

2015/16 ESTIMATES NOTE

Highway 16 – Status Update

Suggested Response:

- The Province recognizes the importance of continued effort to improve the safety of travel along northern routes, including Highway 16.
- I understand the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure has met with mayors and council, local government representatives, and First Nations leaders in communities along the Highway 16 corridor, to better understand residents' transportation challenges.
- The engagement process revealed that there is no single solution to address transportation issues along the corridor, and a "one size fits all" approach isn't the answer.
- The recommendation identifies the need for safer transportation options on our northern highways – thousands of kilometres of highways.
- Much has been done to accomplish this goal, including:
 - Government continues to invest \$4.5 million annually in public transportation options (including the health bus);
 - The expansion of cell phone service along BC Highways – including nearly 160 kilometers along Highway 16 since 2009;
 - Funding provided for ongoing safety workshops; and
 - Hitchhiking awareness programs.
- Thanks to the efforts of northern communities and our government, B.C. is a safer place than it was 15 years ago, and our northern highways are safer than they were 15 years ago.

Comment [SJE1]: Greg has concerns about how broad this is, as TRAN has been focusing on the 700+ km along Highway 16 between PR & PG.

Background:

- The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI) has engaged in a number of activities to determine how best to address the need for safe and reliable transportation between communities along Highway 16. This included face-to-face meetings in summer 2014 with over 80 leaders representing communities, First Nations, local governments and municipalities along the Highway 16 corridor between Prince George and Prince Rupert – to find practical ways to connect residents with services and amenities in major centres.

- As a result of these meetings and previous discussions with stakeholders, MoTI is working with stakeholders to implementing practical, affordable and sustainable solutions to the transportation challenges, and will continue to support local governments to provide local solutions. Actions to date include:
 - A new comprehensive web-based portal, consolidating transportation related information for communities along with Highway 16 corridor into one central location, linking to service providers. The site provides residents with easy access to information on transit, medical transportation, inter-city bus, rail and community-based transportation services.
 - \$75,000 in one time funding to Carrier Sekani Family Services to support increased access to driver education, safe driver, and driver licensing programs for First Nations to ensure more licensed drivers are available to operate vehicles or support existing transportation services in communities. ~~Many First Nations leaders indicated they~~ During meetings with leaders, MoTI heard that First Nations communities have access to community vehicles, but lack licensed drivers to operate these vans or buses.

Additional Progress

- Increased individual and community safety through funding to support community-led prevention and awareness activities:
 - Since 2006, \$150,000 in funding has been provided to support implementation of Highway of Tears Symposium Report recommendations, including:
 - development of a new community coordinator position;
 - hosting of Aboriginal youth forums focusing on safety and violence prevention;
 - delivery of key workshops to engage youth on the risks associated with hitch-hiking; and
 - the creation of a youth safety toolkit.
 - Since 2012, \$350,000 has been provided to Carrier Sekani to raise awareness through a media campaign, and to develop, deliver and enhance community safety workshops along Highway 16, which include discussions about safe transportation options.
 - In 2013/14, the Ministry of Justice helped to secure \$54,000 in federal funding for Carrier Sekani to undertake a community consultation on the needs of victims and family members of missing and murdered women along the Highway of Tears.
 - In March 2014, a \$110,000 in grant funding was allocated to further support the safety of vulnerable Aboriginal women and girls during their transition from rural to urban communities.

- Earlier intervention through targeted RCMP engagement and outreach to hitchhikers:
 - Members of the RCMP in BC now engage with hitchhikers they see while on duty, stopping to interact with and distribute safety information kits to all hitchhikers observed along the highway.
 - Since 2011, RCMP North District in Prince George has implemented unique and detailed directives on hitchhiking in order "to enhance the prevention of crime, early detection of missing persons, and public safety through the proactive identification of persons hitchhiking" in that region.
- Enhanced police response through improved investigative resources and tools:
 - Since 2005, \$20 M in funding has been allocated to the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit in order to review 18 historical cases of disappearances and murders of women along highways in BC between 1969 - 2006. Almost one-third of these cases have been solved.
 - In response to the 2012 MWCI Report, the Ministry of Justice introduced and recently passed the Missing Persons Act (March 2014), which provides police with the tools necessary to find missing people sooner in cases where there is no criminal connection.
- Safer transitions along northern highways through exploration and expansion of infrastructure:
 - A significant amount of new cellular coverage has been added – nearly 160 kilometers since 2009 – to Highway 16. To date, Highway 16 has approximately 69% cell coverage, allowing drivers and people to use their cell phones to call for emergency services and support if needed.
 - University of Northern BC and the RCMP have a joint study underway to come up with recommendations for hitchhikers, police and communities on how to improve safety, and identify alternatives to hitchhiking.
 - Government commits \$1.5 M per year to BC Transit to partner with local communities for local bus service throughout the week. BC Transit is offering to work with other local governments or First Nations who might wish to partner in a cost-share for similar services.
 - The Northern Health Authority operates a subsidized shuttle service to provide safe transportation to individuals travelling to medical appointments outside their home communities.

Contact: Lynda Cavanaugh	Phone: s.17	Mobile: s.17
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HIGHWAY 16 TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Estimates Note

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Date: February 25, 2015

ISSUE

- Communities along the Highway 16 corridor between Prince Rupert and Prince George have identified challenges accessing neighbouring cities and towns for the services they need, to participate in social activities, or to connect with each other.

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

- There is no "one size fits all" approach or easy fix to address the transportation challenges along the Highway 16 corridor. Simply running a shuttle bus along the length of the highway doesn't respond to these challenges.
- MOTI is taking steps to improve access to transportation services for residents of communities from Prince Rupert to Prince George, and is seeking ways to support community-based transportation options to provide safer travel between communities.
- The Province is working in partnership with First Nations organizations to implement practical, affordable solutions to address community needs.
- One such solution was to fund the establishment of a First Nations driver training program to better position communities to operate existing shuttle buses that are currently sitting idle.
- MOTI identified transportation services currently available, and developed a web-based portal to provide information on transportation and other related services for residents along the Highway 16 corridor.
- MOTI will continue to support local governments to provide local solutions.

BACKGROUND

- The 2012 report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry urged the Province to immediately commit to developing and implementing an enhanced public transit system to provide a safer travel option connecting the Northern communities, particularly along Highway 16.
- In Summer 2014, MOTI met with over 80 community and First Nations leaders representing 13 municipalities and districts and 12 First Nations communities along Highway 16 to discuss rural transportation challenges.
- The meetings focused 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.
- MOTI reached out to the First Nations Health Authority to establish a partnership to provide a new shuttle service connecting First Nations communities to neighbouring towns. A funding source and service delivery model have not been confirmed.
- Many First Nations communities have access to vehicles, but lack licensed drivers to operate these vans or buses. In response, MOTI has signed an agreement to provide one-time funding of \$75,000 to the Carrier Sekani Family Services to support increased access to driver training and driver licensing programs for First Nations.

Comment [SJE1]: CONFIDENTIAL

- This funding will allow for the establishment of a First Nations driving instructor training program to support driver training for First Nations communities, providing dedicated training for First Nations drivers seeking Class 5 and Class 4 licences.
- Existing passenger transportation services between Prince George and Prince Rupert are provided by inter-city bus, rail, transit, non-emergency medical transport, and taxi services based in eight communities that together are licensed to serve the entire route. Community-established services are also available.
- At the Summer meetings, MOTI heard that there was no comprehensive source of information about existing transportation services. To address this concern, MOTI developed the province's first web-based portal that consolidates information about transportation related services in locations along the corridor, linking to service providers.
- Over half of BC Transit communities in the province have some form of inter-city service. Inter-city transit is available between Smithers and Hazelton, and between Kitimat and Terrace.
- The decision to initiate transit service rests with local government. Feasibility studies done in 2005, 2009 and 2010 looked at services connecting additional communities along the Highway 16 corridor, but local governments did not proceed due to cost. Less costly alternatives such as volunteer programs were suggested.
- As part of the 10-year transportation plan, MOTI will look at transit services from a rural perspective – in communities across the entire province, not just in the North.

PROGRAM CONTACT

Greg Gilks, Executive Director
Transportation Policy Branch
Transportation Policy and Programs Department

s.17

APPROVALS:

Deborah Bowman, ADM
Gail Silvestrum, a/CFO

Date
Date

Highway 16 Transportation Options

Estimates Note

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Date: March 20, 2015

ISSUE

- Communities along the Highway 16 corridor between Prince Rupert and Prince George have identified challenges accessing neighbouring cities and towns.

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

- There is no "one size fits all" approach or easy fix to address the transportation challenges along the Highway 16 corridor. Simply running a shuttle bus along the length of the highway doesn't respond to these challenges.
- Increased cell coverage and Drive BC webcams have improved the safety for citizens living along the Highway 16 corridor.
- The Ministry will continue to work with First Nations and community partners to identify practical, affordable and sustainable transportation initiatives to increase safety of citizens living in remote, rural northern communities along the Highway 16 corridor.
- Support for existing transportation services delivered through Northern Health Connections and BC Transit will continue, and the Ministry will pursue partnerships with community organizations to increase safe driver education and licensing, information sharing and inter-community transportation services.

BACKGROUND

- The 2012 report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry urged the Province to immediately commit to developing and implementing an enhanced public transit system to provide a safer travel option connecting the Northern communities, particularly along Highway 16.
- In summer 2014, MOTI met with over 80 community and First Nations leaders representing 13 municipalities and districts and 12 First Nations communities along Highway 16 to discuss rural transportation challenges.
- The meetings focused 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.
- Ministry staff were told that several First Nations communities have access to vehicles, but lack appropriately licensed drivers to operate these vans or buses. In response, MOTI has signed an agreement to provide one-time funding of \$75,000 to the Carrier Sekani Family Services to support increased access to driver training and driver licensing programs for First Nations.
- This funding will allow for the establishment of a First Nations driving instructor training program to support driver training for First Nations communities, providing dedicated training for First Nations drivers seeking Class 5 and Class 4 licenses.
- Existing passenger transportation services between Prince George and Prince Rupert are provided by inter-city bus, rail, transit, non-emergency medical transport, and taxi services based in eight communities that together are licensed to serve the entire route. Community-established services are also available.

- At the summer meetings, Ministry staff heard that there was no comprehensive source of information about existing transportation services. To address this concern, MOTI developed a web-based portal that consolidates information about transportation related services and worked with ServiceBC to facilitate distribution of hard copies when internet is not available.
- Transit feasibility studies done in 2005, 2009 and 2010 looked at services connecting additional communities along the Highway 16 corridor, but local governments did not proceed due to cost. Less costly alternatives such as volunteer programs were suggested.

PROGRAM CONTACT

Greg Gilks, Executive Director, Transportation Policy Branch, Transportation Policy & Programs Department – Cell: ^{s.17}

Mezzarobba, Marcie JAG:EX

From: Gilks, Greg E TRAN:EX
Sent: Wednesday, April 8, 2015 2:05 PM
To: Moody, Juliette JAG:EX
Cc: Mezzarobba, Marcie JAG:EX; Evans, Sandy J TRAN:EX
Subject: RE: Highway 16 - Estimates Note

We have nothing more to update at this time. I do not anticipate we will have a "final" version until we walk into Estimates, but we can keep you in the loop if developments call for an update. At this time the Carrier Sekani are developing their driver training program and the First Nations Health Authority has initiated planning for discussion with their stakeholders (that last point is still confidential).

Greg Gilks, Executive Director
Transportation Policy
Transportation Policy & Programs
Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
250-387-0882

From: Moody, Juliette JAG:EX
Sent: Wednesday, April 8, 2015 8:59 AM
To: Gilks, Greg E TRAN:EX
Cc: Mezzarobba, Marcie JAG:EX
Subject: FW: Highway 16 - Estimates Note

Hi Greg,

I see Sandy ^{s.22} and she put your name as the contact person ^{s.22}

We were just wanting to update our estimates notes and wondered if there have been any updates to the attached Highway 16 Transportation Options note? Would it be possible for you to share the final version with us?

If you prefer, we can wait for Sandy to ^{s.22} and follow-up with her.

Thanks very much,
Juliette

From: Moody, Juliette JAG:EX
Sent: Wednesday, April 8, 2015 8:53 AM
To: Evans, Sandy J TRAN:EX
Cc: Mezzarobba, Marcie JAG:EX
Subject: FW: Highway 16 - Estimates Note

Hi Sandy,

I am assisting Marcie with the estimates notes. Just wondering if there have been any updates to the Highway 16 Transportation Options note? Would it be possible for you to share the final version with us?

Thanks very much,
Juliette

From: Mezzarobba, Marcie JAG:EX
Sent: Wednesday, April 8, 2015 8:47 AM
To: Moody, Juliette JAG:EX
Subject: FW: Highway 16 - Estimates Note

From: Evans, Sandy J TRAN:EX
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2015 10:35 AM
To: Mezzarobba, Marcie JAG:EX
Subject: RE: Highway 16 - Estimates Note

I don't yet have final sign-off, but here's a DRAFT of the note for our Minister's Estimates Binder.

Sandy

From: Mezzarobba, Marcie JAG:EX
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2015 3:31 PM
To: Evans, Sandy J TRAN:EX
Subject: RE: Highway 16 - Estimates Note

Great, thank you.

From: Evans, Sandy J TRAN:EX
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2015 2:15 PM
To: Mezzarobba, Marcie JAG:EX
Subject: RE: Highway 16 - Estimates Note

No problem. I'll get ours to you as soon as I can.

From: Mezzarobba, Marcie JAG:EX
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2015 2:12 PM
To: Evans, Sandy J TRAN:EX
Cc: Arthur, Emily JAG:EX
Subject: RE: Highway 16 - Estimates Note

Thanks very much Sandy. Appreciate you taking the time to review.

Marcie

From: Evans, Sandy J TRAN:EX
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2015 10:37 AM
To: Mezzarobba, Marcie JAG:EX
Cc: Arthur, Emily JAG:EX
Subject: RE: Highway 16 - Estimates Note

Here are a few suggestions on the JAG note ... thanks for the opportunity to comment.

From: Mezzarobba, Marcie JAG:EX
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2015 8:18 AM
To: Evans, Sandy J TRAN:EX

Cc: Arthur, Emily JAG:EX
Subject: RE: Highway 16 - Estimates Note

Thanks very much.

From: Evans, Sandy J TRAN:EX
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2015 8:16 AM
To: Mezzarobba, Marcie JAG:EX
Cc: Arthur, Emily JAG:EX
Subject: RE: Highway 16 - Estimates Note

No worries. Just so you know, my ED is still reviewing my notes (which actually have not yet been requested in our ministry). As soon as I hear back from him, I'll share them with you (I prepared four).

From: Mezzarobba, Marcie JAG:EX
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2015 7:02 AM
To: Evans, Sandy J TRAN:EX
Cc: Arthur, Emily JAG:EX
Subject: RE: Highway 16 - Estimates Note

Hi Sandy,

Attached is our draft note on the Highway of Tears. The draft is based on the latest information we had at the time we were drafting the MWCI Final Update Report on progress of the implementation of the recommendations (released in December 2014). As things may have changed since then, just wanted to run it past you for any edits that need to be made to ensure messaging on the response to this issue is consistent.

Thanks for reviewing Sandy.

Marcie

From: Evans, Sandy J TRAN:EX
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2015 2:29 PM
To: Mezzarobba, Marcie JAG:EX
Cc: Rockerbie, Kirk TRAN:EX; Gilks, Greg E TRAN:EX
Subject: FW: Highway 16 - Estimates Note

Hi, Marcie. I am in the process of crafting 3-4 estimates notes with respect to Highway 16 transportation topics/actions. I'll be working with Greg Gilks to finalize them in the near future. Greg and I would be happy to take a look at your draft note ... and I'm sure that Greg will share our draft note(s) with you when they've shaped up.

Sandy Evans, Manager
Passenger Transportation Policy
BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
250-953-4940

From: Rockerbie, Kirk TRAN:EX
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2015 2:24 PM
To: Evans, Sandy J TRAN:EX
Subject: FW: Highway 16 - Estimates Note

From: Mezzarobba, Marcie JAG:EX
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2015 2:24 PM
To: Rockerbie, Kirk TRAN:EX
Cc: Arthur, Emily JAG:EX
Subject: Highway 16 - Estimates Note

Hi Kirk,

Toby Louie with Our Corporate Policy and Planning Office suggested I connect with you. I am coordinating Estimates preparation for my Branch and one of the notes we have been asked to prepare is on Highway 16 Transformation. As a result of our work on the implementation of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry Report and the specific recommendation re: transportation on Highway 16, we anticipate our Minister will be asked about it.

Do you know if your Ministry is preparing an Estimates Note on the Highway 16 issue and who I could connect with about obtaining a copy of the note to support our note preparation? I want to make sure that the messaging between the two Ministries is consistent. If a note is not being prepared, I would like to run the draft of our note past someone in your Ministry and wondered who that would be.

Sorry for the many questions and thanks in advance for your help!

Regards,

Marcie Mezzarobba | Director, Policy
Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch
Ministry of Justice

Tel: 604-660-3868 | Mobile: s.17 | email: marcie.mezzarobba@gov.bc.ca

2015/16 ESTIMATES NOTE**Highway 16****Suggested Response:**General:

- The Province recognizes the importance of continued effort to improve the safety of travel along northern routes, including Highway 16.
- I understand the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure has met with mayors and council, local government representatives, and First Nations leaders in communities along the Highway 16 corridor, to better understand residents' transportation challenges.
- The engagement process revealed that there is no single solution to address transportation issues along the corridor, and a "one size fits all" approach isn't the answer.
- The recommendation identifies the need for safer transportation options on our northern highways – thousands of kilometres of highways.
- Much has been done to accomplish this goal, including:
 - Government continues to invest \$4.5 million annually in public transportation options (including the health bus);
 - The expansion of cell phone service along BC Highways – including nearly 160 kilometers along Highway 16 since 2009;
 - Funding provided for ongoing safety workshops; and
 - Hitchhiking awareness programs.
- Thanks to the efforts of northern communities and our government, B.C. is a safer place than it was 15 years ago, and our northern highways are safer than they were 15 years ago.

Background:

- The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI) has engaged in a number of activities to determine how best to address the need for safe and reliable transportation between communities along Highway 16. This included face-to-face meetings in Fall-Summer 2014 with over 80 leaders representing communities, First Nations, local governments and municipalities along the Highway 16 corridor between Prince George and Prince Rupert – to find practical ways to connect residents with services and amenities in major centres.
- As a result of these meetings and previous discussions with stakeholders, ~~the Ministry~~ MTI is implementing practical, affordable and sustainable solutions to the transportation challenges, and

will continue to support local governments to provide local solutions. Actions to date which were identified including:

- A new comprehensive web-based portal, consolidating transportation related information ~~in~~ for communities along with Highway 16 corridor into one central location, linking to service providers. The site provides residents with easy access to information on transit, medical transportation, inter-city bus, rail and community-based transportation services.
- \$75,000 in one time funding to Carrier Sekani Family Services to support increased access to driver education, safe driver, and driver licensing programs for First Nations to ensure more licensed drivers are available to operate vehicles or support existing transportation services in communities. Many First Nations leaders indicated they communities have access to community vehicles, but lack licensed drivers to operate these vans or buses.

Additional Progress:

- Increased individual and community safety through funding to support community-led prevention and awareness activities:
 - Since 2006, \$150,000 in funding has been provided to support implementation of Highway of Tears Symposium Report recommendations, including:
 - development of a new community coordinator position;
 - hosting of Aboriginal youth forums focusing on safety and violence prevention;
 - delivery of key workshops to engage youth on the risks associated with hitch-hiking; and,
 - the creation of a youth safety toolkit.
 - Since 2012, \$350,000 has been provided to Carrier Sekani to raise awareness through a media campaign, and to develop, deliver and enhance community safety workshops along Highway 16, which include discussions about safe transportation options.
 - In 2013/14, the Ministry of Justice helped to secure \$54,000 in federal funding for Carrier Sekani to undertake a community consultation on the needs of victims and family members of missing and murdered women along the Highway of Tears.
 - In March 2014, a \$110,000 in grant funding was allocated to further support the safety of vulnerable Aboriginal women and girls during their transition from rural to urban communities.
- Earlier intervention through targeted RCMP engagement and outreach to hitchhikers:
 - Members of the RCMP in BC now engage with hitchhikers they see while on duty, stopping to interact with and distribute safety information kits to all hitchhikers observed along the highway.

- Since 2011, RCMP North District in Prince George has implemented unique and detailed directives on hitchhiking in order "to enhance the prevention of crime, early detection of missing persons, and public safety through the proactive identification of persons hitchhiking" in that region.
- Enhanced police response through improved investigative resources and tools:
 - Since 2005, \$20 million in funding has been allocated to the Provincial Unsolved Homicide Unit in order to review 18 historical cases of disappearances and murders of women along highways in BC between 1969 - 2006. Almost one-third of these cases have been solved.
 - In response to the 2012 MWCI Report, Ministry of Justice introduced and recently passed the Missing Persons Act (March 2014), which provides police with the tools necessary to find missing people sooner in cases where there is no criminal connection.
- Safer transitions along northern highways through exploration and expansion of infrastructure:
 - A significant amount of new cellular coverage has been added – nearly 160 kilometers since 2009 – to Highway 16. To date, Highway 16 has approximately 69% cell coverage, allowing drivers and people to use their cell phones to call for emergency services and support if needed.
 - UNBC and the RCMP have a joint study underway to come up with recommendations for hitchhikers, police and communities on how to improve safety, and identify alternatives to hitchhiking.
 - Government commits \$1.5 million per year to BC Transit to partner with local communities for local bus service throughout the week. BC Transit is offering to work with other local governments or First Nations who might wish to partner in a cost-share for similar services.
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- The Missing Women Commission of Inquiry recommendation identifies the need for safer transportation options on our northern highways, including Highway 16.
- Much has been done to accomplish this goal, including:
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Contact: Lynda Cavanaugh	Phone: ^{s.17}	Mobile: ^{s.17}
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