

B.C. on the Move: Engagement Meeting Notes

NOVEMBER 27, 2014

1:30 PM

WILLIAMS LAKE

ATTENDEES/AFFILIATION	Walt Cobb, Chamber of Commerce Jason Ryll, Chamber of Commerce Claudia Blair, Chamber of Commerce Bill Van Es, West Chilcotin Tourism Association
MOTI REPRESENTATIVES	Paula Cousins, District Manager, Transportation, Thompson Nicola District, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Margaret Henley, District Operations Technician, Cariboo District, MoTI Sandra Wagner, Senior District Clerk, Cariboo District, MoTI
NOTE TAKER	Kai-lani Rutland, Kirk & Co. Consulting Ltd.
KEY THEMES (3-6)	
1) Ferries: Participants indicated that discontinuation of service of BC Ferries' Route 40 has greatly impacted the economic development of the region and that current service is not adequate.	
2) Airports: Participants were supportive of additional investments and support to local airports and noted their importance in the region.	
3) Rail: Participants were supportive of investments and partnerships to revive passenger rail service in the region, noting that it would support tourism and economic development while connecting communities.	
4) Highways: Continued support for the four-laning of the Cariboo Connector.	
5) Highways and side roads: Participants all agreed that industry and tourism are incredibly important for this region and supported additional investments into the region's transportation network to support economic development.	
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investments to transportation networks that will support the region's tourism-based industry are a priority and will provide opportunities for economic growth in the region. 	
MOVING FORWARD – STRATEGIES	
1) Moving People and Goods Safely and Reliably	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing investments for the Cariboo Connector and Highway 20 are 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 investments are important to the region. Investments in side roads and public transportation are important for the further development of the region's tourism industry. 	
2) Growing the Economy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic development is directly connected to the ability to move goods and services. Ongoing investments in Highway 20 and the Cariboo Connector is vital for economic development in this region. 	
3) Connecting and Strengthening Communities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passenger rail service and public transportation between communities is needed in order to connect people with the airport, with health care services and to support tourism and families working in other regions. 	
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 including maintaining side roads, cycling trails and airports. 	
TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants prioritized investments to airport infrastructure and further development and use of airport lands. Participants would like to see improvements to Route 40 Ferry Service Investments to provide passenger rail service between communities in the region are important. 	
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/DISCUSSION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant from Chilcotin noted that their main concern is the cancellation of the Queen of Chilliwack ferry/Route 40 from 	

<p>Bella Coola. The replacement ferry is too small and is not suitable for the amount of people that need to use it. The service is not adequate and is having a devastating effect on their region. Businesses in the region rely on the ferry service to transport people to and from the region. It is a huge economic burden to not have the ferry capacity and capabilities to service the businesses and tourism industry. The participant noted that the transportation network needs to be able to support the region's economy by transporting tourists to the region. Investments in highway 20 are needed as well.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant from the Chamber of Commerce noted that, from a regional perspective, the economic challenge for the Cariboo Region is that they do not have oil reserves or natural gas, and so LNG is not a priority for the region. It does little to enhance the local economies. The participant noted that there are people resources, agriculture, and natural tourism landscapes, and that they have just as much to contribute and influence long term for the province. Enhancements in the regions infrastructure are important. The region is supportive of additional investments to enhance and expand air travel to the region. Investments to the region's highway corridors are a priority and will help to move goods through the region safely and reliably. Despite being in the interior, this region is still dependent on ferry routes and would like to see investments to have those services maintained.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant indicated that affordable air travel is a necessity for the province and reiterated the need for adequate air access to connect this region to the rest of the world. The participant expressed a desire to utilize the airport property for additional uses, perhaps through expanded property development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant noted the importance of the regions highways and rail and noted that there is a need to four lane Highway 97 and connect all of the communities. It is important to connect all of the communities north of Hope instead of bypassing them. The participant noted that bypasses are not ideal in this region and that traffic through the communities is regarded as a positive thing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant noted that rail can and should play a much larger role to the province in providing access and connections to the communities in this region. The rail lines need enhancements to move goods and people. The participant noted that the Ministry should look at opportunities for rail use in the province as a very effective way to provide access to communities and public transportation. The region requires the Province's assistance in making that happen, and would like to see a long term and aggressive plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant indicated that, because they are along the coast, they are dependent on the ferry system. Along the coast there are three major points of contact, Prince Rupert, Bella Coola and Vancouver. There needs to be enhanced access to the rest of the province through these and new access points. The BC coastline could be multibillion dollar industry if the access to industry was developed. Improved access along the coastline could bring long-term benefits. The participant noted they were encouraged to see that the Province is looking at long term investments, and noted that the interior of BC needs the support.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant noted that clarity surrounding the Province's role over airport lands would be appreciated. The participant noted that from their perspective, a partnership between the community and the Province could increase the potential of these airports as sources of economic opportunity and enhanced travel throughout the province and region. Locally, the airport property is under-utilized. In this part of the province, the airport supports forest fire operations during the summer but there is additional opportunity for the airport to expand their forest fire services and better utilize the airport properties to generate economic stimulus for the area. Commercial expansion will always be supply and demand, but the use of industry-specific services is something the airport, in partnership with the Province, needs to explore a little more.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant indicated a need for expanded connections through the airport. Currently, passengers are only able to fly to Vancouver. If passenger service were expanded and available to Kamloops or the oil sands, it could entice families to base themselves out of this region. From here, there are no other airport connections other than to Vancouver. There are a lot of people who work in the oil sands, and they drive to Kamloops and head to where they are going. Is the province have any involvement in expanding this? Need and potential for expansion.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant noted that the airport road needs improvements, but mentioned this was the municipality's responsibility.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant indicated continued support for the four-laning of the Cariboo Connector.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant noted that bypasses can have serious economic development implications.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant noted that a bypass would be detrimental to their community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant from the Chamber of Commerce noted that there used to be passenger rail and ferry service but that they don't have passenger rail service now. The passenger rail service was great for the communities. The participant noted that what happened with the rail service is the same with what happened to the ferry service in Bella Coola: the people in power are not looking at the tourism opportunities. There needs to be a reinvestment into making it accessible for people to travel, as tourists find it difficult to move in this region. From an international perspective, rail is used in many other countries very effectively for the communities it goes through – for passengers or tourists. The region has a basic rail infrastructure, but the option to use that as an economic opportunity have been eliminated. The participant noted that when there are international tourists who are familiar with trains, then they are able to access these places.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant noted that they think it is worth it to add more rail cars on the trains than to have additional heavy truck traffic on the roads. Additionally, there is a difference in the cost of maintaining roads in comparison to rail lines; i.e., rail lines are repaired with private money.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant noted that the Province should put pressure on the rail companies to provide passenger rail service again.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant indicated that Route 40 is a perfect example of a port which is a missed opportunity. Right now, route 40 is a night-time ferry service, but the beauty of the coast should be showcased; the ferry service should be during the day. It is also about access for tourists and travelers, and there need to be additional partnerships that provide the services that are needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant noted that there is local demand for the accommodation of pedestrian pathways and cycle routes. Funding for pedestrian pathways would be welcomed by the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant noted that the Ministry should be maintaining the grass on the side of roadways more frequently.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A participant noted the Williams Lake corridor is working well. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A participant noted that the right turn coming out of Tim Horton's is a safety concern. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A participant noted there are safety concerns with the Wholesale Gas Bar, and that the traffic around there is dangerous and should be looked into. |