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## Notes of Meeting

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Date of Meeting: July 23, 2009

Project Number: 6595-024-00-01

Time: 1:30pm – 4:15pm

Project Name: **Bow Valley Regional Transit Services Commission**

Location: Banff Town Hall, Banff, Alberta

Regarding: Task Force Meeting

Attendees:

Cheryl Hyde	representing	Town of Banff
Bill Lambert	representing	AECOM
Darren Reeder	representing	Banff-Lake Louise Hotel-Motel Association
Brian Marcotte	representing	AECOM
Ian Mackie	representing	I.D. #9 (via teleconference)
Shannon O'Donovan	representing	Banff Engineering
Mike Murtha	representing	Parks Canada
Karen Sorensen	representing	Councillor of Banff
Cordelia Crockett	representing	AECOM
Mark Yawney	representing	Banff Airporter
Carlos Garcia (UTSB)	representing	Environmental Groups
Ron Casey	representing	Mayor of Canmore
Jason Zimmerman	representing	Town of Banff
Ron Stonier	representing	Tourism Canmore

Distribution:	Ladd Snowsell	Mt Norquay/Lake Louise/Sunshine Ski Areas
	Shannon O'Donovan	Banff Engineering
	Robert Earl	Town of Banff
	Wayne Lilley	Alberta Transportation
	Kevin Van Vliet	Canmore Engineering
	Dave Schebek	I.D. #9
	John Stutz	Mayor of Banff
	Jeannie DeValois	Alberta Municipal Affairs

**PLEASE NOTE: This is not a verbatim account of everything said in this meeting. It is a brief summary of the key points as transcribed by Cordelia Crockett and Brian Marcotte. The PowerPoint agenda and the issues/opportunities discussion outline are attached. If there are any omissions, please advise, otherwise we will assume the contents to be correct.**

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Bill Lambert introduced the purpose of the meeting, which was to discuss details of the commission's draft Regulations and Bylaw, and initial Business Plan.

1. The question of whether and when to accept additional members on the Board of Directors, particularly ones which would be contributing significant amounts of funding and/or would be voting members, should be addressed in the Business Plan and possibly the Bylaw. If the Business Plan does not support the inclusion of additional members, then this does not have to be an element of the Bylaw. Alternatively, if the Business Plan does recommend the inclusion of additional members in the future, then the Bylaw should address how this will be done. Either way, the Regulations will be silent on this issue. There was general agreement that in any case the BVRTSC should be able to add new members.
2. Regarding the issue of additional Board Members, there has to be clarity in the Bylaw regarding who will be appointing them and how (i.e. majority vote or another method). If additional members will be added through a vote by existing Members, then objective criteria for membership may not be needed. However, the Business Plan should provide principles for adding a new member (e.g. an entity that provides 5-10% of the operating or capital funds over some length of time).
3. To prevent the Board of Directors from growing so large that it will be difficult to make decisions, the Regulations could include a limit on the number of voting members. Also, there was concern that five voting members may be too little, as this creates the risk that with too few individuals, clashing personalities could hinder progress or quorums would be difficult to make. Therefore, it was recommended that there be two members from each municipality, and possibly more than two members from the business groups.
4. It is unlikely that Parks Canada would pursue voting membership on the Board of Directors, and so this potentiality need not be considered in the Business Plan, Regulations, or Bylaws.
5. The Regulations, Bylaws, and Business Plan must be resilient enough to deal with unanticipated events.
6. Banff-Lake Louise Tourism and Canmore Tourism should be included among the non-voting members of the Board of Directors, as they will be key groups for sharing the message of the new regional transit system.
7. With the Regional Waste Commission, there is a legal obligation for the members to pay the agreed upon rates. Something similar may be needed to ensure that members follow through with their funding commitments to the five year transit service plan and related investments (i.e. transit infrastructure) and budget in the Business Plan. However, it is recognized that members may need approval from their councils/constituents before approving decisions, particularly ones with a major financial impact. Members will need to know their obligations so that there are no situations in which a decision is approved by the Board of Directors but not an individual member.
8. Decisions by the Board of Directors must be made independently from other organizations.
9. There are many reasons for including an environmental representative on the Board of Directors; this non-voting member will represent local needs, help share the message of the new regional transit system, help quantify the environmental impacts of the regional transit system, and confirm that the Commission is carrying out its environmental mission.

10. The Business Plan should identify what is desirable in terms of transferring assets. The Regulations and Bylaws should allow for asset transfer and indicate how an asset is to be valued.
11. Three-year terms are perhaps too long if the Commission is not working well. A member representative's first year on a Commission is usually spent learning about the workings and mission of the Commission. Therefore, a two-year term limit may be preferable. However, if there are more board members (e.g. two per municipality), then maybe three-year term limits may not be as risky and should be used.
12. The voting could be different for different types of decisions. Some could require a majority vote, while others could require a minimum 80% of the vote. Also, the voting could be set up such that a decision would only be approved if the member most affected by that decision in terms of costs agreed to it.
13. There is the risk that if this Commission does not produce any results, members will not want to contribute money to it.
14. The Business Plan should try to lay out major decisions that will need to be made in upcoming years and how the voting should likely proceed.
15. The Business Plan should also recognize that all members are currently facing financial pressures.
16. The Regulations will be changed to indicate that a Member cannot withdraw from the Commission; only the representative of a Member party can withdraw. The Member's constituent party will still be held accountable for its financial obligations to the Commission.
17. While it is the intention that the private sector's labour and equipment will be used as much as possible in the services provided by the Commission, it must also be recognized that most provincial and federal grants are intended for capital investments. It is likely that some services will use capital assets acquired through these grants, much like the local Banff transit services, while others will rely on the equipment provided by private operators
18. The Commission will need to avoid the impression that one town is paying for the local services in another town (i.e., that Canmore is paying for local transit services in Banff).
19. The transit services should be classified as being regional, local, or seasonal (summer or winter) and/or business-related. Cost-sharing should be determined for each type of service in line with benefits received by various parties.
20. There is a Tourist Improvement Fee (TIF) which is dedicated for marketing expenditures, including 'visitor experience'. The TIF is not focused on transportation oriented initiatives so any linkage of transit service to 'visitor experience' would require considerable discussions between the BLLT and the accommodation properties that submit the TIF.
21. In the Business Plan, Bylaw, or Regulation, there should be no suggestion that Parks Canada will introduce parking fees or camping fees to pay for transit services. However, Parks Canada may still be able to provide funding from its general fund to pay for transit services.
22. A potential component of a future service plan for the Bow Valley might entail establishing four transit hubs/centres just off Highway 1 at Banff, Lake Louise, and Canmore and near the entrance to Sunshine, at which local and regional transit services, as well as seasonal ski and summer transit services would meet. In the further examination of these transit hubs, it will be noted that while it is normally accepted that it is desirable to minimize transfers, the establishment of transit hubs may provide a wider choice of trips to customers and some efficiencies in terms of the costs of the local, regional and seasonal transit services inter-connecting at these hubs. This concept will be examined in more detail in the update on service plans for the Bow Valley. It was indicated by the Parks Canada representative that a hub for transfers to Sunshine near the highway which would be used for both winter and summer services is likely not possible because the land surrounding the turnoff is prime wildlife habitat.
23. The Regional Smart Card is complementary in many ways to the Regional Transit System and should be pursued for the convenience of customers and for increasing transit ridership.

24. The transit market may be divided into three groups – residents, regional visitors, and international visitors. Thinking about these different segments is a useful way of planning and marketing services.
25. In the Bylaw and Business Plan, and in the case of the ski area services, there has to be a clearer distinction between funding from fare collection (i.e. the money the customer pays when boarding the bus) and funding provided otherwise.
26. An important question to answer in the Bylaw and Business Plan is who will pay in the event that projected fare revenue estimates are not met or who will benefit if fare revenue estimates are higher than forecast. The answer is likely that all parties should pay to makeup fare revenue shortfalls or receive benefits in terms of higher fare revenues, in direct proportion to their financial contributions to the specific type of transit service-local, regional or seasonal (i.e. ski area service or camping/hiking service).
27. The Regulation, Bylaws, and Business Plan need to recognize that there is a perception that the Commission is simply being created to address ski bus issues. The Business Plan needs to emphasize that the benefits (e.g. new or enhanced local transit service and the introduction of new regional transit services) are intended for the entire region.
28. Rather than using the term “Temporary Accommodations” throughout the documents, the more common term “Accommodation Sector” will be used.
29. The cost estimate for the Banff-Canmore service (~\$550,000 per year) appears to be quite low. This estimate was taken from the Shirocca report and was likely based on service that was not extensive. The estimate for this service and all the other services will be revisited by the Consultants, taking into account changes which should be made to these proposed services for efficiencies and/or better customer service, and inflation.
30. The cost-sharing for each local, regional and seasonal bus service offered by the BVRTSC may become very complicated with alternative funding contributions from a number of different parties. It may be preferable when the BVRTSC has an established track record for providing transit services, and there is an ease and comfort of working together among its members, to establish a common blended funding formula to use on all transit services funded by the BVRTSC.
31. Parks Canada currently contributes some funding to the local Banff service. In the Business Plan, the current status of cost-sharing should be included (this particularly relates to Roam Transit in Banff).
32. The principles of cost sharing have to be clarified in the Business Plan so that the Commission has guidance in case circumstances change and new cost-sharing formulas need to be used.
33. In the Business Plan, it will be important to be clear about whose property tax revenues are being used to fund services, and which property taxes-business and/or residential.
34. Newsletters describing progress made towards creating a Regional Transit Services Commission will continue to be distributed and published on the Banff and Canmore websites and through other means.
35. The Consultant will provide updated cost and ridership estimates for the various services.
36. There are currently very few limitations on visitors arriving by car to Banff National Park. A vehicle intercept lot with shuttle service was provided several years ago, with the aim of reducing the number of trailers that went to some of the more crowded parking lots, but it wasn't particularly successful.
37. The Business Plan should emphasize the regional nature of this Commission, and be aware that it should not create the image of being an entity that will benefit Banff only.
38. There is evidence that a significant number of people travel from Banff to Canmore for services, recreation, employment, etc, which should be considered in the cost-sharing formulas for the regional services between Canmore and Banff.
39. The project may have started as a result of the issues related to bus service to the ski resorts, but it has in fact turned into something with a much greater scope and regional impact.
40. A Canmore to Kananaskis transit service should also be considered in longer term plan for the BVRTSC.

## **NEXT STEPS**

In the coming weeks, the consultant will carry out more one-on-one meetings to discuss financial and operational details, as well as make adjustments and improvements to the draft regulations, bylaws, and business plan.

Next meeting: To be determined; most likely in the later half of August

Notes taken by: Cordelia Crockett with input from AECOM team members