



The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project

Detailed Design Consultation Summary Report

Squamish

June 8, 2007

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1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.1 Project Scope

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, reliability and capacity. 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 as demand increases for resident and visitor travel, as well as 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:

- **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 Beach 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 2-lane sections and alternating passing opportunities provided by alternating the third lane.

1.2 Project Goals

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

- Safety improvements
- Reliability improvements
- Capacity improvements
- Project completion by late 2009
- Management of traffic flows during construction in order to minimize disruption and maximize predictability
- Completion of the project on time and on budget

1.3 Community Consultation

The Ministry of Transportation (MoT) has consulted about the scope and nature of highway improvements since 2002 with communities, businesses and residents along the corridor. Residents and community stakeholders have participated in hundreds of meetings. The design stages include:

1. Project Definition Consultation
(completed 2002–2003)
2. Pre-Design Consultation
(completed 2003–2005)
3. Preliminary Design Consultation
(completed 2005–2006)
4. Detailed Design Consultation
(February–October 2007)

The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project maintains a community relations program to provide ongoing communications about construction activities, as well as current construction delays and highway closures updates.

The S2S Transportation Group is the contractor responsible for designing, building, operating and maintaining the Sea-to-Sky Highway. A key outcome of detailed design consultation is practical feedback on detailed design features for consideration by the Ministry of Transportation and the S2S Transportation Group, prior to completion of improvements in each section.

Detailed design consultation generally involves the discussion of fewer but very specific treatments related to the final design improvements, including such things as specific traffic calming and noise reduction features, shape and texture of gateway signage, detailed landscaping, lighting and other aesthetic treatments.

1.4 Traffic Management

A key goal of the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project is to manage traffic flows during construction in order to minimize disruption and maximize predictability for travellers. Highway closures will be implemented at set times and publicized well in advance.

To plan ahead for a safe trip, call **1-877- 4SAFE99 (1-877-472-3399)** for up-to-date traffic information or go to the website (www.seatoskyimprovements.ca) to access the following travel planning tools:

- **Weekly Schedule** – Weekly update on confirmed highway closures and delays
- **Travel Planner** – A list of the available closure/delay windows for current season
- **Closure & Delay Windows** – The maximum closure/delay windows to 2009
- **Road Alerts Service** – Frequent Sea-to-Sky travellers can receive text message alerts about major or unscheduled events that affect highway travel

2. OVERVIEW OF DETAILED DESIGN CONSULTATION ON HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

2.1 Stages of Consultation

As the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project proceeds through various design stages and ultimately into construction, communities and key stakeholders are being consulted. The design stages include:

1. Project Definition Consultation (completed)
2. Pre-Design Consultation (completed)
3. Preliminary Design Consultation (completed)
4. Detailed Design Consultation (**CURRENT STAGE**)

2.2 Detailed Design Consultation

The purpose of the consultation is to:

- **Inform** the community and stakeholders about the draft detailed design features for the Sea-to-Sky Highway within the Squamish area as well as the corridor-wide features.
- **Gather** input and feedback regarding detailed design features for highway improvements from the community and stakeholders.
- **Summarize** community and stakeholder input for consideration by the Ministry of Transportation and the S2S Transportation Group.
- **Distribute** the Consultation Summary Report to consultation participants and other stakeholders.

2.3 Detailed Design Consultation Topics

The following consultation topics are discussed in the Squamish detailed design community consultation:

- Community Gateways
- Business Gateway Signs
- Landscape Features
- Pedestrian Crossings, Landscaping and Lighting

2.4 Detailed Design Consultation Methods

a. Discussion Guide and Feedback Form

A consultation discussion guide (see TAB 4) was developed to explain the purpose of the detailed design consultation and included a feedback form to assist in gathering community input.

The discussion guide also included:

- Maps showing the location of highway improvements and features,
- A summary of the results from preliminary design consultation with the Squamish community in May–June 2006,
- Graphics illustrating the gateway feature options, business gateway options, and
- Descriptions and graphics of the landscape options and treatments.

b. Feedback Forms

Feedback was gathered at four small group meetings, two Open Houses, e-mail, fax and mail (see TAB 5).

c. Web-based Consultation

All consultation materials were available on the web, including the feedback form that could be e-mailed, mailed or faxed back to the project office.

d. Small Group Meetings

The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project team met with four stakeholder groups at the Sea-to-Sky Hotel on April 17th, 2007:

- Business, Tourism, Development
- Transportation, First Responders, Utilities
- Sustainability
- Community/Recreation

The discussion guide and display boards were reviewed at the small group meetings and attendees provided comments on detailed design features for the Squamish community, and had the opportunity to ask questions.

A facilitator, recorder, Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project staff and members of the S2S Transportation Group attended the small group meetings.

e. Open Houses

Open Houses were held at the Sea-to-Sky Hotel on Tuesday, April 24th, 6:30 pm–8:30 pm, and Saturday, April 28th, 10:00 am–12:00 pm, and gave residents, community organizations and businesses an opportunity to provide feedback on detailed design features. Display boards provided background on the highway improvements, the gateway feature options, business gateway options and the landscape options. Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project staff and S2S Transportation Group team members were available to answer questions.

f. Public Notice and Postcard

An advertisement for the Open Houses was placed in the *Squamish Chief* on April 13th and April 20th, 2007 (see TAB 3).

A postcard invitation was distributed to the Squamish community on Friday, April 13, 2007. This postcard was also distributed at community organization meetings (Rotary Club and Chamber).

g. Squamish Media Interviews

Rob Ahola, of the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project, was interviewed by the *Squamish Chief* on April 17 to raise awareness about the upcoming detailed design consultation open houses. The interview appeared in the April 20th edition of the *Squamish Chief*.

3. KEY THEME SUMMARY

The Squamish Detailed Design consultation included gathering community feedback and input regarding the community gateways, business gateways and landscape features.

More than 120 people participated in the Squamish Detailed Design consultation as follows:

- 38 people attended the small group meetings,
- Approximately 60 people attended the April 24th and 28th Open Houses.
- A total of 121 feedback forms were returned;
 - 34 feedback forms were submitted at the small group meetings,
 - 31 feedback forms were submitted at the Open Houses,
 - 16 online feedback forms were completed, and
 - 40 feedback forms were dropped off at Tim Hortons and then taken to the Sea-to-Sky Highway Project field office in Squamish.

Key Themes

- Some participants expressed concern that there are too many traffic lights on the highway through the Squamish section.
- Participants requested that centre barriers on the highway be installed wherever possible.
- Some participants requested that the culvert at Wilson Slough be sized to accommodate transit by canoes.
- Several participants suggested that highway speeds through the Squamish section of the highway should be reduced.
- Respondents were almost equally divided on their agreement with the proposed plantings at Industrial Way noting that low shrubs should be planted in order to retain the visibility of the businesses and sightlines for drivers when exiting the parking lot.
- Some participants commented that the intersection at Wal-Mart is underused and should be removed.
- Some participants requested that the sidewalk at Centennial Way underpass be moved to the other side of the road so that students would not have to cross through traffic.
- Many respondents requested that existing trees near Centennial Way should be retained and low shrubs should be planted to augment the existing trees. Only trees that absolutely need to be removed are removed and new trees should be planted.
- Several respondents suggested either moving Mamquam Road to Garibaldi walkway farther from the highway or providing a barrier between the road and the walkway in the interest of safety. Other respondents suggested planting trees or shrubs alongside the walkway to act as a natural barrier for pedestrians.
- Respondents suggested that Mamquam Road to Garibaldi walkway be concrete or another 'smooth' surface for ease of use for a variety of user groups.

4. SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK FORM QUESTIONS

The following is a summary of input provided through the consultation feedback form. The quantitative results¹ (see TAB 1) are presented below and these are followed by a qualitative summary (see TAB 6) of feedback form comments.

4.1 Community Rocks Gateway Feature

The community rocks gateway feature emphasizes the natural surroundings of the area. Each option will have the name of the community displayed in a contemporary, consistent typeface. A Salish name for each area will also appear on the sign.

Participants were asked: Please indicate your preference for option 1 or 2.

Quantitative Summary

Option 1: Faux rock boulder base with integrated faux rock sign.	83%
Option 2: Faux rock boulder base with the sign made of painted metal.	17%

Summary of Comments

Please provide additional comments.

The majority of respondents strongly favoured option 1, the rock sign.

- Many respondents commented that real rock should be used rather than faux rock, especially with the amount of rock available in the Squamish area.
- Several respondents commented that the font used for the lettering should be large enough to be clearly visible and readable.

4.2 Business Gateway Signage

Business Gateway signs will identify the main commercial areas of Squamish Town Centre and Garibaldi Business Centre.

Options 1 and 2 are designed to correspond to the *Community Rock* gateway signage and to reflect the natural surroundings of the Squamish area.

Participants were asked: Please indicate your preference for option 1 or 2.

¹ Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Quantitative Summary

Option 1: A metal sign set into a boulder-like, faux rock base. Signs would be approximately 5 feet tall.	89%
Option 2: A metal sign set on a rock wall, made of real or faux rock. Signs would be approximately 5 feet tall.	11%

Summary of Comments

Please provide additional comments.

- Many respondents suggested using real rock rather than faux rock.
- Respondents preferred a sign made entirely of rock rather than metal.
- Some respondents commented that the business gateway signs should be consistent with Community Gateway Signage.

4.3 Landscape Plans

a. Cleveland Avenue

At Cleveland Avenue, it is proposed that the medians will be planted with Green Ash trees along with Cotoneaster, Lavender, Japanese Spirea and Cinquefoil. The environmentally sensitive area northeast of the Cleveland Avenue intersection will be retained. Low, native shrub plantings are proposed at the southeast quadrant of the intersection.

Participants were asked: Please indicate your level of agreement with the proposed plantings.

Quantitative Summary

Strongly Agree	34%
Somewhat Agree	44%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	13%
Somewhat Disagree	5%
Strongly Disagree	3%

78% of respondents agreed (either strongly or somewhat) with the proposed plantings.

Summary of Comments

Please provide additional comments.

- Many respondents suggested the use of low native shrubs that would not interfere with visibility of businesses.
- Many respondents did not want to see large trees planted, while some respondents preferred evergreens with year-round foliage.

b. Industrial Way

At Industrial Way, it is proposed that the medians will be planted with Green Ash trees along with Cotoneaster, Lavender, Japanese Spirea and Cinquefoil. The roadside areas will be planted with clusters of native vegetation. These clusters will be strategically located to optimize views to the adjacent commercial properties while softening the road edge.

Participants were asked: Please indicate your level of agreement with the proposed plantings.

Quantitative Summary

Strongly Agree	20%
Somewhat Agree	25%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	8%
Somewhat Disagree	4%
Strongly Disagree	44%

48% of respondents disagreed (either strongly or somewhat) with the proposed plantings.
45% of respondents agreed (either strongly or somewhat) with the proposed plantings.

Summary of Comments

Please provide additional comments.

- Many respondents preferred planting low shrubs that would allow for visibility of businesses.
- Many respondents commented that planting of trees would impact the visibility of businesses and obstruct driver visibility when exiting the parking lot.

c. Commercial Way

The landscape area at Commercial Way will be planted with clusters of native vegetation. In the median near the intersection, Green Ash trees will be planted along with Cotoneaster, Lavender, Japanese Spirea and Cinquefoil. The eastern roadside area at the intersection will be planted with clusters of native vegetation.

Participants were asked: Please indicate your level of agreement with the proposed plantings.

Quantitative Summary

Strongly Agree	33%
Somewhat Agree	40%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	17%
Somewhat Disagree	5%
Strongly Disagree	5%

73% of respondents agreed (either strongly or somewhat) with the proposed plantings.

Summary of Comments

Please provide additional comments.

- Several respondents preferred planting of low shrubs to trees citing the importance of maintaining sightlines for the safety of pedestrians.
- Several respondents requested evergreen trees.

d. Centennial Way

Centennial Way offers opportunities for restoration of disturbed roadside areas. Plantings of native trees and clusters of native vegetation are proposed for the disturbed areas. The large islands will be planted with low shrubs and grass. Consideration will be given to maintaining proper safety sightlines for merging traffic.

Participants were asked: Please indicate your level of agreement with the proposed plantings.

Quantitative Summary

Strongly Agree	45%
Somewhat Agree	34%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	10%
Somewhat Disagree	5%
Strongly Disagree	6%

79% of respondents agreed (either strongly or somewhat) with the proposed plantings.

Summary of Comments

Please provide additional comments.

- Many respondents requested that the existing trees be retained and low shrubs should be planted to augment the existing trees.
- Several respondents expressed their support of a restoration plan for Centennial Way.

e. Mamquam Road

At Mamquam Road, it is proposed that the medians will be planted with Green Ash trees along with Cotoneaster, Lavender, Japanese Spirea and Cinquefoil. The eastern roadside will receive low-growing native vegetation. Overhead hydro wires limit the height of the vegetation. The west side of the road will receive clusters of native vegetation.

Participants were asked: Please indicate your level of agreement with the proposed plantings.

Quantitative Summary

Strongly Agree	43%
Somewhat Agree	40%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	10%
Somewhat Disagree	3%
Strongly Disagree	3%

83% of respondents agreed (either strongly or somewhat) with the proposed plantings.

Summary of Comments

Please provide additional comments.

- Several respondents suggested planting low shrubs that are green year-round rather than planting trees.
- One respondent noted the noise reduction value of trees.

f. Mamquam Road to Garibaldi Way

South of Mamquam Road, it is proposed that the median will be planted with Green Ash trees along with Cotoneaster, Lavender, Japanese Spirea and Cinquefoil. The west side of the road will receive clusters of native vegetation. The eastern roadside will receive low-growing native vegetation. Overhead hydro wires limit the height of the vegetation.

Participants were asked: Please indicate your level of agreement with the proposed plantings.

Quantitative Summary

Strongly Agree	40%
Somewhat Agree	38%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	8%
Somewhat Disagree	8%
Strongly Disagree	5%

78% of respondents agreed (either strongly or somewhat) with the proposed plantings.

Summary of Comments

Please provide additional comments.

- Some respondents suggested planting low shrubs that are green year-round rather than trees.
- Some respondents requested that only evergreen trees be planted.

g. Trail/Walkway Options – Mamquam Road to Garibaldi Way

From Mamquam Road to Garibaldi Way, a trail/walkway is planned. There are two proposed options for this trail/walkway.

Participants were asked: Please indicate your preference for option 1 or 2.

Quantitative Summary

Option 1: A concrete sidewalk and boulevard.	18%
Option 2: A meandering walkway. The surface is to be determined at a later date.	82%

Summary of Comments

Please provide additional comments.

- Several respondents suggested moving the walkway farther from the highway or providing a barrier between the road and walkway in the interest of safety.
- Several respondents suggested planting trees or shrubs on the side of the walkway to provide a natural barrier for pedestrians.
- Some respondents suggested that the pathway be concrete or another 'smooth' surface for ease of use for a variety of user groups.

h. Garibaldi Way

It is proposed that the medians will be planted with Green Ash trees as well as Lavender, Japanese Spirea and Cinquefoil. The west side of the road will receive clusters of native vegetation at the intersection and base of the pedestrian overpass.

Participants were asked: Please indicate your level of agreement with the proposed plantings.

Quantitative Summary

Strongly Agree	31%
Somewhat Agree	47%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	8%
Somewhat Disagree	8%
Strongly Disagree	5%

78% of respondents agreed (either strongly or somewhat) with the proposed plantings.

Summary of Comments

Please provide additional comments.

- A few respondents suggested planting low shrubs rather than tall trees.
- A few respondents requested only evergreens be planted (not Green Ash trees).

i. Depot Road

It is proposed that the median north of the intersection will be planted with Green Ash trees as well as Cotoneaster, Lavender, Japanese Spirea and Cinquefoil. The west side of the road will receive clusters of native vegetation.

Quantitative Summary

Strongly Agree	31%
Somewhat Agree	47%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	8%
Somewhat Disagree	8%
Strongly Disagree	5%

78% of respondents agreed (either strongly or somewhat) with the proposed plantings.

Summary of Comments

Please provide additional comments.

- Participants made various suggestions including using a natural look, permanent greenery, and ensuring that views of businesses are not blocked

Community Gateway Landscape Feature

To alert drivers that they are entering a community and to promote traffic calming on the Sea-to-Sky Highway, it is proposed that a single row of Green Ash trees be planted on either side of the north and south community gateways.

Participants were asked: Please indicate your level of agreement with the proposed plantings.

Quantitative Summary

Strongly Agree	48%
Somewhat Agree	33%
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	7%
Somewhat Disagree	11%
Strongly Disagree	0%

81% of respondents agreed (either strongly or somewhat) with the proposed plantings.

Summary of Comments

Please provide additional comments.

- Some respondents suggested that fir or cedar trees should be used instead of ash trees.
- Some respondents suggested using trees and shrubs that are permanently green.
- Some respondents commented that it is important to maintain good visibility in this area.

4.4 Additional Comments

- Some respondents requested that the sidewalk be moved to the other side of the road (at the Centennial Way underpass) so that students would not have to cross through traffic.
- Several respondents requested safety measures be instituted, such as traffic calming, reduced speed limits and separated trails for the benefit of the community.
- Several respondents asked that only trees that absolutely need to be removed near Centennial Way are removed, and that many new trees are planted.
- Other respondents asked that shrubs be used in landscape plans rather than trees, as they felt that trees would impede the view of businesses and impact safety of pedestrians and cyclists.