

# B.C. on the Move: Engagement Meeting Notes

NOVEMBER 6, 2014

9:30AM

BURNS LAKE

<b>ATTENDEES/AFFILIATION</b>	CAO Clinton Mauthe, Village of Fraser Lake Jolene Webb, Village of Fraser Lake Mayor Dwayne Lindstrom, Village of Fraser Lake Councillor Joan Burdeniuk, District of Fort St. James Councillor Russ Gingrich, District of Fort St. James Mayor Rob MacDougall, District of Fort St. James Mayor Luke Stimbold, Village of Burns Lake Councillor John Illes, Village of Burns Lake Deputy Mayor Tom Liversidge, Village of Granisle
<b>MOTI REPRESENTATIVES</b>	Scott Maxwell, Acting Regional Manager Northern Region, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Carl Lutz, District Manager, Transportation, Bulkley-Stikine District, MoTI
<b>NOTE TAKER</b>	Selina Bull, Kirk and Co. Consulting Ltd.
<b>KEY THEMES (3-6)</b>	
1) <b>Transit:</b> Participants agreed that public transportation into, out of, and within their communities was critical to residents' well-being. The District of Fort St James and the Village of Granisle were particularly concerned with being able to provide transportation for residents to access medical services.	
2) <b>Highways and side roads:</b> Participants agreed that the growth of the resource industry represented both a challenge and an opportunity. There were concerns that industry has increased the traffic on, and damage to, the roads but participants agreed there was the potential to work with industry to help cover such costs.	
3) <b>Highways:</b> Participants expressed a need to upgrade parts of Highways 16 and 27, to add extra capacity through passing lanes, and to add extra width at certain points.	
<b>CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The District of Fort St. James and the Village of Granisle noted that a major challenge for their communities was accessing medical services. They noted that their populations are aging and in order to be able to age in place, seniors need to be able to get transportation to medical services in Prince George. This is a struggle because many of the seniors do not drive or do not wish to drive in bad winter conditions. Participants noted that the Northern Health bus service is inadequate, as it only provides a short window for people to attend appointments.</li> <li>Many participants felt that the resource sector's increased activity was a challenge for the region in terms of traffic, safety, and increased maintenance costs.</li> </ul>	
<b>MOVING FORWARD – STRATEGIES</b>	
1) <b>Moving People and Goods Safely and Reliably</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The District of Fort St. James indicated that a prime concern was the main bridge going into Fort St. James, which is just two lanes and has no space for pedestrians. The District of Fort St James has tried to get pedestrians off the roads in the area because of the safety issues with heavy and wide trucking traffic, but that there is no option for pedestrians other than to walk across the bridge.</li> <li>Participants agreed that speed reader boards have had a positive impact in the area and that they would like more installed in the area so that there are two for each community (one in each traffic direction).</li> <li>The District of Fort St James indicated that the fibre trucks passing through the community on Highway 27 are damaging the road, and causing bad potholes. A participant from the District of Fort St. James also noted that it needs repaving and that it cannot just be an easy or cheap fix. He also noted that Highway 27 is too narrow (especially at Dog Creek) and the shoulders in adverse conditions can be too soft. The District of Fort St James indicated that if the highway could be widened it would improve safety.</li> <li>A participant from the Village of Fraser Lake indicated that Highway 16 from Prince Rupert to Prince George is seeing increased trucking traffic and fatal accidents. The District of Fort St. James noted specifically that the highway between Vanderhoof and Fraser Lake is bad and has some critical points that need upgrading.</li> <li>A participant from the District of Fort St. James indicated that highway safety would be improved if the line paint actually stayed on the road.</li> </ul>	
2) <b>Growing the Economy</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Village of Burns Lake noted that it would create tourism growth and potentially resource opportunities if there were a road between Bella Coola and Kitimat.</li> <li>The District of Fort St James noted that fibre activity and traffic has increased a great deal, and it is adversely impacting the community. The District of Fort St James indicated that the traffic is making the road through town even worse.</li> </ul>	
3) <b>Connecting and Strengthening Communities</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The District of Fort St. James noted that there is no public transport in the community, which is a challenge for the senior population who do not feel comfortable driving on bad roads and in wintery conditions. If residents have a medical appointment, Northern Health Bus service can be inflexible so making these appointments in Prince George. Fort St. James</li> </ul>	

<p>has created a seniors-helping-seniors-program, which is funded through grants and pleading. However, participants from the District of Fort St James noted that having to constantly worry and make grant applications for funding was a drain on their resources and meant that they could not plan their program properly.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The District of Fort St. James noted that MoTI should be looking at the unique needs and strengths of each community in order to provide more adequately for the province's needs. The one-size-fits-all approach like the Northern Health bus service does not work for all communities.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A participant from the Village of Granisle noted that the community has a very similar problem to Fort St James and expressed interest in establishing a similar service as in Fort St. James or coordinating to work Granisle into the existing Fort St James program.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Mayor of Fort St. James noted that if residents are going to be able to age in their own communities, there have to be services available to them.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A participant from the Village of Burns Lake noted that it would be beneficial to have a bicycle path between Burns Lake and the South Side Ferry. The Village of Burns Lake indicated that a lot of it has already been built by ATVers and that such a trail would be heavily used by the communities. A participant from the Village of Fraser Lake indicated that there is a CN grant available for such a project.</li> </ul>	
<p>4) Maximizing Collaboration and Investment with Partners and Stakeholders</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The District of Fort St. James expressed a strong interest in partnering with BC Transit or another government agency to help fund its seniors' transportation program or similar programs. The District of Fort St. James indicated that the government should develop programs that are not just a "one-size-fits-all" approach, but are unique and meets needs of each community. Participants felt it was difficult to work with Northern Health.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The District of Fort St. James indicated that it is looking for long-term funding partnerships for their seniors' transportation program. There is a need for stability of funding so that resources can be directed towards running the program efficiently instead of chasing money constantly.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Village of Burns Lake indicated that the community is interested in partnering with the Regional District and with MoTI to repave the airport runway. The Village of Burns Lake would be willing to put down the majority of funds if they could gain help from MoTI for paving.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A participant from the District of Fort St. James noted that the community is looking to bring industry and MoTI together to look at sections of road that are heavily impacted by industry. If industry is inactive, the road is not well maintained, but residents of the area still use it. The maintenance of industry roads is undertaken by the forest service, but it is inadequate, but the current split of jurisdiction is not working well. The participant noted that industry needs to be a part of the solution, as it will aid in economic development.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A participant from the Village of Burns Lake inquired as to whether MoTI would approach regional districts to contract out maintenance. The Village of Burns Lake indicated that it would make more sense because the regional district/municipality gets tax revenue from subdivisions but MoTI is required to maintain roads.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS</b></p>	
<p>Village of Fraser Lake:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Village of Fraser Lake indicated that the top transportation priority was to carefully consider Highway 16 between Prince George and Prince Rupert.</li> <li>The Village of Fraser Lake noted that another priority for this area was airports, and indicated that while airports belong to municipalities, the municipalities do not have enough funds to run them.</li> </ul>	
<p>District of Fort St. James</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The District of Fort St. James noted a main concern with funding for their seniors' transportation service.</li> <li>The District of Fort St. James indicated that adding passing lanes on Highway 16, and generally widening highways (including the bridge into Fort St James) should be a priority.</li> <li>The District of Fort St. James also prioritized getting MoTI to work with industry and the community to upgrade or better maintain North Germansen Road.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/DISCUSSION</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A participant from the Village of Granisle inquired whether BC on the Move will only address highways and rail, or whether it would also deal with transportation issues like bus service. Scott Maxwell noted that the transit program is under MoTI's portfolio and that this process is to gather feedback on both policy and direct investment.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A participant from the Village of Granisle inquired of Fort St. James how their volunteer drivers for the seniors' transportation program met liability requirements. A participant from Fort St James indicated that the volunteers are screened by the RCMP and have district insurance.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The District of Fort St James noted that seniors were considering taking over the health transportation program because they would be able to garner more funding as a non-profit.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants from Fort St James felt that their community was unduly shouldering Northern Health's responsibility.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A representative from Burns Lake noted that the area is transitioning into a more tourism-focused area, and so there is a need to look at the older bridges and culverts that do not support fish passage. This participant also indicated that there is a need to work with CN on this issue.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A participant from Fort St. James noted that speed reader boards would be more effective if the solar power worked better, as sometimes the signs are not illuminated.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A participant from Fort St. James inquired about whether the re-classification of Highway 16 would make a difference.</li> </ul>	

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There was general agreement that passing lanes in the area have made a positive impact and communities would like to see this work continue. One participant from Fraser Lake inquired whether it is easy to turn a 2-lane highway with passing lanes into a 4-lane highway.</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A participant from the Village of Burns Lake noted that rumble strips are beneficial on northern highways.</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A participant from the Village of Fraser Lake inquired who funds speed reader boards.</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A participant from the Village of Burns Lake noted that part of Fraser Lake road was costing Burns Lake \$50 000 in maintenance costs and Burns Lake would like to share some of the costs.</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A representative from Fort St James inquired about how detailed the plan will be. Scott Maxwell noted that short-term goals will be quite detailed and tangible, while medium- and long-term goals will be broader.</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A representative from the Village of Burns Lake noted that snow removal is important to the community.</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participants expressed appreciation for MoTI's cooperative attitude and for their good relationship.</li></ul>   |