
INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Highway 16 transportation meetings to take place

PRINCE GEORGE – The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is meeting with First Nations and municipal leaders on the corridor from Prince George to Prince Rupert, to better understand the transportation needs of people living in communities along Highway 16.

Meetings will be held from June to mid-July that will focus on finding practical ways to connect residents with services and amenities in major centres, such as getting to medical appointments, doing grocery shopping or simply visiting family and friends.

These will build on the meetings and discussions already held with stakeholders, including the Omenica Beetle Action Coalition, the North Central Local Government Association and the RCMP Northern Division.

There isn't an easy fix for the transportation challenges in the region. The distance between communities presents a significant challenge for people to travel back and forth. A multi-community approach is necessary to find practical solutions to the transportation challenges many residents face every day.

The ministry looks forward to continued discussions with communities along the Highway 16 corridor.

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ISSUES NOTE**

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Date: Sept. 16, 2014

Minister Responsible: Todd Stone

Highway 16

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- **My staff met with First Nations and municipal leaders to help us better understand the community-specific transportation concerns and needs for each community along the Highway 16 corridor.**
- **There isn't an easy fix for transportation services in the region. The distance between communities presents a significant challenge for people to travel back and forth.**
- **However, through the meetings, we heard of a number of common transportation challenges that residents face every day.**
- **Staff are now developing a number of practical solutions to help connect residents with services and amenities in the major centres along the corridor.**
- **I am confident that these solutions will make a very positive difference for residents living along the Highway 16 corridor.**

KEY FACTS REGARDING THE ISSUE:

In June and July, ministry staff met with more than 80 First Nations and municipal leaders representing 13 municipalities and 12 First Nations communities, to get a better understanding of existing transportation challenges along the Highway 16 corridor from Prince George to Prince Rupert. Through feedback gathered at the meetings, the ministry is developing practical and affordable solutions to address these challenges.

These meetings built on the 2006 Highway of Tears Symposium, the 2012 Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, and other meetings and discussions with stakeholders, including the Omenica Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC), the North Central Local Government Association and the RCMP Northern Division.

Through the meetings, a number of themes surfaced which were used to develop practical and sustainable solutions to address common community concerns. In addition, information gathered through a survey conducted by OBAC and Carrier Sekani Family Services (with ministry input), also informed the ministry's work to find safe and reliable transportation needs for residents in the area.

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Highway 16 Key Messages & Questions and Answers

Key Messages

- I have asked ministry staff to meet with First Nations and municipal leaders to find practical transportation options that will help connect residents with services and amenities in the major centers along Highway 16.
- A multi-community approach is necessary to find practical solutions to the transportation problems many residents face every day along this corridor.
- There isn't an easy fix for transportation services in the region. The distance between communities presents a significant challenge for people to travel back and forth.
- We are building on the work already done to allow us to better understand the individual needs of each community.

Questions and Answers:

Why is the ministry not holding meetings with the broader public?

There have been meetings already held. We are building on our knowledge of the corridor and what we have heard from community leaders so far. Government is now meeting with First Nations and municipal leaders who we believe can best represent the challenges and needs of their individual communities.

These focused discussions will help the ministry find practical solutions that will connect local area residents with services and amenities in major centres along the corridor.

What will the ministry do with the feedback it receives from the meetings?

It will determine practical solutions and actions necessary to improve community interconnectivity along Highway 16 so residents can access the services they need.

Why are you holding meetings about transportation improvements when the Highway of Tears Symposium and the Missing Women Commission Inquiry have recommended improved transportation service on Highway 16?

The meetings with First Nation and municipal leaders this June and July build on the recommendations from the Highway of Tears Symposium and the Missing Women Commission Inquiry, as well as other meetings that have taken place between government and stakeholders.

There is no easy fix here. We are talking about a corridor that is almost 800 kilometres. It is important that government understand the specific interests of individual northern communities so that practical transportation solutions can be found to help residents access the services they need.

How much money will you put into transportation improvements on Highway 16?

We won't know what these costs will be until we complete our discussions with municipal and First Nations leaders.

How much is it costing to do these meetings?

As you know, we all have to manage our budgets very carefully. We will be using government offices for the meetings and will be keeping costs down.