

sea-TO-SKY

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**Pre-Design Consultation
Summary Report**

Furry Creek

March, 2005

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

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

British Columbia's Ministry of Transportation is undertaking improvements to the highway between West Vancouver and Whistler to improve its safety and reliability. By 2009, extensive improvements will make travel along the corridor safer for residents, commuters and tourists. To be completed before the Olympics, the highway improvements will serve population growth and economic development in the corridor over the long term as demand increases for resident and visitor travel and goods movement.

Improvements will include highway widening and straightening, improved sightlines, passing lanes and other design innovations 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:

- 4 lanes Horseshoe Bay to Lions Bay
- 2 lanes Lions Bay to Porteau Cove (3rd lane on rail bed for Olympics)
- 3 lanes from Porteau Cove to Squamish
- 4 lanes within urban Squamish
- 3 lanes from Squamish to Whistler

The estimated capital project cost for the improvement project is \$600 million and will be completed by 2009 to 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.

The primary goals for the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project include:

- Safety improvements;
- Reliability improvements;
- Capacity improvements;
- Project completion by 2009;
- Manage traffic flows during construction to minimize disruption and maximize predictability; and
- Complete the project on time and on budget.

A. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

The Ministry of Transportation (MoT) has consulted about the scope of highway improvements over the last two years with communities, businesses and residents along the corridor. The MoT project team has attended more than 400 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 Furry Creek Community Advisory Group, the Lions Bay Community Advisory Group, Howe Sound Community Forum, Squamish advisory groups, Tourism Whistler, One-Whistler, Chambers of Commerce, environmental organizations, including the Recreation Focus Group and the public.

B. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

A key priority of the Ministry of Transportation is to minimize disruption and maximize the 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.

2. OVERVIEW OF 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. The design stages include:

- Pre-Design
- Preliminary Design
- Detailed Design

A. PRE-DESIGN CONSULTATION GOALS

The purpose of the Furry Creek Pre-Design consultation is to:

- Inform the community and stakeholders about the draft pre-design options for improvements to the Sea-to-Sky Highway within Furry Creek and about corridor-wide consultation;
- Gather input and feedback regarding the draft pre-design options for highway improvements from the community and stakeholders;

- Summarize community and stakeholders input for consideration by the Ministry of Transportation. Distribute the Consultation Summary Report to consultation participants, the regional district and other stakeholders.

B. FURRY CREEK COMMUNITY CONSULTATION METHODS

a. DISCUSSION GUIDE AND FEEDBACK FORM

A discussion guide was developed that explained the purpose of the consultation, described the pre-design options for residents and provided a feedback form to assist in the gathering of community input.

b. WEB-BASED CONSULTATION

All consultation materials were available on the web including feedback form that could be emailed or faxed back to the project.

c. FURRY CREEK PRE-CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

On **October 20, 2004**, the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project held an open house in Furry Creek as part of the Squamish Pre-Design Consultation to provide an opportunity for residents south of the Squamish parks to provide input to the consultation. At this open house pre-consultation materials were available for Furry Creek residents to consider and provide input. Subsequent to this open house on **November 25, 2004**, a meeting was held with the Furry Creek CAG to review the results of this pre-consultation meeting.

d. FURRY CREEK PRE-DESIGN COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Input from the pre-consultation meetings was used to develop a Pre-design Consultation Discussion Guide and feedback form. On **January 10, 2005**, a pre-design consultation meeting was held with the Furry Creek CAG and subsequent to that an open house was held in Furry Creek on **January 18, 2005**.

3. KEY THEME SUMMARY

Overall, participants support the use of a variety of traffic calming measures to address noise reduction through the community of Furry Creek. These measures might include the use of vertical markers, banners and signs, and landscaping buffers.

Participants expressed a preference for transit facilities located adjacent to Furry Creek Centre both on the east and west side of the highway. In addition, they supported the construction of a pedestrian crossing just north of the Furry Creek entrance to facilitate east-west movement.

Participants supported (61%) the location of the southern Primary Gateway¹ at the existing gateway location near Porteau Bluffs. With the northern Primary Gateway residents 50% supported locating it at the existing pull-out 1000m north of the southbound access into Furry Creek while 47% thought it should be located right at the southbound access point.

With regard to noise reduction, 76% said that speed controls should be used to address this concern and 97% said that quiet pavement should be used. In addition, several participants want the project to look at the posted traffic speed as a way of reducing noise.

FURRY CREEK PRE-CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Generally, participants at the October 20, 2004 pre-consultation open house were supportive of the primary gateway concept but were varied in their ideas as to where the gateways should be located. Seventy-five percent of the participants supported traffic calming measures including low noise pavement (100% of participants), while 67% supported the idea of speed controls on the highway. Comments focused on safety of residents, the need to address the location of public transit facilities, and the potential increase in noise levels. Participants also needed additional information on the lane configuration near and through Furry Creek with concerns that proposed configurations might lead to congestion and unsafe passing.

In the November 25, 2004 Furry Creek CAG meeting,² the concerns of residents at the open house were reinforced. CAG members were concerned about noise and suggested a number of options for addressing noise. Options that are technically feasible, such as speed controls and the use of quiet pavement, were included in the January 2005 Pre-design Consultation Discussion Guide.

CAG members also wanted the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project to ask residents about the possible location of public transit facilities in the January 2005 open house related to the Pre-Design Consultation. Finally, the ability to move from east to west across the highway was identified as a concern for the community.

Each of these issues was considered as part of the pre-design consultation process.

¹ Gateways are features constructed along a highway near a community that contribute to public safety by calming traffic and creating a sense of arrival.

² Meeting Summary available in Appendix: Tab 1

KEY THEME SUMMARY - FURRY CREEK PRE-DESIGN CONSULTATION

Summary of January 10, 2005 CAG Input³

The following are suggestions made by members of the Community Advisory Group for Furry Creek:

- (1) That speed reduction through Furry Creek be seriously considered.
- (2) Technical specifications for 'quiet' were requested.
- (3) A member requested that community type lighting standards⁴ be considered as part of the gateway treatments.
- (4) Several members endorsed the concept of a pedestrian underpass at the bus stop location.
- (5) A suggestion was received to use regular asphalt on the corridor and use open graded asphalt through the communities with a request to investigate the cost-effectiveness of this proposal.
- (6) Several members encouraged the appropriate use of signage to slow traffic.
- (7) The issue of the recent sound test was raised and it was agreed that this would be followed up on and that a re-test would be done if necessary.

Summary of Community Input January 18, 2005⁵

1. TRAFFIC CALMING

The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project would like to assist in calming and slowing traffic throughout the Furry Creek community. Would you like to add traffic calming measures, such as vertical markers and gateway treatments, which may include banners or signs along the highway throughout the Furry Creek community?

90% **YES** 10% **NO**

Would you like to add further traffic calming measures, such as landscape buffers along the highway corridor through the Furry Creek community to calm traffic and identify the Furry Creek Community?

97% **YES** 3% **NO**

³ Notes available in Appendix, Tab 2

⁴ Lighting that fits into an overall community branding design.

⁵ Copies of feedback forms are available in Appendix, Tab 2.

2. BUS STOPS

The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project can provide bus stops off the highway at the northbound and southbound entrances to Furry Creek. Do you support the addition of bus stops in your community?

97% **YES** 3% **NO**

A. Please indicate your preference for the proposed location of the southbound bus stop:

88% On the west side of the highway across from the Furry Creek Centre

6% Off the highway on the southbound off ramp

6% Some other location, where:

B. Please indicate your preference for the location of the northbound bus stop:

97% On the east side of the highway adjacent to the Furry Creek Centre

3% Some other location, where:

Summary of Comments:

Comments focused on ease of use with suggestions that a new pedestrian underpass would facilitate use, as would locating it in the center of Furry Creek

3. PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

It is possible to include a pedestrian crossing just north of the northbound entrance to Furry Creek to allow for pedestrian access across the highway provided that a cost sharing agreement is reached.

Do you support a pedestrian crossing just north of the Furry Creek entrance?

89% **YES** 11% **NO**

4. GATEWAY – SOUTH

The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project proposes to enhance, and possibly relocate, the primary south gateway to the Furry Creek Community. There are several options for the relocation of this gateway. Where would you like the south gateway to be located?

- 61% A) At the existing Furry Creek sign location just north of Porteau Bluffs
- 39% B) Existing pullout on the west side of the highway, approximately 200m south of the main access to Furry Creek
- 0% C) Some other location, where: _____

Summary of Comments:

Participants suggested that a primary gateway should be supported with additional signage placed strategically in the community.

5. GATEWAY – NORTH

The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project proposes to provide a north gateway into the Furry Creek community. Where would you like the north gateway to be located?

- 50% A) At the existing pull-out 1000m north of the southbound access into Furry Creek
- 47% B) At the southbound access into Furry Creek
- 3% C) At the Furry Creek bridge

6. HIGHWAY TRAFFIC NOISE

Highway traffic noise has been identified as a concern by Furry Creek residents. The baseline noise levels indicate that the current and projected noise levels are within MoT policy limits.

However, there are several methods that can be used to reduce noise levels, if necessary. These include speed control and the use of quiet pavement.

Do you support the use of speed controls to reduce noise?

- 76% YES
- 24% NO

Do you support the use of quiet pavement to reduce noise?

97%	YES	3%	NO
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Additional Comments from Feedback Forms:

Seven participants suggested that the speed on this portion of the highway should be reduced to 60 km/hr, while others wondered why the project was considering traffic calming when the speed was set at 80 km/hr.

Several participants identified noise as a significant concern and suggested the use of traffic calming measures and other methods to assist in reducing noise levels.