

Pre-Design Consultation Summary Report

**Whistler Section
Brandywine – Function Junction**

June 28, 2005

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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 over the long term, 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 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 estimated capital project cost for the improvement project is \$600 million, and will be completed by 2009. Improvements will meet projected 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
- Management of traffic flows during construction to minimize disruption and maximize predictability
- Complete the project on time and on budget

A. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

The Ministry of Transportation (MoT) has consulted about the scope of highway improvements since 2002 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 Lions Bay Community Advisory Group, Furry Creek Advisory Group, Britannia Beach Advisory Group, Howe Sound Community Forum, Squamish advisory groups, Pinecrest and Black Tusk Advisory Group, 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 and road closures 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. For additional information, go to:

<http://www.seatoskyimprovements.ca/>.

2. OVERVIEW OF CONSULTATION ON HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT DESIGN

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

- Pre-Design
- Preliminary Design
- Detailed Design

A. PRE-DESIGN CONSULTATION GOALS

The purpose of the Brandywine to Function Junction consultation is to:

- Inform the community and stakeholders about the draft pre-design options for improvements to the Sea-to-Sky Highway in the Brandywine to Function Junction section 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, community advisory group and other stakeholders.

B. PRE-DESIGN CONSULTATION METHODS

a. DISCUSSION GUIDE AND FEEDBACK FORM

A discussion guide (see tab 4) was developed that explained the purpose of the consultation, described design options for residents and included a feedback form to assist in gathering community input. The discussion guide also provided maps highlighting the location of each option. Feedback was gathered at open houses, by email, fax and mail.

b. WEB-BASED CONSULTATION

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

c. ONE-WHISTLER ADVISORY GROUP

The Sea-to-Sky Project team met with the One-Whistler advisory group on Nov. 25, 2004. At this meeting, the consultation materials were reviewed. Members indicated appreciation for the materials and said they looked forward to the results of the consultation with the community.

d. SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

Five small group meetings were held in Whistler, March 9th and 10th, 2005. At these meetings, the consultation materials were reviewed and meeting participants were encouraged to complete feedback forms and attend the open houses. In addition to the Discussion Guide, presentation boards provided background on each of the options and Sea-to-Sky staff were available to answer questions.

e. OPEN HOUSES

Two Open Houses were held in Whistler. The first was held on Saturday, April 2, 2005, from 2:00-5:00 pm at Westin Resort & Spa, Whistler, B.C. and the second Open House was held on April 7, 2005, from 5:30-8:30pm at Whistler Municipal Hall, in Council chambers. In addition to the Discussion Guide, presentation boards provided background on each of the options and Sea-to-Sky staff were available to answer questions.

f. ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisements for the Open Houses were placed in the Whistler Question on March 24, 2005 and in the Whistler Pique on March 25, 2005. 3250 Discussion Guides were distributed in the March 24 edition of the Whistler Question. As well, Tourism Whistler distributed notice of the Open Houses to its database (see tab 3).

3. KEY THEME SUMMARY

There were approximately 125 participants in the consultation. A total of 49 feedback forms were returned with 21 being completed in the small group meetings, 22 submitted at the Open Houses, 4 submitted electronically and 2 by fax.

Summary of Feedback Form Choice

Participants were asked to indicate their preference for:

1. PRIMARY GATEWAY - SOUTH

As part of the upgrade to the highway, the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project proposes to build a primary south gateway to the Resort Municipality of Whistler. Gateways contribute to public safety by calming traffic and creating a sense of arrival. There are several options for the location of these gateways.

Where would you like the south gateway to be located?

31%	South of Brandywine Provincial Park	
46%	At Brandywine Provincial Park	
13%	North of Brandywine Park	
8%	Some other location. Where?	There was no consensus on alternate locations. Suggestions included: "before Function Junction", "at Function Junction" and "closer to Whistler".

2. PRIMARY GATEWAY – NORTH

As part of the highway improvements, the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project proposes to rebuild the primary north gateway to the Resort Municipality of Whistler near Function Junction.

Where would you like the Gateway near Function Junction to be located?

75%	Before Function Junction Intersection		
10%	After Function Junction Intersection		
10%	Some other location. Where?	There was no consensus on alternate locations. Suggestions included: “at Callaghan”, “crest of Powerline Hill” and “somewhere with a scenic view”.	

3. MILLAR CREEK RAIL CROSSING

The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project proposes to upgrade the existing at-grade rail crossing to a grade-separated crossing. This will improve the overall safety and reliability of the highway. Existing tree coverage and landscaping provide adequate coverage of the Whistler Waste Water Treatment Plant. However, there are options that can be used to further shield the sewage treatment facility from view while traveling on the highway.

What is your preference for creating a visual barrier to the Whistler Waste Water Treatment Plant?

79%	Natural treatment such as a landscaped berm, including trees planted on the berm		
8%	Gateway signage, announcing arrival into Whistler		
10%	Other. Please specify.	Some participants identified smell from the waste water treatment plant as an issue and would like that addressed even more than creation of a visual barrier.	

4. BRANDYWINE FOREST SERVICE ROAD

As part of the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project, it is possible to close and relocate the Brandywine Forest Service Road to join with the new Whistler Nordic Centre Access Road, which is proposed to be at the Callaghan West Forest Service Road. This access is approximately 500 metres north of the existing location. This relocated access provides a more efficient connection to the Whistler Nordic Centre. In addition, this access provides safe access for recreational users to hiking trails east of the Callaghan Creek and on the west side of the highway.

Does this new access location meet your needs for access to the Whistler Nordic Centre and Callaghan Valley?

75%	YES	10%	NO
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5. NORTHBOUND VIEWPOINT

The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project proposes to construct a viewpoint approximately 1 kilometre north of Callaghan Creek for northbound travellers, with parking for 5 - 10 vehicles with a right-in/right-out access. This viewpoint will provide unobstructed views to the north, south and west.

Do you support the addition of a northbound viewpoint 1 kilometre north of Callaghan Creek?

90%	YES	6%	NO
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6. BRANDYWINE PROVINCIAL PARK PULLOUT

The Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project is currently examining options to provide a southbound pullout parking area near the Brandywine Provincial Park. This pullout parking area could be useful for people who use the Brew Lake Trail, which is across the highway from Brandywine Provincial Park.

If this pullout was provided, how would you use this pullout?

Key comments included:

- use as a chain-up area and view point
- use to access trail to Brew Creek
- parking for hiking
- location for Whistler Welcome Centre

SUMMARY

Approximately 125 people participated in the Whistler area consultation. A total of 49 feedback forms were returned with 21 being completed in the small group meetings, 22 submitted at the Open Houses, 4 submitted electronically and 2 by fax.

Key Theme Summary of Comments

The following are the key themes identified in the participant feedback:

a. Primary Gateways

While a majority of participants favoured location of the North Gateway before Function Junction, many participants expressed concern that another viewpoint/pull-out should not be built near the location of the North Gateway.

b. Landscaped Berm

Participants indicated a preference for the addition of a landscaped berm to create a visual barrier to the Whistler Waste Water Treatment Plant. Additionally, potential odour from the waste water treatment plant was identified as a concern.

c. Chain-up areas

The importance of adding additional chain-up areas was noted by many participants, as was the importance of advance notification (signage) for the motorist, regarding the upcoming chain-up area. This comment was particularly prevalent in the small group meetings.

d. Safety

The participants requested increased use of rumble strips to improve safety and visibility on the highway. Increased use of lighting was also suggested, particularly at intersections. Safety was commented on more in small group meetings than at open houses.

