

British Columbia News

Ministry launching Peachland transportation study

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peachland - The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is launching a transportation study which will look into Highway 97 improvements through and around the District of Peachland – both for the short term and the longer term.

This will be a two-year study focused on Peachland, and it will examine transportation alternatives, including the possibility of an alternate Highway 97 alignment around Peachland.

“We are listening to the people of Peachland, and we want to open it up to public discussion on ideas for short-term and longer-term traffic solutions for the community,” said Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Todd Stone. “The study will look into the options that will meet the transportation needs of Peachland including developing an alternate route, or improving the existing highway.”

This study will be carried out in concert with the ministry’s Central Okanagan Planning Study, which was launched in the fall of 2014.

The Peachland study will use technical work that has been done as a part of the Central Okanagan Planning study, including traffic counts and future traffic growth projections, the needs of the travelling public, and community land use plans.

“Given the increased traffic volumes along Highway 97 and the potential for future development in Peachland, the B.C. government has launched a study that will be focussing on Peachland.” said Penticton MLA Dan Ashton. “This is a growing region and there is a great deal of local tourism, and so this study will be taking all of this into account as it studies how future transportation needs through Peachland are best addressed.”

Peachland Mayor Cindy Fortin and council have been advised of the study, and they are very encouraged with the launch. At the annual Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Convention, they met with Premier Christy Clark and Stone to discuss the possibility of a bypass study.

"This is wonderful news for Peachland," said Fortin. "We have been anxiously waiting for a definitive study on the Highway 97 corridor through Peachland, so that residents can get some answers regarding a bypass versus four-laning, and so that developers can confidently move forward with their plans."

The Peachland study will launch immediately and public engagement is being planned for spring 2016. The ministry will consider input from this consultation along with input from the local mayor and councilors, the Highway 97 Task Force committee, chamber of commerce as well as local First Nations, environmental stakeholder groups, and other local stakeholder groups.

"This is the most important issue affecting the future of Peachland," said Peter Warner, president of Highway 97 Task Force Society. "This decision will be much appreciated by the 820 members of our Highway 97 Task Force Society, who support the bypass option. This is an important step towards the possibility of achieving a bypass."

Since 2001, the B.C. government has invested more than \$400 million in upgrades to improve safety and mobility on the Highway 97 corridor in the Central Okanagan. Some examples of improvements are: the William R. Bennett Bridge, Highway 97 six-laning from Water St. to Highway 33, four-laning of Highway 97 from Winfield to Oyama, the Westside Rd. interchange and the Campbell Rd. Interchange.

Learn more:

For more information on the Central Okanagan transportation study, or to submit your feedback online, go to: <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/okanagasecondcrossing/>

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