

B.C. on the Move: Engagement Meeting Notes

OCTOBER 28, 2014

2:00 PM

PEMBERTON

ATTENDEES/AFFILIATION	Peter DeJong, Squamish-Lilloet Regional District Mike Furey, Regional Municipality of Whistler Susie Gimse, Squamish-Lilloet Regional District Joe Paul, Regional Municipality of Whistler Mike Richman, Village of Pemberton Mayor Nancy Wilhem-Morden, Regional Municipality of Whistler
MOTI REPRESENTATIVES	Renee Mounteney, Deputy Director South Coast Region, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Ashok Bhatti, District Manager, Lower Mainland, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Graeme Schimpf, Operations Manager, Lower Mainland District, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI)
NOTE TAKER	Christel Guenette, Kirk & Co. Consulting Ltd.
KEY THEMES (3-6)	
1)	Capacity/congestion: Participants noted that protecting capacity on roads was important to accommodate the increase in visitor traffic to the region.
2)	Transportation options: Participants noted that alternative forms of transportation were important to enable residents to access work opportunities in all communities.
3)	Cycling: Participants stressed the importance of addressing safety concerns to accommodate cyclists on the roads.
4)	Highways and side roads/Transportation options: Participants noted that rehabilitation of roads is important be able to accommodate alternative forms of transportation (i.e. continuation of the highway improvements from Whistler and Pemberton, maintenance of the corridor).
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted the current rail system is inadequate for servicing the Sea to Sky corridor. One participant noted that the current transit system in Pemberton does not accommodate shift workers working in Whistler. One participant noted that revenue from the transit system is not enough to sustain it, and there are limited revenue streams to offset the cost of transit. Connecting rural areas in the regional district. There is limited broadband in these areas which forces people to commute to work. Participants noted that Whistler is seeing an increase in visitors. Highway maintenance and capacity are ongoing challenges in the region. Participants noted that increased development along the Sea to Sky Highway increases congestion. One participant noted that logging trucks have put excessive demand on secondary road infrastructure. Reliability of the Pemberton Airport is an issue, as crosswinds limit the ability of many planes to land. Lengths of trains through town are becoming an issue, as they block traffic between commercial and residential sections of town and hinder emergency responders accessing these areas. Participants noted there are access issues for pedestrians and cyclists with respect to CN Railway. Participants suggested increased congestion could result in a decline of visitors to Whistler.
MOVING FORWARD – STRATEGIES	
1)	Moving People and Goods Safely and Reliably <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One participant suggested dividing the remainder of the Sea to Sky Highway and widening the shoulders to accommodate alternative modes of transportation. Participants highlighted the need for effective and regular painting of highway lines. Participants noted that bike lanes are required throughout Pemberton so school children can move safely through the community.
2)	Growing the Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that more competitive air access to YVR is necessary. Participants suggested making it easier for international visitors to visit Whistler by resolving visa issues and allowing competitive airlines access to YVR. Participants would like to see continued highway improvements north of Whistler. Pemberton has seen an increase in tourism traffic through Ironman competitions and has become a popular destination for mountain and road cycling. Participants suggested increasing shoulder widths throughout the Squamish-Lilloet Regional District to accommodate cyclists.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants suggested and discussed the development of an area airport.
3) Connecting and Strengthening Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants highlighted a need to improve connection between Pemberton and Kamloops. Participants noted that traffic light sequencing at Britannia Beach would improve the flow of traffic on Fridays northbound, and Sundays southbound. A crossing for pedestrians and cyclists along CN Railway lines is needed. Participants highlighted the need for increased regional transit.
4) Maximizing Collaboration and Investment with Partners and Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants would like to see passenger rail from the Lower Mainland to Pemberton through to Lilloet. Participants suggested revising regulations for private bus services as an alternative to BC Transit. One participant suggested relocating the Pemberton Airport. This may be a partnership with Mt. Currie to find an area that could handle expansion and bigger planes.
TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS	
Village of Pemberton:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus or rail service from Whistler with multiple runs throughout the day and evening. Bike lane from Pemberton to Whistler and roads that accommodate bikes along Meadow Road to D'Arcy.
Squamish-Lilloet Regional District:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transit system between Squamish and Whistler. A transit system that makes transportation attainable and affordable. Improvements to Highways 12, 40, and 99.
Regional Municipality of Whistler:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging more airlines into YVR with a flight to Pemberton Airport for international visitors to access Whistler. Roundabouts along Highway 99.
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/DISCUSSION	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Mayor of Whistler expressed concern regarding the number of proposed developments along the Sea to Sky Highway between Horseshoe Bay and Whistler. As MoTI plays a part in approving subdivisions, the Mayor was concerned these developments would increase highway capacity and congestion. A participant from Whistler expressed concern regarding climate change and greenhouse gas emissions created by people commuting to Vancouver. A participant from Whistler expressed appreciation for the signage along the Sea to Sky Highway, which assists people traveling to the community. A participant from the Squamish-Lilloet Regional District questioned whether Official Community Plans and growth strategies were taken into consideration prior to the Sea to Sky Highway expansion. Renee Mounteney responded that the local OCPs were understood and provided factors that infrastructure expansion was based on. A participant noted that Whistler has become a popular destination for cyclists to train leading up to events in the area. A participant from Pemberton noted that the sport of cycling is growing and suggested that MoTI needs to recognize the impact this will have on the roads. A participant from Pemberton requested that signage in English and First Nations languages continue all the way along the Sea to Sky Highway. One participant noted that there is a lack of cooperation between CN Railway and local governments in providing access throughout the district, particularly north of Pemberton. A participant from the Squamish-Lilloet Regional District questioned why there has been an increase in traffic going into West Vancouver. A participant from the Ministry responded that this is being examined to determine what is contributing to the congestion. Participants from Whistler and the Squamish-Lilloet Regional District noted they would be forwarding a written submission. One participant noted that events double the amount of traffic to the area. MoTI needs to monitor this and work with communities to manage the impacts of event traffic. One participant noted that increasing highways to three lanes does not address climate change and population growth. Alternative modes of transportation need to be analyzed to move people away from using their cars. One participant stressed the importance of moving cars off the highway and encouraging people to use alternative modes of transportation.