

B.C. on the Move: Engagement Meeting Notes

NOVEMBER 19, 2014

11:00AM

CRANBROOK

ATTENDEES/AFFILIATION	Norma McDougall, Sparwood Chamber of Commerce Cal McDougall, Teck Coal, Mayor of Sparwood Corien Siedees, Fernie Chamber of Commerce
MOTI REPRESENTATIVES	Norm Parkes, Executive Director of Highways, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Jack Bennetto, District Manager, Transportation, Rocky Mountain District (MoTI)
NOTE TAKER	Carmen Bennett, Kirk & Co. Consulting Ltd.
KEY THEMES (3-6)	
1)	Highways: Participants expressed concerns with winter maintenance on highways in the region, particularly Highway 43 between Sparwood and Elkford.
2)	Cycling and pedestrians: Participants expressed that accommodating cycling and walking within and between communities (particularly Fernie and Sparwood) is a priority.
3)	Highway: Participants noted that the intersection of Highway 3 and 43 in Sparwood is a concern as traffic volumes and congestion continue to increase. Improvements to this intersection are needed to accommodate traffic flow.
4)	Highways/Tunnel: Participants noted that improvements to the Elko Tunnel are a priority and questioned whether there is an opportunity to address safety concerns here. This could include widening the tunnel, or implementing a warning signal when trucks are passing through.
5)	Highways: Participants noted that traffic on Highway 3 is on par with traffic on the Trans-Canada Highway, as Highway 3 is used more frequently as an alternate route when the Trans-Canada is closed.
6)	Transit: Participants noted that transit and other transportation alternatives within and between communities are necessary to accommodate a diverse and aging population.
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that a significant challenge in the region is related to traffic increases on Highway 3, noting that this is an alternate route to Highway 1 and traffic volumes are on par with the Trans-Canada Highway. Congestion and safety concerns are issues at key intersections in these communities.
MOVING FORWARD – STRATEGIES	
1)	Moving People and Goods Safely and Reliably
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One participant noted that the Ministry has done a great job over the years with improvements in this region, but there are still some areas in need of improvement. The participant noted that the highway between Sparwood and the Alberta border is a problem in terms of winter maintenance and truck traffic. There are limited passing lanes along this stretch. One participant noted that the intersection of Highways 3 and 43 in Sparwood is an issue, as the foundation is mud/clay, which is likely going to cause further construction delays and be a significant funding consideration. Participants noted that safety on Highway 43 from Sparwood north to Elkford is a challenge, as this is a problem area for snow removal and sees heavy traffic in the mornings. Participants noted that extreme weather conditions (rain followed by temperature drops) cause challenges for winter maintenance. Traffic volumes and road conditions are an issue, as many people commute on this road to the mines each morning. Participants noted that addressing the priority and the timing of snow removal is a necessary consideration, as it is not being maintained early enough or well enough. Participants noted that the Lizard Creek Bridge near the ski hill is a high priority, as this is the oldest and smallest bridge in Fernie and is in need of improvement or replacement. Participants noted there is a lot of traffic through the tunnel, and inquired whether there could be an opportunity for flashing lights or a warning signal when big trucks are passing through. Participants from Sparwood questioned whether there could be an opportunity to widen the tunnel, as it is currently dangerous. Participants agreed improvements to the tunnel are a priority in the region. One participant noted that the curvy rock cuts near the tunnel cause problems. The area does not get much sunlight, so icy road conditions are an issue, and wildlife is also a problem in this region. Participants noted that the passing lane coming out of the tunnel is too short, so drivers will speed up and then slow down when they get to the rock cuts, which causes further traffic problems and safety concerns. Participants noted that Highway 3 traffic is on par with traffic volumes on Highway 1 and this is increasing. Sparwood noted that adding a light at the intersection of Highway 3 and 43, as has been proposed, would cause significant traffic congestion and would be problematic for Sparwood. Norm Parkes noted that this would be assessed. Participants noted this is the main entrance into Sparwood, and is already problematic. More lanes could be added to limit congestion. One participant noted that there are 3 main entrances to Sparwood, but they are all bad. Fernie noted that a main priority is the turn off to the ski hill, which is dangerous in winter. It is a busy, slippery turn, which is

problematic in the winter.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that more passing lanes between Highway 3 and 93 south of Fernie are required. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fernie received a letter from the school district regarding an area where a flashing traffic signal is needed. Currently, a number of children are crossing the highway, often when they should not be. Norm Parkes responded that there will need to be clarification on what is required in order to address the issue. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants questioned what the progress is of the wildlife signals that have been proposed and where they might be located. 	
2) Connecting and Strengthening Communities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that cycling and walking trails are a focus in Fernie and Sparwood. Cycling and walking trails between communities in this region would be beneficial. There are some narrow shoulders, as well as the tunnel, which may not be conducive to cycling, but some improvements could be made to accommodate cyclists and cycling tourism. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fernie would like to see improvements to public transportation. The population is aging and reassessment of the transit system is required. 	
3) Maximizing Collaboration and Investment with Partners and Stakeholders	
TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS	
Sparwood:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted the intersection of Highway 3 and 43 in Sparwood is a priority, as congestion on Highway 43 is an increasing concern. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that winter maintenance on Highway 43 between Sparwood and Elkford is a concern and a priority. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that cycling and walking infrastructure is desirable within and between communities in the region. 	
Fernie:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fernie noted that the replacement of the Lizard Creek Bridge is a priority. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fernie noted that improvements to the main turnoff to the ski hill are needed in order to safely accommodate traffic. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fernie noted that safety issues related to congestion are a concern and more passing lanes are required on highways in the region. 	
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/DISCUSSION	