

**Public Input Summary & Analysis
For Open House #3
Highway 3 Functional Planning Study
BC/Alberta Border to Highway 507**

A) INTRODUCTION

On Wednesday March 9, 2005, McElhanney Consulting Services Ltd. hosted the third of four planned public Open Houses relative to the Functional Planning Study for the Highway 3 corridor between the BC border and Highway 507 (through the Municipality of the Crowsnest Pass). Open House #3 was held between 4PM and 8PM at the Crowsnest Centre in Coleman. Open House #1 and #2 were held in January and June of 2004, respectively.

The purpose of Open House #3 was:

To make the community aware of:

- The results of Open House #2; and
- Current study progress.

To invite the public to comment on:

- McElhanney's recommendation for the route alignment passing Coleman and Sentinel; and
- Preliminary evaluation of highway twinning passing Bellevue, Hillcrest, Passburg and Burmis.

The Open House displays provided details regarding technical planning and design criteria for the highway, and environmental, historical, topographical, geotechnical, and property characteristics/constraints within the study boundaries. The displays indicated the background and progression of the study from the four base alternatives shown at Open House #1 to the current preferred and recommended alternatives and the evaluation categories. The routes shown at Open House #3 were:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1) North Base Route | Rejected by study process. |
| 2) Central Base Route | Rejected by study process. |
| a) Central CPR Option | Not Preferred by study process. |
| 3) South Base Route | Not Preferred by study process. |
| a) Central to South Option | Not Preferred by study process. |
| b) South to South/East Option | Preferred and Recommended Route. |
| c) Central/South to South/East | Preferred Route. |
| 4) Municipal Concepts | |
| a) Urban Four Lane | Rejected by study process. |
| b) Urban Couplet | Rejected by study process. |

Open House attendees were invited to sign-in, given an information package (see list below) and invited to fill out and submit a comment and questionnaire handout. From the responses to-date, it is possible to identify public opinion and concerns that will be taken into consideration during the next stage of the study – the preparation of a ‘recommended functional plan’ that will be presented to the public at Open House #4 (tentatively scheduled for June 2005).

The following information was provided (grouped as shown):

1. Questionnaire (please take the time to fill this out)
2. Project Information Sheet #5
3. Study ‘Fact Sheet’
4. Storyboard Line for today’s Open House (#3)
5. Report for Second Evaluation of Route Alternatives
6. Public Input Report for Open House #2, held June 29, 2004
7. Storyboard Line from Open House #2
8. Public Input Report for Open House #1, held January 20, 2004
9. Frequently Asked Questions Report
10. Storyboard Line from Open House #1
11. Study Area Plan, showing the two Preferred Alternatives for Open House #3

B) SUMMARY OF INPUT RECEIVED

The Open House had an anticipated turnout for a community of 5,000 to 10,000 people. Based upon previous experience on prior, similar, projects an attendance in the range of 150 to 200 people would be considered good. Open House #3 attracted 387 attendees, 348 of which agreed to 'sign-in'. 190 attendees filled out and submitted responses to the three questions posed in the questionnaire. 151 of the 190 respondents included comments with their questionnaire submission.

Table 1: Attendance Summary

Open House	Attendees	Questionnaires/Responses	
		Total Received	With Comments
#1	249	101 (41%)	82 (81%)
#2	177	73 (41%)	44 (60%)
#3	387	208 (54%)*	161 (77%)*

*Totals include responses received after the Open House.

The responses to the three preliminary questions are summarized, and compared with the results from Open House #1, in the following tables.

Table 2: Residence and Workplace Summary
(Question 1: Where do live and/or work?)

Location	Open House #3				Open House #2				Open House #1			
	Live	Work	% Live	% Work	Live	Work	% Live	% Work	Live	Work	Live %	Work %
Hillcrest	6	8	3%	4%	3	3	5%	5%	5	2	5%	2%
Frank	4	11	2%	5%	0	3	0%	5%	6	7	6%	8%
Coleman	78	48	43%	22%	34	18	52%	28%	43	22	46%	24%
Sentinel	7	9	4%	4%	4	3	6%	5%	4	2	4%	2%
Crowsnest	1	11	1%	5%	2	4	3%	6%	1	2	1%	2%
Bellevue	16	15	9%	7%	3	2	5%	3%	8	7	9%	8%
Blairmore	56	77	31%	36%	16	21	25%	32%	14	35	15%	38%
Carbondale	1	4	1%	2%	2	1	3%	2%	3	1	3%	1%
Hazell	1	3	1%	1%	0	0	0%	0%	0	1	0%	1%
B.C.	2	20	1%	9%	0	7	0%	11%	0	5	0%	5%
East in Alberta	10	9	5%	4%	1	3	2%	5%	9	9	10%	10%
Totals:	182	215	100%	100%	65	65	100%	100%	93	93	100%	100%

Open House attendees resided primarily in Coleman (43%) and Blairmore (31%), but only 22% work in Coleman while 36% work in Blairmore. This confirms the results from Open House #1 & #2 (also shown in Table 2), that within the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, Coleman is more a "residential" centre while Blairmore is more of an "employment" centre.

Table 3: Travel Purpose Summary
(Question 2: Why do you travel through the study area?)

Primarily For:	Open House #3		Open House #2		Open House #1	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Residence and Personal Travel	170	89%	62	85%	87	86%
Employment	75	39%	25	34%	37	37%
Farming	6	3%	0	0%	4	4%
Business	39	21%	10	14%	26	26%
Trucking	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
Other	14	7%	4	5%	10	10%

89% of the respondents indicate that the primary reason for travel is related to “residential or personal travel”. Obviously, the long-distance (or “through”) traveller would not be well represented at the open house. However, this confirms the current high use of Highway 3 for local traffic movements, and points to the need to improve the highway’s efficiency by ultimately separating the traffic for the two key travel purposes, local and through drivers.

Table 4: Open House Session Summary
(Question 3: How did you hear about this open house?)

		Open House #3		Open House #2		Open House #1	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Radio		33	16%	7	10%	20	20%
Newspaper ads		127	63%	43	59%	69	68%
Television		2	1%	0	0%	1	1%
Flyer		51	26%	17	23%	2	2%
Community/Newsletter		43	21%	4	5%	4	4%
Other		28	14%	12	16%	12	12%
Were the information displays helpful?							
	YES	165	82%	66	90%	75	75%
	NO	15	7%	2	3%	5	5%
Better understand process due to OH?							
	YES	163	81%	63	86%	75	74%
	NO	24	11%	6	8%	6	6%

With respect to prior public knowledge and awareness of the Open House, it is apparent that the most effective method of informing the public continues to be through local newspaper advertisements. Although a bulk mail-out through Canada Post to all residents in the municipality occurred prior to the open house, only 26% of attendees identified this method, compared to 63% through the newspaper.

Compared with Open Houses #1 and #2, the public assessment of the information provided for Open House #3 was at the average. 82.5% (Open House #1 and #2) of respondents felt the displays were helpful, compared to 82% from Open House #3. 80% (Open House #1 and #2) compared to 81% (Open House #3) of respondents felt that they understand the process better after attending the Open Houses.

C) OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The comments received to-date includes 190 from submitted questionnaires, plus an additional 18 comments received through emails and correspondence during the period subsequent to the Open House. Similar to Open House #1 and #2, the comments can be summarized under four broad categories shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Comment/Concern Summary

Type of Concern	Attendees Identifying Concern					
	At Open House #3		At Open House #2		At Open House #1	
	Number of Responses	% of Total Attendance	Number of Responses	% of Total Attendance	Number of Responses	% of Total Attendance
Route Preference	70	18%	30	17%	29	12%
Environmental	38	10%	10	6%	26	10%
Property / Business Impact	50	13%	9	5%	10	4%
Time Frame Too Long	30	8%	-	-	-	-
Speed Limit/Hwy Standards*	24	6%	-	-	-	-
Other	35	9%	5	3%	34	14%

*Proposed speed limit and National Highway Standards too high for mountainous terrain.

From the above it is apparent that the interest in identifying a route preference has increased, from 29 people at Open House #1 and 30 people at Open House #2 to 85 people at Open House #3, while concern regarding environmental issues has dropped from 32% at Open House #1 to 17% people at Open House #3.

1. ROUTE PREFERENCE

A total of 70 (18%) of the comment submissions expressed a route preference based upon the information displayed at the Open House. The route preferences are summarized in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6: Identified Route Preference

Route or Option	Attendees Identifying Route Preference		
	At Open House #3	At Open House #2	At Open House #1
	Number (% of Total Preference)		
South Route or Options	39 (56%)	21 (70%)	23 (80%)
North Route	3 (4%)	0 (0%)	3 (10%)
Central Route	4 (6%)	1 (3%)	2 (7%)
Urban Four-Lane	4 (6%)	5 (17%)	n/a
Urban Couplet	5 (7%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
Do Minimum/Keep Existing	15 (21%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL:	70 (100%)	30 (100%)	29 (100%)

Table 7: Identified South Route/Option Preference

Route or Option	At Open House #3
	Number (% of South Route Preference)
South-Southeast Route	9 (23%)
Central–Southeast Route	4 (10%)
South-Southeast or Central-Southeast Route*	18 (47%)
South Base	4 (10%)
1979 Gazetted Route	4 (10%)
TOTAL:	39 (100%)

*Note: 9 of the 17 respondents for the S-SE or C-SE requested that the highway be moved between Blairmore and Coleman.

39 respondents indicated a preference for the South Route or Option. The respondents resided in the following communities:

Table 8: Respondents Selecting a South Route or Option

Community	Open House #3
Coleman	20
Blairmore	13
Bellevue	3
Hillcrest	1
Sentinel	1
Calgary	1
TOTAL:	39

The place of residence may influence the preference for a South-Southeast or Central-Southeast Route, considering that 85% of the respondents in favour of these routes live in Coleman or Blairmore, the areas most affected.

Do Minimum/Keep Existing

15 respondents felt that the highway should remain at its present location and receive only minor upgrades such as turning lanes and limited twinning.

Other

Two respondents felt that the highway should be removed from the Crowsnest Pass entirely, and five people feel that the highway should bypass some or all of the existing communities. Two respondents suggested that only a truck bypass be constructed.

Route Preference Summary

The open house was well advertised in advance. People concerned with the process or possible outcomes had the opportunity to attend themselves, send an acquaintance, and/or contact the consultation facilitator for an information package. The open house information is now available on Alberta Infrastructure & Transportation’s web site.

Based on attendance at three open houses and resulting public feedback, it is apparent that the public still considers a South Route preferable to the other Base Alternatives; with the South-Southeast and Central-Southeast the most popular.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

A total of 38 (10%) of the comment submissions expressed environmental concerns. The identification of environmental concerns is summarized in Table 9.

Table 9: Environmental Concerns

Type of Concern	Open House #3	Open House #2	Open House #1
Wildlife	20	6	17
Water Quality (rivers, aquifers, wetlands)	15	5	6
Non-Specific	3	2	3
TOTAL:	38	13	26

From the above it is apparent that the study area continues to be considered an important environmental site. However, the number of attendees expressing an environmental concern has increased from 26 (10%) at Open House #1 and 10 (6%) at Open House #2 to 38 (10%) at Open House #3 (see Table 5). As a percentage of attendees expressing a concern, this issue has decreased from 32% at Open House #1 to 30% at Open House #2 to 24% at Open House #3. Both wildlife and water quality will continue to be addressed during the upcoming route selection process, and relative mitigation measures considered.

3. PROPERTY / BUSINESS IMPACT CONCERNS

A total of 50 (13%) of the comment submissions expressed concerns related to impacts to property, both residential and commercial. Most of those comments originate from residents who are concerned about the loss of homes and businesses and the associated impacts that would occur with limited access to communities along the new highway. Access could remain to the present highway.

4. OTHER CONCERNS AND COMMENTS

A total of 35 (9%) of the comment submissions expressed concerns related to the issues in Table 10.

Table 10: Other Concerns

Concerns and Comments	Number of Responses
BC Not Twinning Highway 3. Why are we?	13
Access to Communities Too Far Apart	10
Noise From New Highway	12
TOTAL:	35

There were also comments and opinions that:

- The study is or is not thorough, unbiased or well researched; or
- The Open House material was well done, too extensive, or not extensive enough.

Similar to Open House #1 and #2, given the diversity and contradictory content in some of these “other comments” it is difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions from them.

D) CONCLUSIONS

Open House #3 was well attended, and many meaningful comments were again received, providing input into the final study phase – development of a “recommended plan”. It is evident from the above analysis of public input to date that:

- 1. There continues to be a strong and broad-based public support for a South Based Alternatives, particularly for the Recommended and Preferred Routes, including residents of Coleman and Blairmore.**
- 2. Property/Business impacts and the environment are key concerns to be addressed by the project team.**
- 3. After Route Alignment, Environment and Property/Business Impacts, the Construction Timeline was the most important issue.**