



Highway 16 Action Plan Advisory Group

Ministry of Transportation

Conference Call

Thursday, March 9, 2017

9:30 am – 10:30 am

Conference Call Information: [REDACTED] – Participant ID [REDACTED]

These Minutes are considered to be complete and correct. Please advise the writer of any error or omissions, otherwise these Minutes will be considered to be an accurate record of the discussions.

Chair:

Deborah Bowman, Assistant Deputy Minister – Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Members in attendance:

Taylor Bachrach, Mayor - Smithers

Shane Brienen, Mayor - District of Houston

Carol Leclerc, Mayor - City of Terrace

Reg Mueller, Community Member - Saik'uz First Nation – left early

Steve Raper Chief Communications Officer - Northern Health Authority

Members absent:

Rob MacDougall, Mayor - District of Fort St. James

Mary Teegee, Executive Director - Carrier Sekani Family Services

Joseph Bevan, Chief - Kitselas First Nation

Richard Jock, Chief Operating Officer - First Nations Health Authority

- Devi Goberdhan, Director of Operations, Health Benefits - First Nations Health Authority
- John Mah, VP, Health Benefits - First Nations Health Authority

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Staff in attendance:

Cam Filmer, Executive Director – Policy and Programs

Silas Brownsey, Executive Director - Transit and Crown Agency Policy

Chris Fudge, BC Transit

Carl Lutz, District Manager, Bulkley-Stikine District

Cailey Brown, District Development Technician, Bulkley-Stikine District

Melanie Robbestad – Regional Management Administrator – Advisory Minutes

Meeting Commenced at 9:30 am

Welcome – Review Agenda/Last Meeting Minutes – Deborah Bowman

- Minutes from previous meeting discussed, no changes or additions

Program Update: Community Vehicle Grant Program – Cam Filmer

- Additional funding for the Community Vehicle Grant Program will be announced in the near future, will be doubling the original amount of \$800,000 to \$1.6 Million – Please keep confidential until after official announcement has been made
- Applications evaluation process saw:
 - Applications screened for eligibility,
 - Initial scoring against program criteria by Ministry staff,
 - Confirmation and amendment of that scoring by a cross-section of staff with corridor knowledge from multiple Ministries, and,
 - A scan of potential distribution methods was evaluated with the assistance of some advisory members (not those with obvious or self-identified possible conflict of interest).
- We anticipate announcements soon.
- Once announcements are made:
 - Conditional grant agreements will be put in place with the successful applicants.
- The ministry has the ability to carry-over funding from this program into the next fiscal year.

Program Update: VIA Rail – Potential Opportunities – Cam Filmer

- As planned, a number of advisory group representatives took the VIA rail train on Feb 27th from Prince Rupert to Prince George including:
 - VIA representative Michael Wolcke,
 - Highway 16 Transportation Advisory member Mary Teegee,
 - Regional District Kitimat Stikine, Bob Marcellin,
 - RCMP members, Sergeant Joe Garcia, Advisory NCO, Aboriginal Policing, North District RCMP HQ “E” Div and Corporal Wenda Leask,
 - Ministry leads Cam Filmer and Carl Lutz.
- This was an initial assessment of possible opportunities building on the original offer from VIA.
- The trip purposefully took place during winter time conditions.
- Debriefing meeting will occur by end of March and we will report back at the next advisory meeting.

Program Update: Mapping/Collaboration – Cam Filmer and Steve Raper

- Nancy Liesch from FLNRO has advised that GeoBC will remain committed to this initiative in the future.
- A new set of draft maps should be completed by March 17th
 - Map – PDF – Updated with the following:
 - Transit – current and proposed,
 - Community Vehicle Grants,
 - Transit current and proposed and community vehicle grants,
 - Transportation by day to day – fully updated, and,
 - Include current and proposed routes.
 - Web Map
 - Further discussion / input required,
 - Options to be looked at for Committee review
 - Possible short term – hyper linked map (transit for an area),
 - Complicated – mid and long term decisions required:
 - Will need increased web information,
 - Full website – much bigger discussion,
 - Will need folks like transit – given street level information,
 - This will be discussed in the next working group meeting.

- Northern Health Connection realized the highest numbers for ridership in January 2017 they've ever seen. Working with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) as well as the joint and media promotions that have been done have been extremely successful.
- Current work with FNHA includes:
 - Engagement with Prince Rupert on best practices with the Northern Health (NH) connections program,
 - Assist with engagement of other First Nations communities to facilitate expansion and modeling.
- Monthly meetings between FNHA and NH are continuing.
- Communications strategies:
 - Awareness and promotions through this partnership continues to grow and reap dividends in ridership growth,
 - Social media campaign continues to provide value – January being our best ridership month ever,
 - Exploring more comprehensive joint communication strategies.
- Next Steps:
 - Transition of Northern Director at FNHA – from Megan to Nicole Cross
 - Meeting March 17 with Nicole/Megan/Devi
 - Provide update on joint work plan to Nicole
 - Broader discussions on further opportunities

Program Update: First Nations Driver's Education – Cam Filmer

- Carrier-Sekani Family Services, as our contractor, has reached out to all First Nation communities along corridor.
- They are getting MOUs in place with those communities that identify local support for the delivery of training.
- Progress is being made, with classes scheduled for Class 4 training this month in the Fort St James and Burns Lake areas.
- Ministry staff continue to work closely with CSFS on planning for, and reporting out on, the delivery of training throughout the corridor in the current calendar year.

Transit – Silas Brownsey

- First service was launched January 30th – Smithers to Moricetown commuter service. Operating six days per week.
 - MOTI paved a walking path to the bus shelter,
 - Ridership has already seen growth.
- Regional District Bulkley Nechako (RDBN)
 - Reached an important milestone last week where the Regional District bylaw was established at the board meeting and the Transit Service Agreement was signed. This was a culmination of a tremendous amount of work by the RDBN to get it in place and through the approval process,
 - Next steps:
 - Procurement – the transit committee was meeting to discuss the procurement strategy,
 - A marketing and communications strategy will be launched through BC Transit,
 - Hoping to see service up and running within the next couple of months.
- Regional District of Kitimat Stikine
 - Discussions with potential partner communities have been taking place,
 - Currently we are working on getting the commitments in place with the Hazeltons, Gitwanga'ak and other communities,

- Hoping to have this completed by the end of March and move into the operational phase,
- The Regional District already has transit service in place, so will be quick to implement once the agreement is in place,
- BC Transit will then have to confirm scheduling, marketing and outreach,
- Hoping to see this service also up and running within the next couple months.

Update on Transit Shelters – Carl Lutz & Cailey Brown

- Working with BC Transit and community representatives to identify additional locations for transit shelter installs and bus pullout construction on new and existing routes.
- We will be identifying new transit/traveller shelter installs to support the Community Vehicle Grant Program. Cam Filmer to share information with Carl and Cailey as it becomes available.
- Lighting improvements. Design complete in several communities and installs to happen this upcoming year.
- Installation of five more webcams.
- Examining other improvements such as: crosswalks, intersection upgrades and signage along the corridor to support transit upgrades.
- Installing benches as requested by communities.
- Canvassed communities and advisory group members to submit improvement ideas.

ACTION #1: Carol Leclerc, Mayor of City of Terrace asked for mapping of where transit shelters have been installed and where new transit shelters will be installed. MoTI to supply.

Roundtable Discussion – next steps and milestones - All

- Deborah Bowman: If there are any materials you could use to assist in sharing this information with neighbouring communities or staff, please let us know.
- Carol Leclerc: Very appreciative for the extra funding coming for the vehicles, looking forward to the mapping, kudos to everyone that keeps pushing these along.
- Taylor Bachrach: Thankful to everyone, very excited about the Eastern transit, Smithers to Prince George and between the communities on that stretch of highway. Looking forward to working with others to promote that schedule and how convenient it will be. Very exciting phase of the rollout. Expressed thanks to Silas and Carl in Smithers and everyone we've come into contact how fantastic they've been to work with.
- Chris Fudge: Will definitely make all those tools available to get the message out. We have some traditional means to promote the service, but perhaps we can also come up with other creative ideas. Please feel free to reach out to me directly if there's anything I can do to support you in that respect.
- Carl Lutz: When these services get up and running, the ministry has portable changeable message signs that could be updated to reflect the options with transit.
- Steve Raper: Hoping to keep the numbers trending in the right way. Looking forward to working further on the community based solutions as some of the other numbers come out.
- Deborah Bowman: Hats off to BC Transit for the excellent job they do in marketing. Maximize every opportunity for outreach throughout the First Nations communities.
Thank you everyone for joining us.

Meeting adjourned: 10:24 am

Next Meeting: Suggested Dates April 6, 2017 or April 10, 2017 TBC