

B.C. on the Move: Engagement Meeting Notes

NOVEMBER 20, 2014

2:30PM

NELSON

| | |
|--|--|
| ATTENDEES/AFFILIATION | Stuart Nelson, Beaton Arms Crossing Association Earl Frerichs, Beaton Arms Crossing Association Shirley Kosiancic, Nakusp Chamber of Commerce Tom Thomson, Nelson Chamber of Commerce |
| MOTI REPRESENTATIVES | Norm Parkes, Executive Director of Highways, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Hugh Eberle, District Manager, West Kootenay District, MoTI Ryan Oakley, District Program Engineer, West Kootenay District, MoTI |
| NOTE TAKER | Carmen Bennett, Kirk & Co. Consulting Ltd. |
| KEY THEMES (3-6) | |
| 1) Bridges: Participants presented and discussed a business case for a fixed link crossing of Upper Arrow Lake to replace the ferry crossing, noting that this initiative would bring more people, goods and services to the region. The participants noted that the ferry is a hindrance to attracting industry. | |
| 2) Highways and side roads/Ferries: Participants noted that closures on Highway 1 affect the movement of goods in this region and impact the local economy. Participants noted that the ferry cannot handle the capacity generated by closures and peak travel times, which causes a bottleneck. | |
| 3) Airports: Participants expressed the importance of the Castlegar Airport to the region, noting that improvements to the airport that address reliability issues are a priority. | |
| 4) Highways: Participants suggested that Highway 3 is more important to this region than Highway 1, and that improvements should be focused on Highway 3. | |
| 5) Highways: Participants noted that improvements to Highway 33 are also a priority, as this is the main corridor connecting the region to the Okanagan. Connecting to the Okanagan is important for tourism and health care. | |
| CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that the ferry system poses challenges in the region and is a possible hindrance to economic development. Participants noted that the reliability of the Castlegar Airport is a regional problem. Participants noted that traffic congestion increases on Highway 3 when Highway 1 is closed, noting that improvements to Highway 3 are necessary. | |
| MOVING FORWARD – STRATEGIES | |
| 1) Moving People and Goods Safely and Reliably | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One participant noted that a number of areas that could be potential rest areas along the highway have been blocked with guard rails. One participant noted that trucking and rail compete with one another, and suggested there are potential opportunities for the government to play a role to show how the trucking industry can support the rail industry and vice versa. Norm Parkes responded that the Gateway Council largely serves that purpose, to facilitate discussions and interconnectedness between rail, air, ports and trucking sectors. One participant noted problems with the construction of widened shoulders, suggesting that it has been done poorly in some areas. One participant noted that chip trucks cause damage to the roads and questioned whether barging has been considered as an alternate way to transport chips. One participant noted that the Nakusp Chamber of Commerce supports improvements to the ferry system, because this affects the whole community from a business, tourism and residential perspective. | |
| 2) Growing the Economy | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some participants noted that the ferry is a hindrance to attracting industry to the region. One participant suggested that a fixed link crossing could attract people, industry and economic growth to the West Kootenay region. | |
| 3) Connecting and Strengthening Communities | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants representing the Beaton Arms Crossing Association presented a case for a fixed link to replace the ferry crossing of Upper Arrow Lake. The participants noted that they have been discussing a proposal with Columbia Power and Columbia Basin Trust. Participants noted that closures on Highway 1 affect the movement of goods, leading to significant economic impacts. Every time a closure happens, it impacts this valley because people use this as an alternate route. The participant noted the ferry cannot handle that capacity, causing a bottleneck with severe wait times. | |

| |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants expressed appreciation for the Ministry's work on providing a detailed estimate for a fixed link , but commented on some areas that noted seem overstated in terms of cost (for example, traffic signals, wildlife fencing and road widening). |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One participant noted that in the fall of 2010, the Columbia Basin Trust put money into the Nakusp and Area Development Board to determine what could be done in this region, and transportation was identified as a major issue impacting economic growth. Participants noted that the bottleneck at the ferry needs to be addressed. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant noted that the project has to originate with the Province, but there would likely be an opportunity for federal funding, as well as potential interest from Columbia Power. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant from Beaton Arms Crossing Association noted that it seems the valley has become more of a drain to the province now that there is no mining or major economy here, and noted that a project like this would bring nothing but prosperity through the region. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norm Parkes expressed appreciation for the work that has been put into this project, and noted it will be considered along with other projects and priorities as the ten-year transportation plan is developed. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One participant noted the importance of looking at this from a regional perspective. The participant noted that the Castlegar Airport is a significant priority in the region. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One participant noted the Highway 3 corridor is a priority, as well as improvements to Highway 33. The participant noted the Okanagan Valley is likely to be the major contributor to this region from a tourism perspective, and strengthening connections to the Okanagan are important. The participant suggested that Highway 3 is more important to this region than Highway 1. |
| 4) Maximizing Collaboration and Investment with Partners and Stakeholders |
| |
| TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For some participants, a priority is the development of a fixed link crossing of Upper Arrow Lake. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some participants noted a priority is to improve the reliability of air transportation in the region. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some participants noted improving highway corridors such as Highway 3, Highway 33 and Highway 1, is important for connecting communities, economic growth and |
| ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/DISCUSSION |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One participant noted it can be challenging for rural communities to compete with urban areas for infrastructure. |