

HIGHWAY 3

FUNCTIONAL PLANNING STUDY

BC / Alberta Border to the Frank Slide

- PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET #2 -

INTRODUCTION

McElhanney Consulting Services Ltd. has been retained by Alberta Transportation (AT) to conduct a Functional Planning Study for the Highway 3 corridor from the BC/Alberta border to the Frank Slide.

A Functional Planning Study is required due to increasing traffic volumes and development pressures on Highway 3 and, particularly in the vicinity of Coleman, to enable the municipality to effectively plan for its own future growth. The study will identify and evaluate all reasonable highway alignments and make recommendations for long-term requirements for the highway in light of current design and environmental standards.

Highway 3 is a National Highway serving inter-provincial travel. Highway 3 passes through the middle of the numerous communities within the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, and serves as the only arterial route connecting these communities.

BACKGROUND

As part of the National Highway System, with vital links to British Columbia and the U.S., the desirable ultimate design for Highway 3 is to a free flow standard, with access primarily at interchanges.

Highway 3 through the Municipality is two lanes wide and 32 km long. Approximately two thirds (20 km) of the highway's length is already in its final location and will ultimately be twinned. At the municipality's request, the final alignment of the 12 km section through Coleman to Sentinel is now under review.

There are no immediate plans to implement the long-term recommendations of this study. Defining the ultimate corridor for the final 12 km section of Highway 3 will assist the municipality in establishing its own land use and development plans and policies.

Corridor History Passing Coleman Community

1970/72 - In consultation with the municipality, AT selected a North route.

1973 – To avoid developed areas north of Coleman, the municipality requested a route through town or

a South Route.

1974 – Province initiated Environmental Planning Study (EPS) to examine North and South corridors.

1975 – Municipality endorsed a South Route.

1976 – EPS concluded a South Route was superior.

1977 – AT endorsed a South Route.

Since 1977, 20 of the Pass' 32 km of Highway 3 were reconstructed in their final location, as the first two of the ultimate four lanes.

1979 – AT gazetted the Highway 3X South Route. 25% of the alignment was subsequently acquired.

1982 – Municipality requested that the North Route be reconsidered, further north than 1972 option.

1984 – AT found that a more northerly route would climb too high above Coleman.

1986 – AT agreed to property trades with local mining and oil industries along the previously proposed Highway 3X route.

1993 – AT consolidated the background and technical strategy for the South Route.

2003 – AT agreed to the municipality's request to re-evaluate the strategy for upgrading Highway 3 passing Coleman to Sentinel.

IDENTIFIED COMMUNITY CONCERNS

- Potential route alignment passing Coleman.
- Increasing traffic volumes on existing highway.
- Long-term community planning needs.
- Impacts on environmental / historic resources.
- Timing of highway improvements.

WHAT IS A FUNCTIONAL PLAN?

The Functional Plan identifies short term and long term strategies for highway development. Typically, the planning process involves public input, an analysis of the current highway situation, and evaluation of technical issues and constraints. A Functional Plan is the first step for planning, designing and constructing future highway improvements.

The objectives of the study are:

- Engage area stakeholders in the investigation of issues and in the development of alternative routes.
- Review issues, evaluate alternatives and make recommendations for a corridor strategy between the BC/Alberta border and the Frank Slide.
- Ensure that issues and concerns of area stakeholders are addressed where possible and practical in the final recommendations.
- Obtain community endorsement and Alberta Transportation approval.

A Functional Plan looks at the corridor as a whole and ensures that decisions and recommendations made on specific road alignments, widths, etc. are viewed as part of the larger provincial highway network, instead of individual segments.

Based on analysis of the traffic volumes and the technical issues, the Functional Plan identifies what is required to meet long-term needs, such as access to existing and future adjacent development and communities, interchange locations and configurations, bridge alternatives and ultimate road alignments, including elevations.

STUDY PROCESS

Project Appraisal: The project team has consulted with the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass and other stakeholders to convey study objectives and receive their input. The team has also conducted site examinations to document issues and concerns, problem definition and study objectives.

Develop Preliminary Alternatives: The team has identified long-term highway needs, predicted future traffic and transportation objectives, identified project constraints and criteria, and examined the province's and the municipality's road plans and development objectives. A high-level analysis and evaluation of various alternatives was conducted to identify alternative concepts (base alternatives) for preliminary route options through the corridor.

In addition to the constraints created by the mountainous terrain and community centres, the Pass contains many natural resources and historical sites that will have to be protected during planning.

Open House #1 is being held to invite the community

to view the project information and the preliminary concepts and to discuss concerns with project staff.

Prepare Preferred Plan: The team will review public input from Open House #1 and from other stakeholders, to refine the concept and prepare a preferred functional plan and corridor strategy.

Open House #2 will be held to invite the community to view the project information, public input received to date and the preferred plan and to discuss concerns with project staff.

Prepare Recommended Functional Plan: The team will review public input from Open House #2 and from other stakeholders, to refine the plan and to prepare the recommended functional plan and corridor strategy.

Open House #3 will be held to invite the community to view the project information, public input received to date and the recommended functional plan and to discuss concerns with project staff.

WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP?

Following this Open House, the alternatives will be ranked and evaluated based on the input received here, from other stakeholders, from the regulatory agencies, and on technical standards and costs.

A preferred functional plan and corridor strategy will be developed and presented at the second open house, scheduled for late spring 2004, to allow for additional comments and input from the local community and stakeholders.

INFORMATION

If you have any questions, comments or would like additional information, please contact:

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