

B.C. on the Move: Engagement Meeting Notes

NOVEMBER 27, 2014

11:30 AM

COQUITLAM

ATTENDEES/AFFILIATION	Cori Lynn, New Westminster Chamber of Commerce Stan Weismiller, New Westminster Chamber of Commerce Mayor Greg Moore, Port Coquitlam Andrea Madden, Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Chamber of Commerce Reg Ems, BC Agriculture Council
MOTI REPRESENTATIVES	Renée Mounteney, Deputy Director South Coast Region, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Thomas Chhun, Operations Manager, Lower Mainland District, MoTI
NOTE TAKER	Christel Guenette, Kirk & Co. Consulting Ltd.
KEY THEMES (3-6)	
1) Funding: Participants expressed the importance of researching options to fund improvements to transportation infrastructure.	
2) Transit: Participants stressed the need to improve transit to connect communities.	
3) Highways and side roads: Participants requested access and egress points onto highways (i.e. Mary Hill Bypass), to alleviate congestion as it relates to signals.	
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES	
New Westminster Chamber of Commerce:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted the difficulty in seeing efforts for regional solutions. Participants expressed concerns that the BC Chamber of Commerce may not be adequately expressing the viewpoints of the local Chamber of Commerce. Local Chambers need to be consulted with. 	
City of Coquitlam:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participant noted that the Metro Vancouver population and development is growing exponentially. This could translate into an additional 600,000 cars on the roads. The participant noted that the region has an inequitable tolling policy. The participant suggested that there is no "Plan B" to the Mayor's Vision. The participant noted that communication is the biggest challenge. The participant noted difficulties in accessing lands needed for infrastructure improvements. Agricultural lands are being used. 	
MOVING FORWARD – STRATEGIES	
1) Moving People and Goods Safely and Reliably	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants noted that goods movement drives the economy. A balance is needed to move goods as there is insufficient rail space to do so. Participants from the New Westminster Chamber of Commerce noted that a modal shift will have to be worked on. There are tools that can be utilized for pricing that will create a stable funding formula. Participants from the New Westminster Chamber of Commerce noted that short sea shipping is a concept that should be pursued as trucks are limited and rails are short. There is undeveloped waterfront in Port Metro Vancouver that could be utilized to move cans around. Participants from the New Westminster noted that the population is increasing along the northeast corridor, but has little bus service. Residents prefer to use transit. Participants stressed the importance of building the Bailey Bridge. Participants noted that consideration was needed on the effects of road closures for local businesses, during the rehabilitation of the Pattullo Bridge. It was suggested to reduce or eliminate tolls on the Port Mann Bridge during construction. A participant noted that due to the toll on the Port Mann Bridge, increased congestion "spilled over" to the Mary Hill Bypass. With all the lights along that route, congestion is intense. It was suggested that grade separation or intersection improvements be made as there have been no improvements to this route since the highway was built. A participant from the City of Coquitlam noted the Mayor's Vision addressed road improvements in terms of growth strategies. A participant stressed the importance of constructing the Bailey Bridge. Infrastructure was constructed with this bridge in mind. It is important for the movement of people and goods throughout the region. A participant from Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows noted that there are issues with cyclists using sidewalks, as there is no space for them on the road. 	

2) Growing the Economy	
•	Participants from New Westminster referenced past work in developing economic opportunities along the Fraser River. Treat the Fraser River as part of the road system, so it could be subsidized to help move container trucks off the roads.
•	Participants from New Westminster expressed the importance of developing transportation strategies to encourage regional economic development opportunities.
•	A participant suggested researching ports that are operating successful short sea shipping ports, to understand how it could be utilized along the Fraser River.
•	A participant from the Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows noted that rail traffic cuts off access to businesses. The transportation of goods and services is important so infrastructure is needed to support this.
•	A participant acknowledged problems with congestion at Harris Road and at the end of the Golden Ears Bridge. A cloverleaf interchange would help alleviate the congestion.
•	A participant stressed the need to maintain infrastructure beyond the Fraser Valley. Exclusion fencing (to keep animals off the road) is deteriorating and requires repair.
3) Connecting and Strengthening Communities	
•	Participants noted the need to agree to a plan to address congestion along Braid Street. It has reached capacity and soon will begin to back up along the freeway. Interchanges tying into this street also need addressing. Senior government initiatives could get government stakeholders together.
•	A participant noted that due to the projected population growth, transit improvements are needed.
•	A participant noted that funds should be allocated to cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, that connects into the Transit system and compliments what local governments are doing.
•	A participant noted that consistent cycling infrastructure needs to be considered. Pitt Meadows' infrastructure has inconsistent cycling paths, which impacts the safety of cyclists.
•	A participant that the South Fraser Perimeter Road has poor access to the Port Mann Bridge, which results in trucks using the Pattullo Bridge. This causes repercussions throughout the rest of the region.
•	A participant suggested closing the road to trucks on the Pattullo Bridge.
•	A participant noted the importance of connecting transit further east up the corridor. Currently, transit stops at Douglas College and doesn't connect the community to the other communities.
•	A participant noted that tolls create unfair advantages to surrounding communities. Due to the tolls, residents are relocating on the south side of the river to avoid these tolls. It was suggested that electronic road pricing would make pricing fair for all residents. It would have a cash card base system. If a vehicle travels through a gantry and has insufficient funds on the card or no card, fines are applied. This system has been successful in Singapore.
•	A participant expressed support for transit initiatives across the province.
4) Maximizing Collaboration and Investment with Partners and Stakeholders	
•	A participant expressed concern around the secondary side roads. As a member of the BC Road Builders, he noted that improvements are needed on Highways 1, 3, and 97. He added that communities exist on these secondary roads.
•	Participants noted the importance of meeting with Transport Canada to form an agreement with rail carriers on grade separation.
•	A participant expressed concerns with rail crossings. Grade separation is needed as rail traffic can clog the highway for long periods of time. With rail traffic forecasted to increase, the municipality would be cut in half. Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge, and Langley would need to be part of these discussions.
•	A participant noted that municipalities divided by rail, creates issues for emergency services as they cannot access the other side of town.
•	A participant suggested the potential expansion of the Pitt Meadows Airport.
•	A participant expressed the importance of provinces helping in developing provincial rail corridors to prevent trains from having to go to Edmonton prior to travelling throughout BC. There is a robust domestic market that requires support.
TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS	
New Westminster Chamber of Commerce:	
•	Continued improvements are needed to the movement of goods in order to drive the economy.
•	Improved transit services (to all communities) are needed to create better access for everyone.
•	Consideration of short sea shipping options, is needed.
City of Coquitlam:	
•	It is important to consider the Mayor's Vision when formulating the 10 year Transportation Plan.
•	Addressing access and egress issues from the Mary Hill Bypass is important. With all the signal lights along this corridor, congestion is "intense". This could be achieved by grade separations along the highway.
•	Addressing at grade rail crossings is important as rail traffic increases and cuts the municipality in half for long periods of time.

Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows Chamber of Commerce:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing at grade rail crossings is important as rail traffic increases and cuts the municipality in half for long periods of time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing transit services further east along the Lougheed Highway is important to connect communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing the congestion at the end of the Golden Ears Bridge and Harris Road through a cloverleaf intersection would give motorists a smoother move along the roadways.
BC Agriculture Council:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transit improvements are needed throughout the province.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support of BC's robust domestic market by providing a provincial rail corridor so that trains do not have to travel to Edmonton before moving goods throughout BC.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rehabilitation of aging infrastructure east of the Fraser Valley needs to continue.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/DISCUSSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Moore, Port Coquitlam, noted that "highway" is mentioned 14 times, while "transit" is only mentioned once. He questioned if this was a reflection of highways being the key focus in the new 10-year transportation plan. Ms. Mounteney clarified this was not intended to be the case. Other areas in the province do have a stronger highway focus, however the plan is meant to be an over-arching plan for the entire province.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Moore noted that the timing for the engagement sessions was too short and by taking place in the middle of an election, it did not demonstrate cooperation with local governments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Moore noted that the Mayor's 30-year Vision articulated the City of Coquitlam's input. The biggest challenge is funding constraints as the Vision plan requests more funding than the MOTI budget and Build Canada funds can provide. He noted that it would be helpful to inform which projects need to be removed from the Mayor's Vision Plan so that the 10-year plan can be affordable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Moore noted that the Minister had stated in 2013 that in 2014 he would be reviewing the tolling policy. This has not been done to date, and should form part of the 10-year plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Moore noted the importance of road pricing encompassing part of the 10-year plan, as outlined in the Mayor's Vision.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Moore requested there be "no more referendums".
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Moore expressed the importance of the 10-year transportation plan linking in with TransLink's plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant noted that Port Metro Vancouver is conducting a study to understand the movement of container trucks around the region.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant asked if third party experts would be utilized in conducting transportation studies throughout the region. Ms. Mounteney responded that BC on the Move was an overarching transportation plan, focused on different priorities. Engineers, consultants and planners would provide input, when considering priorities for the region.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant noted that these public consultation sessions were scheduled at an inopportune time.