typically plowed after 6 or 8 cms of snow had fallen.
- Chief McLeod confirmed the community's concerns regarding the truck traffic on Highway 5A, noting that a solution is to eliminate the truck traffic. If traffic is going to expand from east to west, trucks should be directed to use highways built to accommodate them.
- Chief McLeod noted that although the community has an emergency preparedness plan, it needs to be updated. If there is a catastrophe – access in and out is a concern. If anything happened to the highway between the community and Quilchena, evacuation would be a problem.
- Chief McLeod noted that Glimpse Lake roads are getting rutted. Citizens between Merritt and Kamloops have traffic and truck concerns. There are too few places to pass. Reports from MOTI indicate accident rates are declining. The community is concerned about traffic going from Quilchena to Douglas Lake and Kamloops.
- Chief McLeod noted that traffic on Highway 5A has been a longstanding concern of the community. The route has been discussed at length with the MoTI and the RCMP. Counter measures need to be considered to encourage traffic to slow down and respect lives. The trucks carrying dangerous cargo should not be allowed on Highway 5A. Oversize trucks should not be allowed either.
- Chief McLeod questioned where the Province's workplans for road improvements, bridge improvements, resurfacing, realignments, pullouts etc. could be found online. Communities wanted to know what was going on and to provide feedback on work scheduled.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief McLeod strongly requested on behalf of his community and other residents between Merritt and Kamloops, that trucks be eliminated from Highway 5A. 	
2) Growing the Economy	
Upper Nicola Band: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief McLeod expressed concerns regarding a focus on the movement of goods from point A to B. Questions were raised regarding the changes to commercial regulations, referenced in the discussion guide. 	
3) Connecting and Strengthening Communities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments provided. 	
4) Maximizing Collaboration and Investment with Partners and Stakeholders	
Coldwater Indian Band: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Spahan requested further opportunities to comment on the 10-Year Transportation Plan. Paula Cousins confirmed that the public engagement period was scheduled to conclude December 12, 2014, as the Minister has stated the plan is being prepared for early spring 2015. Additional comments could be submitted in the survey, online or via email. 	
Upper Nicola Band: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants from the Upper Nicola Band noted that while some of the VSA contractors are good, some are challenging to work with. For example, they mowed the roads even after they were asked to postpone mowing while weeds on the roadside were being treated. Paula Cousins confirmed that VSA's contracts were in place for another four years. She further agreed to ask the local MOTI representative to contact the participants from the Upper Nicola Band to discuss concerns. 	
TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A designated suitable chain-up area is needed on the Coquihalla (at Box Canyon). 	
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/DISCUSSION	
Coldwater Indian Band: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Spahan requested an opportunity to meet with the local MoTI Representative (Donalda Ritchie) to discuss traffic issues impacting the community. Paula Cousins agreed to pass along the request. 	
Shackan Indian Band: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants from the Shackan Indian Band requested improvements in communications to band communities. Paula Cousins questioned if the Shackan Indian Band was on VSA's email notification list, and invited the participant to email them directly to confirm contact information. 	
Upper Nicola Band: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants from the Upper Nicola Band requested an opportunity to meet with the local MoTI Representative. Paula Cousins agreed to pass along the request. Chief McLeod commended the good relationship with MOTI, specifically on road safety and speed zones. MoTI discussed the community's concerns and recommendations on speed regulations through reserves (including at Douglas Lake and Quilchena). 	