



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Maria Sandberg, Planning and Parks Coordinator
Date: September 26, 2024
Subject: Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Conceptual Design Report

RECOMMENDATION: **(all/directors/majority)**

That the Board receive the attached "Highway 35 Multi-use Path Conceptual Design Report".

BACKGROUND

This report presents the "Highway 35 Multi-use Path Conceptual Design Report" to the Board for consideration. The design report outlines trail alignment options and construction cost estimates for a 13 km long multi-use trail on the highway right of way, connecting the Village of Burns Lake and Tchesinkut Lake.

This project is supported by the Electoral Areas B and E Parks and Trails Master Plan which identifies supporting active transportation and a connected community as a priority. The proposed trail will provide a safe and functional transportation option for residents and a recreation and tourism asset that will benefit visitors who support local businesses. The long-term vision is to connect the Village of Burns Lake to the Francois Lake Ferry Terminal with a multi-use trail.



The project started in April 2023 when WSP Canada Ltd. was awarded the conceptual design study contract. A \$50,000 grant from Infrastructure Canada's Active Transportation Fund was received to fund the project and the remainder of the cost (\$40,000) was covered by the Northern Capital Planning Grant. The project came in on budget.

DISCUSSION

The project report includes a set of conceptual drawings, a Class D cost estimate for construction, a stakeholder engagement report and a design summary discussing notable design elements, property acquisition, alternative alignment options, and project phasing.

The report identifies the preferred route to run on the southbound side of the highway from the bridge at Gerow Island to Frame Rd, where it would cross Highway 35 and run on the northbound side to Tchesinkut East Road.

The proposed design divides the trail into three segments:

Segment 1: Gerow Island to Osatuik Rd;

Segment 2: Frame Rd to Omineca Ski Club Rd; and,

Segment 3: Omineca Ski Club Rd to Tchesinkut East Rd.

Two alignment options have been identified for segment 1, which contains challenging topography with cut slopes, a creek crossing, a narrow highway right of way and many driveway crossings.

Notable design elements included in the conceptual design include concrete roadside barriers, retaining walls, buried storm infrastructure, constrained trail width, a highway crossing and two creek crossings.

The project engagement included invitations to the public, community organizations, First Nations, utilities, the Village of Burns Lake, government agencies and other stakeholders. Engagement opportunities included an open house, one-on-one meetings and an on-line survey. In addition, notification letters to property owners along the route were sent twice during the project. The report's Appendix C: "First Nation and Stakeholder Engagement Report" outlines the engagement strategy and details the input received.



The report notes that further feasibility and design details of the project would be determined during the detailed design in the future.

Active Transportation Capital Fund

On June 18, 2024, the Province announced \$85 million in funding for active transportation projects on Ministry owned right of ways through the Active Transportation Capital Fund.

The Cycle 16 and Highway 35 trails are two of eleven selected active transportation projects in the province.

In the announcement the Province noted that the first phase of the project will be completing design for the Highway 35 multi-use pathway. Staff has been unable to obtain further details about the Ministry of Transportation's plan for the trail and as far as staff are aware no project manager has been appointed to date. When more information is available, staff will report back to the Board.

ATTACHMENT:

[Highway 35 Multi-Use Path Conceptual Design Report - link](#)