



Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2024, 1:00 PM

Hybrid - Zoom/Board Room, 3008 Fifth Avenue, Port Alberni, BC

MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Bob Beckett, Director, Area "A" Bamfield
Mike Sparrow, Director, Area "F" Cherry Creek
Cindy Solda, City of Port Alberni
Marilyn McEwen, Mayor, District of Ucluelet
Dan Law, Mayor, District of Tofino
Zoran Knezevic, Port Alberni Port Authority
Jolleen Dick, Chief Executive Officer, Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce
Josh Jenkins, Executive Director, Ucluelet Chamber of Commerce
Jen Dart, Executive Director, Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce
Dean Fauchon, Manager, Contract Services, Tsawak-quin Forestry
Colin Koszman, Land Use Forester, Mosaic Forest Management
Michael Pearson, District Manager, Transportation, Vancouver Island, Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure
John McNabb, Member at Large
Ken McRae, Member at Large

REGRETS:

Levana Mastrangelo, Director, Yuułu?it?ath Government
Al Haggard, Port Alberni Port Authority
Ken Watts, Chief Councillor, Tseshah First Nation
Bella Fred, Tseshah First Nation
Brandy Lauder, Chief Councillor, Hupacasath First Nation
Judith Sayers, President, Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council
Molly Hudson, Mosaic Forest Management
Marcie Dewitt, Alberni-Clayoquot Health Network
Charles Mealey, Councillor, City of Port Alberni

STAFF PRESENT:

Daniel Sailland, Chief Administrative Officer
Heather Zenner, Manager of Administrative Services
Charlene Harrison, Administrative Assistant

The meeting can be viewed on the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District website at:

<https://www.acrd.bc.ca/events/9-2-2024/>

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm.

The Chairperson recognized this meeting is being held throughout the Nuu-chah-nulth territories.

The Chairperson reported this meeting is being recorded and livestreamed to YouTube on the Regional District website.

Introductions - Committee Members and Staff present in the Boardroom and via Zoom.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED: J. McNabb

SECONDED: C. Solda

THAT the agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

3. MINUTES

a. Transportation Advisory Committee Minutes – October 31, 2023

MOVED: C. Solda

SECONDED: J. McNabb

THAT the minutes of the Transportation Advisory Committee meeting held on October 31, 2023 be adopted.

CARRIED

4. CORRESPONDENCE

a. January 30, 2024 Letter from Rob Flemming, BC Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure in response to ACRD Board of Directors request to establish an Emergency Route through Horne Lake

Members discussed the letter from BC Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure. Discussion included how Members are looking to work with the Ministry to resolve the highway concern. Members acknowledged that the letter is a high-level response from the Minister.

Ministry staff spoke in response to the letter and identified that they have engaged Parsons Engineering to begin work on an emergency detour route study. The Ministry clarified that they are looking at an emergency detour route, and not a secondary highway. The analysis is mostly technical including; what an emergency route will look like, constraints, and the potential improvements that may be needed to use this route. Tim Murphy, Project Manager with Parsons Engineering will begin technical analysis soon and is expected to take the remainder of the year to complete. Ministry staff

discussed the past studies, from both the ACRD and the Ministry, which date back to the 1990's, and identified that Parsons will begin their analysis by reviewing the background documentation that already exists.

Members spoke about the most recent Highway 4 closure that occurred on December 25th, 2023, and stressed how highly problematic it was for the business sector and residents. Members spoke of how the Cowichan to the Port Alberni Valley route, was not a good alternative route due to fallen trees. Many residents utilized this route even though the Ministry had not reported it as a detour route. ACRD staff identified that Emergency Management Climate and Readiness (EMCR) would not initially provide financial support to those stranded by the Highway closure. ACRD provided Emergency Support Services to several travelers, which was eventually reimbursed by the Province, but added delay to the response.

Ministry discussed that their study will not include an economic analysis. Ministry is viewing this as a technical engineering exercise to look at what is needed on an emergency detour route to make it viable and safe for the public in an event of an emergency. The Ministry is not currently considering a second alternate highway route.

Members discussed the fact that electronic signs have been removed. Members recommended that the Ministry bring the signs back in case of Highway 4 closure, so those traveling the highway have prior notification. Members stressed that signage needs to be present in Coombs/Whiskey Creek area and Coombs Country Candy area. Members suggested to Ministry that there are not enough washrooms for highway closures, as a million tourists travel through during the summer. Staff also recommended that the Ministry notify the ACRD Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) when a closure happens, so EOC can get set up for the closure.

Ministry then spoke about the Christmas closure on December 25th, 2023 and stated it was a minor rock fall on a tree that caused the closure, and the Ministry had to close until December 26th, 2023 as the slope had to be assessed during daylight hours. Ministry spoke to the Members concerns on signage, Digital Message Signs (DMS), and supported investigating signage options.

Members discussed the upcoming ACRD Budget. ACRD staff identified that the ACRD and other local governments have access to funding related to rail transportation that may support further discussions with the public on general transportation options. Members then spoke to the costs to business loss during the highway closure. Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce has performed a study, on economic business loss, funded by Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET). Whistler Centre has been hired by the Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce to do a situation analysis and leading practices research. The West Coast communities determined their economic loss to be 44 million dollars during the highway closures in 2023.

MOVED: J. McNabb
SECONDED: M. Sparrow

THAT this correspondence be received.

CARRIED

5. REQUEST FOR DECISIONS

a. Request for Decision regarding Amendment to the Transportation Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

MOVED: J. McNabb
SECONDED: C. Solda

THAT the Transportation Committee recommend the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Board of Directors amend the Transportation Advisory Committee Terms of Reference as presented.

CARRIED

6. REPORTS

a. 2024 Budget and Workplan – PIC Transportation Committee Scope

The Proposed Case Initiative (PIC) for the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was summarized for Members. ACRD staff presented the PIC to the ACRD Board, to break down and identify budgetary elements that are outside of core business. One of the PICs included confirming and establishing a budget for the Transportation Committee scope. Focus will be on a literature review of the various research initiatives and alternate route explorations that were studied in the past. A budget of \$70,000 was established to help facilitate TAC meetings, help collect existing information and assemble it. There are two core elements to the work that will be done this year. One of those elements is to construct a business case. There are several communities with one road in and out, focusing on the business case aspect, economic impact, and social impacts are important to build importance to the Ministry for supporting the need for an alternative route. The second core element includes what will be done with the collected information. Once both core elements are collaborated, they will be utilized into a plan for engagement with other levels of government to pursue an alternative route.

Members discussed their support for the proposed \$70,000 towards a consultant, as growth of the region and inflation and economy grows, a reliable road access, or secondary route is needed. ACRD will continue to look for more grants towards a secondary route.

Ministry discussed that there are no immediate plans for Angel Rock, but there will be future discussions with the Ministry on this topic. The Ministry will share the Terms of Reference from the project when available from Parsons Engineering.

MOVED: J. McNabb

SECONDED: C. Solda

THAT the Transportation Advisory Committee receives report a.

CARRIED

MOVED: J. McNabb

SECONDED: D. Law

THAT the Transportation Advisory Committee recommend to the ACRD Board of Directors to hire a consultant for \$70,000 for the exploration and prioritization of a secondary transportation route.

CARRIED

7. LATE BUSINESS

8. QUESTION PERIOD

Questions/Comments from the public. The Manager of Administrative Services advised there were no questions or comments respecting an agenda topic from public:

- Participating in Person in the ACRD Board Room
- Participating in the Zoom webinar
- Submissions received by email at responses@acrd.bc.ca.

9. ADJOURN

MOVED: M. Sparrow

SECONDED: J. McNabb

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 2:28 pm.

CARRIED

Certified Correct:

Bob Beckett

Bob Beckett,
Chairperson

Charlene Harrison

Charlene Harrison,
Administrative Assistant