



Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
Suite 310 – 1500 Woolridge Street
Coquitlam BC V3K 0B8

November 18, 2016

Re: Sunshine Coast Fixed Link Feasibility Study

The Squamish Chamber of Commerce is pleased to provide input to the Sunshine Coast Fixed Link Feasibility Study. We appreciate the study team’s consideration of our Board’s meeting schedule and request for additional time for our submission.

However, we do feel obliged to mention the very short notice for the October 18 Squamish Open House. We were unable to inform our membership about the event through our newsletter – one of our important roles.

GENERAL

The Squamish Chamber wishes to express empathy and general support for the communities of the Sunshine Coast which have advocated for this provincial government feasibility study initiative.

It is not so long ago that Squamish was only accessible by steamship ferry, or that our highway connections south and north were notorious for their safety conditions. More recently, it is undeniable that the Sea to Sky Highway Upgrade Project has been important to the economy and growth of Squamish.

Our Chamber has long been actively engaged in regional highway planning issues. Our membership consistently identifies regional transportation and transit issues as important and as a high priority for Chamber advocacy.

We regard the Sunshine Coast Fixed Link Feasibility Study’s Purpose and Scope and Problem Definition Statement to be entirely valid. It is clear that ferry service improvements and alternatives for our neighbouring region must be explored.

FIXED LINK ROUTE SCENARIOS

POWELL RIVER ROAD LINK

The Squamish Chamber wishes to acknowledge the careful route selection work done by the Third Crossing Society of Powell River, and the Society’s innovative concept of this route as part of a new, improved corridor between the North Island and Kamloops via the Duffey Lake road.

However, we suggest that improvement of the Highway 99 route from Pemberton north through Lillooet, and Highway 12 from Lillooet to Lytton, are higher priority investments for the Province as a whole, involving an important alternate commercial transportation link between the Interior and Coast (tidewater portals at Squamish and the Lower Mainland) and a key tourism ‘circle route’.

POWELL RIVER BRIDGE LINK (VIA NELSON ISLAND)

This new bridge link would appear to be very advantageous to Powell River and a cost effective alleviation of access issues. This potential investment should be given a high priority.

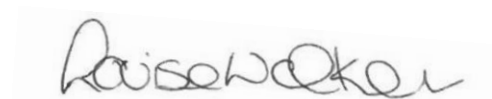
LANGDALE ROAD LINK (VIA SQUAMISH) and LANGDALE BRIDGE LINK (VIA ANVIL ISLAND)

- (1) The Squamish Chamber does not have a preference between these two Howe Sound route options at this time.
- (2) We suggest, again, that improvement of the Highway 99 route from Pemberton north through Lillooet to Highway 97 is a higher priority investment for the Province as a whole at this time than these two Howe Sound route development options.
- (3) The Squamish Chamber is not opposed in principle to a Squamish River crossing (ROAD LINK).
- (4) The option of a road link via Squamish is unlikely to be desirable from the perspective of current investors in a major LNG plant and shipping facility at Woodfibre.
- (5) The Squamish Chamber is not opposed in principle to an increase in vehicle traffic to and through Squamish.
- (6) More information on potential impact scenarios would be desirable – data regarding anticipated vehicle traffic.
- (7) With either route option, an increase in traffic burden for the Squamish-Horseshoe Bay highway section should be anticipated. Therefore, present congestion issues must be alleviated – for example, through implementing the long discussed Britannia Beach bypass route and sorely needed improvements to regional bus transit service.

We commend the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure for responding to concerns of communities in our neighbouring Sunshine Coast region with this Fixed Link Feasibility Study.

We trust our comments provided in this brief are useful to the study initiative's deliberations. The Squamish Chamber of Commerce will always be a keenly interested participant in regional highway and transportation planning initiatives.

Sincerely,



Louise Walker
Executive Director, Squamish Chamber of Commerce

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



cc:

District of Squamish Mayor and Council

Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Board of Directors

Jordan Sturdy, MLA, West Vancouver - Sea to Sky

Pamela Goldsmith-Jones, MP, West Vancouver - Sunshine Coast - Sea to Sky Country

Whistler Chamber of Commerce

Pemberton & District Chamber of Commerce

Lillooet & District Chamber of Commerce

Gibsons & District Chamber of Commerce

Sechelt & District Chamber of Commerce

Powell River Chamber of Commerce

West Vancouver Chamber of Commerce

Squamish Nation Chiefs & Council

Pender Harbour, Chamber of Commerce