

Community Consultation Plan

Background

The Sea-to-Sky Highway links communities from West Vancouver to Whistler. Set in a spectacular mountain landscape, the highway presents complex engineering and construction challenges.

British Columbia's Ministry of Transportation is undertaking improvements to the highway between Horseshoe Bay and Whistler to improve its safety and reliability. By 2009, extensive highway improvements will make travel along the corridor safer for residents, commuters and tourists. This must be completed prior to the Olympics. Over the longer term, highway improvements will serve population growth, economic development in corridor communities and increasing demand for resident travel, visitor travel and goods movement.

Improvements will include highway widening and straightening, improved sightlines, passing lanes and other design innovations and measures to reduce hazards, shorten travel times and increase capacity of the Sea-to-Sky Highway.

The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project will result in the following:

- **West Vancouver to Lions Bay** - 4-lane sections with continuous median barrier including straightening, widening and improved sightlines (eliminating several sharp curves).
- **North of Lions Bay to Murrin Park** - 2, 3 and 4 lane sections; about half of this section includes improved 2 lanes, and the remaining sections include additional passing opportunities with 3 and 4 lanes. Those sections that are 4 lanes will include a median barrier to prevent crossover accidents. Sections adjacent to Murrin Park and within the community of Britannia will include improved 2-lane sections, which is consistent with community input from pre-design consultations. In Furry Creek, there will be 3 lanes moving to 4 lanes with a median barrier.
- **North of Murrin Park through Squamish** - 4-lane divided highway. This section will include median barriers throughout, including the addition of urban design features to the median within Squamish.
- **Squamish to Whistler** - 3 lanes throughout this section, including improved two-lane sections and alternating passing opportunities provided by alternating the third lane.

The \$600-million improvement project will be completed by 2009 and will meet population growth and travel demands until 2020, with additional improvements phased in as required over approximately 20 years. The project will create 6,000 new jobs throughout the province as a result of economic activity generated along the corridor, and will increase provincial GDP by \$300 million over the period of 2010 to 2025.

Our primary goals for the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project are to:

- Achieve safety improvements
- Achieve reliability improvements
- Achieve capacity improvements
- Complete the project by late 2009
- Manage traffic flows during construction to minimize disruption and maximize predictability
- Remain within the project budget of \$600 million.

Community Consultation Goals

Community Consultation

The Ministry of Transportation has consulted about highway improvements over the last two years with communities, businesses and residents along the corridor. To date, the MOT project team has attended over 450 meetings. Much of the consultation has complemented various technical studies undertaken by the MOT on tolling, other route options, and transportation alternatives.

Consultations will continue with municipalities (elected officials and staff), and organizations such as Technical Liaison Committees (locally nominated advisory groups), the Lions Bay Community Advisory Group, Howe Sound Community Forum, Squamish advisory groups, Tourism Whistler, One Whistler, Chambers of Commerce, environmental organizations and the public.

Traffic Management

A key priority of the Ministry of Transportation is to minimize disruption and maximize predictability of traffic delays during construction. Communities along the corridor have been consulted about seasons, days of the week and hours of the day when highway construction would cause the least disruption.

As a result of this consultation, road closures and delays will be limited to non-peak periods.

Consultation on Highway Improvement Design

As the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement project proceeds through various design stages and ultimately into construction, communities and key stakeholders will be consulted. Consultation stages include:

- Project Definition Consultation – *Complete (2002)*
- Public Review of Environmental Assessment Application – *Complete (2003)*
- Pre-Design – *Complete (2003 – 2005)*
- Preliminary Design – *Current (2005 – 2006)*
- Detailed Design – *to be undertaken prior to completion of the improvements*

Best practice in community consultation suggests that community consultation should be gathered during the pre-design and preliminary design stages to ensure designs consider community objectives as well as primary project goals as early as possible in the design process. The detailed design and final design stages usually involve relatively more financial and technical analysis than community consultation to ensure the designs are feasible.

Consultation Summary Reports

An important step in consulting with communities is reporting back to participants summarizing their input and, as much as possible, providing information about how their input will be used. Consultation Summary Reports are generally organized in key themes for consideration by design experts.

Pre-Design Consultation		Actions	
<p>1.Pre-Design Consultation In the overall context of the project scope, schedule and budget, communities along the Sea-to-Sky corridor will be involved in pre-design consultations to ensure that community objectives are considered as appropriate highway improvements are designed to meet the primary safety, reliability and capacity goals.</p> <p>The purpose of the Pre-Design consultation is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider and respond to community objectives identified in the Project Definition phase of consultation • Obtain comments on design objectives for proposed improvements to specific segments of the highway • To gather input into the consultation plan for the Preliminary Design Phase of Consultation <p>A key outcome of the Pre-Design Consultation will be draft design objectives for consideration by the S2S Project Team and its highway designers.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish consultation content – Answer the question; what are we consulting on? • Consultation tools – Discussion Guide, display boards, web materials, feedback forms, open houses, small group meetings, advisory groups, community newspaper inserts, advertising. Utilize a variety of consultation tools to ensure that stakeholders and the public have opportunities to participate. Some people choose to participate through meetings, while others prefer to participate through the web, their community newspaper, by email, or through written correspondence. • Building Public Awareness – advertising and media relations may be used to advise stakeholders and the public about their opportunities to participate. • Consultation Summary Report – Summarize the Pre-Design phase of consultation (i.e. Summarize input obtained through open houses, email, feedback forms etc.) highlighting key themes for consideration by the project team in developing preliminary designs. Post the Consultation Summary Report on the web and distribute the report to consultation participants. 	

Preliminary Design Consultation		Actions	
<p>2. Preliminary Design Consultation Incorporating community input from the pre-design consultation, ensure that community objectives are considered as appropriate highway improvements are designed to meet the primary safety, reliability and capacity goals. The purpose of the Preliminary Design consultation is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider and respond to community objectives identified in the Pre-Design phase of consultation • Obtain feedback on draft Preliminary Designs for proposed improvements to specific segments of the highway <p>A key outcome of the Preliminary Consultation will be practical feedback on Preliminary Designs for consideration by the S2S Project Team and its highway designers as they develop detailed and final designs.</p> <p>Schedule - Preliminary Design</p> <p>Furry Creek - Oct. 2005 (complete) Whistler - Oct./Nov. (complete) West Van - Nov - Jan. 2006 Pinecrest – Jan./Feb. 2006 Britannia Beach - Feb. 2006 Squamish – April 2006 Lions Bay - May/June 2006</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish consultation content – Answer the question; what are we consulting on? • Consultation tools – Discussion Guide, display boards, web materials, feedback forms (including online feedback forms), open houses, small group meetings, meetings with advisory groups, community newspaper inserts, advertising. Utilize a variety of consultation tools to ensure that stakeholders and the public have opportunities to participate. Some people choose to participate through meetings, while others prefer to participate through the web, their community newspaper, by email or through written correspondence. • Building Public Awareness – advertising and media relations may be used to advise stakeholders and the public about their opportunities to participate. • Consultation Summary Report – Summarize the Preliminary phase of consultation (ie. Summarize input obtained through open houses, email, feedback forms etc.) highlighting key themes for consideration by the project team in developing detailed and final designs. Post the Consultation Summary Report on the web and distribute the report to consultation participants. 	

Detailed Design Consultation		Actions	
<p>3.Detailed Design Consultation Incorporating community input from the preliminary design consultation, ensure that community objectives are considered as detailed and final designs are developed.</p> <p>The purpose of the Preliminary Design consultation is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider and respond to community objectives identified in the preliminary design phase of consultation • Obtain feedback on detailed design options for specific segments of the highway <p>The consultation on detailed design improvements generally involves the discussion of fewer, but very specific treatments related to the final design, including such things as specific traffic calming and noise reduction features, shape and colour of light fixtures, and detailed landscaping and other aesthetic treatments. The detailed design stage involves relatively more financial and technical analysis than community consultation to ensure designs are financially and technically feasible.</p> <p>Note: <i>Once consultation on preliminary design is complete, construction of the highway improvements will <u>start</u>. Community consultation on detailed design will be conducted <u>prior to completion</u> of the improvements.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish consultation content – Answer the question; what are we consulting on? • Consultation tools – Discussion Guide, display boards, web materials, feedback forms (including on-line feedback forms), open houses, small group meetings, meetings with advisory groups, community newspaper inserts, advertising. Utilize a variety of consultation tools to ensure that stakeholders and the public have opportunities to participate. Some people choose to participate through meetings, while others prefer to participate through the web, their community newspaper, by email or through written correspondence. • Building Public Awareness – advertising and media relations may be used to advise stakeholders and the public about their opportunities to participate. • Consultation Summary Report – Summarize the Preliminary phase of consultation (ie. Summarize input obtained through open houses, email, feedback forms etc.) highlighting key themes for consideration by the project team in developing detailed and final designs. Post the Consultation Summary Report on the web and distribute the report to consultation participants. 	

Consultation Team		Actions	
<p>Consultation Team – The consultation team will include those with expertise in strategic communications, media relations, facilitation, and all other aspects of community consultation.</p> <p>Technical Team – Key technical experts such as engineers, designers and others will be assigned to work with the consultation team to provide the key information to community participants and to listen to key input provided by community participants.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation Planning• Media Relations• Consultation Materials production; discussion guide, feedback forms, display boards, web materials, advertising etc., consultation summary report etc.• Consultation Event coordination; staffing open houses etc.• Community Relations; dealing with public inquiries that arise during consultation programs• Technical liaison; ensure that key members of the S2S team involved in engineering, design, traffic planning etc. are involved in and aware of the input gathered during consultation.	