

B.C. on the Move: Engagement Meeting Notes

NOVEMBER 25, 2014

10:30 AM

PRINCE GEORGE

ATTENDEES/AFFILIATION	Wayne Standen, BC Ambulance Operations Lane Smith BC Ambulance Operations Derek Dougherty, Prince George Chamber of Commerce
MOTI REPRESENTATIVES	Paula Cousins, District Manager, Thompson Nicola District, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI)
NOTE TAKER	Kai-lani Rutland, Kirk & Co. Consulting Ltd.
KEY THEMES (3-6)	
1)	Highways and side roads: Participants were supportive of continued investments to four-lane the highway from Prince George to Vanderhoof and noted that continued investments in roads would support economic development in the LNG and mining industries.
2)	Highways: Participants were supportive of increased investments to Highway 5A and 16 to increase passing lanes, reliability and safety.
3)	Highways and side roads: Participants indicated height issues with rail overpasses in the Peace region and requested that the Ministry look at lowering the grade of the road to accommodate truck traffic with higher loads.
4)	Highways: Participants were supportive of investments to address congestion on Highway 97.
5)	Highways: Participants indicated safety issues with median barriers and requested that the Ministry look into providing adequate crossovers between barriers so that emergency vehicles can access both sides of the highway.
6)	Trucking: A participant indicated issues with CVSE permitting (commercial vehicle), noting that it is too restrictive.
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety and reliability issues on Highway 5A, 16 and the Cariboo Connector are the primary concerns for this region.
MOVING FORWARD – STRATEGIES	
1)	Moving People and Goods Safely and Reliably <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing investments for Highway 5A, 16 and 97 is important for safety and reliability. The region recognizes the importance of continued investments in these highways to address congestion, safety and facilitate economic growth in the region. Side roads and bypasses are a priority for many of the communities in the region and additional investment is needed to increase safety at congested and unsafe intersections. Participants indicated that investments such as shoulder widening, calming mechanisms, and increased maintenance are priorities. Improvements to concrete barrier breaks are needed to improve safety and first response accessibility on highways. Investments in side roads are important for the further development of the region's cycling-based tourism industry.
2)	Growing the Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that economic development is directly connected to the ability to move goods and services. Ongoing investments in Highway 97, 5A and 16 are vital for economic development in this region.
3)	Connecting and Strengthening Communities
4)	Maximizing Collaboration and Investment with Partners and Stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants expressed appreciation for the good relationship with the Ministry and local offices. Participants noted that maximizing collaboration with partners and stakeholders is critical. Partnership and collaboration are necessary for continued investment in infrastructure.
TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued investments in Highway 15A, 16 and four-laning on the Cariboo Connector to improve safety and reliability are top priorities for this region. Height issues with rail overpasses needed to be addressed to support truck traffic with higher loads. There is a need to look at CVSE permitting issues.
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/DISCUSSION	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant from the Prince George Chamber of Commerce noted the permitting issues that many trucking companies in the region are facing in regards to slow processing time frames in B.C. The participant indicated that comparatively, permitting wait times in Alberta are significantly shorter, which is creating issues for the industry in B.C.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant from the Prince George Chamber of Commerce indicated the importance of continued investments and four-laning on the Cariboo Connector to address reliability and safety issues. The participant noted that a priority for this region was investment into Highway 16. The participant noted that there are issues with reliability and safety on Highway 16 in addition to inadequate conditions and compliances for truck traffic, which causes a lot of truck traffic to have to reroute. The participant indicated that more passing lanes, pull-outs and updates need to be made to Highway 16, specifically around Moricetown and Rocky Mountain Pass.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant from BC Ambulance Operations indicated that there are congestion issues between Prince George and Vancouver on Highway 97 that make the roadway feel more like a slow moving parking lot. The interaction of many logging trucks and summer time tourist traffic causes congestion issues that should be addressed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant from the Prince George Chamber of Commerce reiterated that investments need to be made to Highway 16 to accommodate increased heavy truck activity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant from BC Ambulance Operations expressed concern that with increased LNG traffic on regional roadways, there needs to be investment to increase capacity on the roadways – in their current state, the highways are unable to accommodate additional traffic.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant from the Prince George Chamber of Commerce discussed with Paula Cousins the Ministry's use of new technologies and methods when resurfacing roads.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant from the Prince George Chamber of Commerce noted the important role this region plays in the transportation network and movement of goods to and from Vancouver. The participant indicated that without the transportation network in this region, there wouldn't be any goods in Vancouver. The participant noted that because of this, continued investments in Highway 16 need to be made.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant indicated continued concerns with congestion on the Trans-Canada.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant from the Chamber of Commerce expressed concern that investors are choosing not to source materials from Prince George because of transportation reliability issues and bottlenecks. The participant reiterated the importance of addressing these issues for the economic viability of the region.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant from BC Ambulance Operations indicated safety issues regarding road barriers. The participant noted that often ambulances have to travel an extra 2-3 kilometers to turn around to the other side of the roadway to access vehicles. The participant noted that this is a safety issue and requested that more breaks be added to the barriers for safety reasons.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant from BC Ambulance Operations expressed interest in further intersection studies by the Ministry and City of Prince George.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant from BC Ambulance Operations noted that it would be nice to see additional transit connections between communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant noted an area of road near the Save on Foods in Prince George that is not properly lit and is a blind spot at night. The participant noted that the area is dangerous and should be looked at by the Ministry.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant noted the importance of continued investments in four-laning in regards to truck and tourist traffic – noting that often one gets frustrated with the other, leading to very fast, and unsafe, passing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant requested that the Ministry consider replacing the West Twin Bridge between Prince George and Bride. The bridge has a blind curve on the east end which is unsafe for drivers, and the Ministry should address this.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant requested that the Ministry look into how the use of rubber fill near Keremeos impacts the safety of motorcycle users.