

B.C. on the Move: Engagement Meeting Notes

NOVEMBER 20, 2014

8:30AM

TRAIL

ATTENDEES/AFFILIATION	Don Goulard, Trail Regional Airport Norm Casler, Trail & District Chamber of Commerce Terry Van Horn, Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation Jack McConnachie, North-South Highway Don Ashman, Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation/ AM Ford Sales Ltd. Mike Bosvert, AM Ford
MOTI REPRESENTATIVES	Norm Parkes, Executive Director of Highways, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Hugh Eberle, District Manager, West Kootenay District, MoTI
NOTE TAKER	Carmen Bennett, Kirk & Co. Consulting Ltd.
KEY THEMES (3-6)	
1) Transportation options: Participants noted that transportation and transit alternatives are a priority in this region, suggesting that rural transit systems should be different from urban models.	
2) Airports: Participants suggested that small airports are the best way to connect communities in B.C., noting that the Trail Regional Airport is in need of a runway extension.	
3) Goods Movement: Participants presented and discussed the case for a transportation corridor (road and rail) from Washington through this region, in order to transport goods from the U.S. through the interior and ultimately to the Port of Prince Rupert.	
4) Goods Movement: Participants highlighted the importance of southern B.C. as an important transportation corridor and urged the Ministry not to lose sight of this region.	
5) Cycling: Participants suggested that cycling trails are important for connecting communities in this region.	
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that topography in B.C. limits reliable road transportation, and that opportunities to invest in small air ports will contribute to reliability and economic growth. Participants noted that transportation alternatives are limited in this region. Some participants suggested that B.C.'s supply chains are vulnerable, and noted that the establishment of a North-South corridor from Washington State would increase efficiency, economic growth and reliability. 	
MOVING FORWARD – STRATEGIES	
1) Moving People and Goods Safely and Reliably	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that a second entrance to the hospital in Trail is needed. One participant recognized that in terms of reliability, there are not a lot of options for alternate routes in B.C. because the terrain is so challenging. Norm Parkes acknowledged that perhaps the priority in that case is to focus more on safety, in order to limit the impact of highway closures and to keep British Columbians safe. One participant acknowledged that terrain is challenging for both road and air transportation, and noted that small airports are a way to help grow the economy. The participant noted that Castlegar and Trail airports provide alternatives for transportation out of this region, taking congestion off the roads. Competition between these two airports has helped the aviation sector, and more investment in regional airports is necessary to increase competition and provide more transportation alternatives. One participant noted that a longer runway in Trail is necessary in order to maximize the number of flights and travelers. Weight restrictions are limited by runway length. The participant suggested that a mile of road takes a traveler one mile, while a mile of runway connects people to the world. Participants noted that airports are important, as it allows people and goods to move faster. Participants noted that in B.C., opportunities lie in aviation because topography limits other transportation options. One participant noted this is significant for people commuting to work in other areas. Participants also noted the importance of the Trail Airport due to its proximity to Red Mountain. One participant questioned whether there is a plan for the Waneta Bridge (oldest bridge in B.C.) and questioned whether there is an opportunity for replacement or expansion of this bridge, noting that this would make the trucking supply chain more efficient. One participant noted that the Waneta rail bridge is leaning and in need of rehabilitation. One participant noted that there are potential risk factors associated with the supply chain, given that rail lines are shared by rail companies, and if a rock slide causes a road or rail corridor to close, there are limited alternatives. The participant noted the supply chain is also vulnerable in the event of a natural disaster affecting Vancouver and Seattle. The participant suggested that a solution to this issue would be the establishment of a North-South transportation corridor through Waneta in Washington, in order to more efficiently connect with transportation corridors to northern B.C. The participant noted that the communications dark fibre on the coast between Seattle and Alaska needs to be moved and suggested an inland route for this fibre would assist the establishment of a transportation corridor. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that American partners want a more direct route to get commodities to Prince Rupert, and that a significant portion of investment for a new corridor would likely be on the American side of the border.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North-South Highway participants noted they have been attending sessions in the States regarding 395 North, noting that this highway effectively ends in Colville. Their proposal was to continue the highway through Trail, in order to connect with Highway 3 and provide a more direct route to B.C.'s ports. The participant noted that trucks hauling goods from B.C. to the States are limited by weight, so are currently not running at capacity.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants reiterated it is important to not lose focus on southern B.C. as an important transportation corridor. They also noted that Highway 3B is important.
2)	Growing the Economy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants suggested that establishing a North-South corridor from the States would assist economic growth in the southern interior region and in the province as a whole.
3)	Connecting and Strengthening Communities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that transit and transportation alternatives are very important in this region. New alcohol laws have had a significant impact in rural areas because there are no transportation alternatives. For seniors, getting to and from the hospital is an issue. One participant noted that Rotary used to hold a fundraiser every year, but they cannot anymore because people will not drive due to alcohol legislation. One participant noted that young people are leaving the region because there are limited social opportunities here, partly due to lack of transportation alternatives.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted there should be separate rural and urban models for transit in B.C., as it is not a one-size-fits-all issue.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that cycling trails are important for connecting communities, suggesting that the trail in Canmore, Alberta is a good model.
4)	Maximizing Collaboration and Investment with Partners and Stakeholders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One participant noted that the Trail Airport needs a mile of runway in order to be most efficient, and questioned whether there could be an opportunity for grant funding. The Airport is currently looking at building a new terminal and also putting a fence around the perimeter. The participant noted a conceptual plan and budget for the new terminal will be available in early 2015.
TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that investment in the Trail Regional Airport is important for growing the economy and connecting communities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some participants noted that transportation alternatives, such as public transit, taxi service, and expanded cycling networks are needed in the region.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some participants suggested that the establishment of a transportation corridor, connecting Washington State with B.C. routes, would be a priority for growing the economy in the region and increasing the reliability of supply chains in B.C.
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/DISCUSSION	