

B.C. on the Move: Engagement Meeting Notes

NOVEMBER 25, 2014

9:00AM

VANCOUVER

ATTENDEES/AFFILIATION	Don Jolley, Fire Chiefs Association of B.C., (FCABC) Christine McLenan, FCABC Denis Boucher, Traffic Services, RCMP
MOTI REPRESENTATIVES	Kirsten Pedersen, Executive Project Director, BC on the Move, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Ed Miska, Chief Traffic, Electrical, Hwy Safety and Geo Standards Engineer, MoTI
NOTE TAKER	Carmen Bennett, Kirk & Co. Consulting Ltd.
KEY THEMES (3-6)	
1)	Transportation planning: Participants noted there needs to be more provincial coordination between jurisdictions for First Responders. With respect to fire service, there is no formalized agreement regarding who will respond in areas outside local jurisdiction.
2)	Highways and side roads: Participants noted it is necessary to consider how provincial roads and infrastructure are going to be serviced.
3)	Highways and side roads: Participants noted that considerations related to roads and enforcement are the main priorities from a policing perspective.
4)	Highways and side roads: Participants noted that geolocation technology and location signage should be made available on roads in order to improve emergency response times and accuracy.
5)	Transportation planning: Participants noted that infrastructure needs to support emergency services, such as incorporating more emergency access points on highways, wider shoulders for safe policing, and features that limit the impact of accidents.
6)	Highways and side roads: Participants agreed that road markings are an issue, as paint is not visible in certain conditions. This is one of the biggest hazards for public safety.
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants from FCABC noted there is a lack of jurisdictional coordination that limits the ability of fire services to respond to emergencies outside their local jurisdictions. Participants noted that input from emergency responders needs to be considered in the development of infrastructure.
MOVING FORWARD – STRATEGIES	
1)	Moving People and Goods Safely and Reliably
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted a number of great improvements have been made from a safety perspective. Participants noted that the Nexus lane at the Sumas border crossing is too short and this is a safety concern, as many people try to bypass the line and cut through traffic. The participant representing the RCMP noted that, from a policing perspective, RCMP ask that their input be included with respect to any expansions. The participant noted that expansion creates pressure on policing (for example, on the South Fraser Perimeter Road), and that planning should not just be about infrastructure, it should also consider how expanded roads are serviced. There are policing responsibilities that come with additional roads and side roads, and there can be no assumption that RCMP will police a section of road. The participant suggested that in the past, policing has not been part of the discussion with respect to additional roads, and it needs to be a part of the discussion moving forward. RCMP noted that some sections of highway are dangerous to police, and there are areas that police cannot access safely. Where road conditions can be improved, from a policing standpoint, such improvements are necessary for safety. The participant noted that shoulders need to be able to accommodate a police car on the side of the road, as narrow shoulders create a safety concern for officers stopping on the side of the road. Participants noted that expansion of the SkyTrain to the Fraser Valley is long overdue. Participants noted that moving people safely and reliably is a high priority, and congestion on the roads is a big problem in terms of safety and policing issues today. Ed Miska responded that there has been collaboration with policing in a number of projects. He acknowledged that enforcement issues need to be considered earlier in project planning and noted that this can be discussed further. The participant representing the RCMP noted that speed is a significant contributing factor with respect to safety concerns. The participant suggested that automated enforcement may be a consideration moving forward. The participant noted that increased speeds are presenting challenges from an enforcement and safety perspective, and suggested there should be more dialogue around this. Participants noted that, in terms of enforcement in the trucking industry, a number of drivers are not keeping their vehicles up to date. The participant noted that scales were once used more for monitoring and enforcement, but that a number of scales have been closed. The participant noted that with increased development and trucking in the north, it will be necessary to find ways to keep the trucking industry informed and to stay on top of enforcement.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roads and enforcement are the main consideration from a policing perspective.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants from FCABC noted that fire services are municipal, so there are vast areas of the province outside local jurisdictions with no provision of fire services. Participants expressed concern that there are areas with no first responders, and no formalized agreement regarding who will respond to calls in these areas. Participants noted concern among fire service, ambulance and police, and that it is necessary to consider response capability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants would like to see more coordination between jurisdictions for responders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FCABC participants noted that permits are restricted by jurisdictions, which is problematic in terms of response coordination. The participants suggested that infrastructure needs to be built with permitting in mind. For example, fire services need to respond in the event of a provincial emergency, but there are restrictions with overweight permits that limit responders to certain areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that there are long stretches of roadway with medians that cannot be crossed, that are thus without access for emergency vehicles, which lengthens response times. Participants suggested they would like to see a standardized process with emergency access points at specific intervals (e.g. every 10 km) to improve response times and road safety.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that positive reinforcements have been made along some routes to limit the number of crashes, such as protective barriers and fencing, and commented that these should be implemented further.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that getting accurate location information of incidents on the provincial highway network is challenging. Without knowing the location, it is difficult to know what type of response is necessary and how to dispatch accordingly. Better geolocation technology and identifiers, such as signs, can help callers identify their location. Participants agreed that identification of incidents is challenging without having accurate location information.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants supported and encouraged the use of signage to identify when emergency situations, such as accidents, have occurred. Flashing alert signs that notify drivers of accidents are helpful, and may prevent further accidents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that social media is a useful tool to provide real-time information to drivers. Participants suggested that increased use of communication tools will help traffic flow and reliability. This is especially the case in the north, where closures can affect a highway for extended periods of time, and there are no alternate routes. Closures are an economic, safety and reliability consideration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kirsten Pedersen noted that some district managers in the north have been working with local governments on similar issues that have been raised, as well as coordinating with Emergency Management B.C.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants suggested that province-wide coordination is lacking, noting that local governments respond to their city limits, but there is void space beyond these jurisdictions and no coordination around how to address this issue. The missing piece would be legislation that grants fire services the authority to respond outside their jurisdictions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From a policing perspective, participants noted there is some pushback by municipalities when municipal officers leave city limits. Police are generally covered for liability outside their jurisdictions, where fire services are not. There is no provincial resource to respond to fire emergencies outside local jurisdictions, on provincial highways such as the Coquihalla, for example.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that there is a lack of understanding and a lack of initiative for jurisdictions to make a coordinated agreement with respect to response capability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that road markings are an issue, as paint is not visible in certain conditions. This is one of the biggest hazards for public safety.
2) Growing the Economy
3) Connecting and Strengthening Communities
4) Maximizing Collaboration and Investment with Partners and Stakeholders
TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS
FCABC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants from FCABC noted that addressing jurisdictional issues is a priority.
All: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that further engagement with the RCMP will be necessary prior to any infrastructure development. Participants noted that geolocation accuracy is important for safe and reliable emergency response. Roads and enforcement are the main consideration from a policing perspective. Participants noted that road markings are an issue, as paint is not visible in certain conditions. This is one of the biggest hazards for public safety.
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/DISCUSSION