



Representing the Residents and Ratepayers of Otter Point, Shirley and Jordan River

Meeting Notes

Special Issues Panel - Speed, Safety & Noise On West Coast & Otter Point Rds

Sun. Nov. 5, 2017 | 2:00 – 4:30 PM | Juan De Fuca (JdF) Local Area Services Building

1. **Introductions** *Bill Dushenko*, OPSRRA President
2. **Welcome from Honourable John Horgan, Premier and MLA Langford-Juan de Fuca** - *Bruce Fogg*, Executive Assistant welcomed the local residents and passed on Premier Horgan's best wishes. He indicated that he would be taking notes to pass along to Premier Horgan who was at another event.
3. **Moderator** – *Mike Hicks, RD, JDF EA*

Mike Hicks provided a background on which body of government was in charge of roadways and reviewed the agenda for the event.

4. Panelists

- **Jeff McArthur** – RCMP Staff Sergeant, Sooke Detachment - *Accidents, severity and, policing options*

The Dept. covers the region from Connie Rd to halfway between Port Renfrew & Lake Cowichan and are experiencing staff shortages.

Current resources include 17 members of the local detachment 13 of which are paid for by Sooke. Stats currently bear out that the remaining staff of four - which is 23% of the current force - are covering 23% of the incoming calls from the other rural areas being serviced.

Those four Provincial Members are responsible for East Sooke, Otter Point, Shirley, Jordan River, Port Renfrew and the old growth forest in the area - areas that can take as much as five hours to reach for a single call. These officers are responsible for everything from First Nations policing to property and violent crimes to search and rescue, as well as typical admin and testimony at court cases. Road patrols are only a portion of their overall duties.

One positive change to assist in traffic tickets includes recent case law that that succeeded in charging a motorist with excessive noise using just the testimony of the officer rather than utilizing decibel meters and an objective standard. There has been a promise to utilize forces to increase enforcement on the roadways.

- **Steve Bauer** – Manager/ Acting Regional Manager Commercial Transport, Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement (CVSE) - *Trucking regulation/policing, compliance and traffic levels.*

CVSE is a provincial body that is integrated with both a national and international program through CVSA (Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance) to enforce commercial vehicle safety, size and weight on our highways throughout North America.

South Island CVSE is responsible for looking after 8,000 vehicles with 2,000 carriers; this includes commercial – light and heavy - trucks, taxis, school buses. Regulation is done through ticketing, which can then escalate to warning letters, compliance reviews, then audits and, ultimately, the loss of licensing for that carrier.

This group also creates standards for commercial transports and proposes change as needed through analysis on safety statistics and new technology. Any vehicle licensed for over 8200 kg must have a mechanical inspection done every six months (this includes buses, gravel and logging trucks). Each year 250 targeted checks are done provincially with partners focused on driving behaviours by both truckers and other drivers. Recent stats indicate that, in accidents involving large trucks and passenger vehicles, the passenger vehicles were 70% more likely to have been found at fault.

- **Al Wickheim** – First Responder and Former Paramedic, Community Coordinator Emergency Manager - *Challenges for emergency services providers, accident severity and seasonality*

Concerns have been voiced about 3am noise and slow moving vehicles, and most importantly that heavy truck traffic contributes to roadway instability and pavement degradation.

Concerns have also been raised around school areas, Sandcut Beach and Jordan River where insufficient parking has resulted in heavy use of narrow shoulders for drop off, pick up and short-term parking. The result is dangerous conditions for passengers/ children getting in or out of cars while avoiding trucks and other cars driving along the road.

Emergency responders currently do not have the capacity or WorkSafe permission to break up a load of logs in case of an accident where a load is lost. This includes extreme conditions where a vehicle is trapped under them or if the single road in or out of town is impassable. Road closures have a wide-spread negative effect on the community creating unreliability and safety concerns if there is an emergency beyond the accident.

Noise from trucks is creating chronic sleep deprivation in the community, this is both a health and safety concern.

Trucks, even expertly driven ones, are too big for narrow curvy roadways and cannot keep fully on their side of the yellow line.

Weekend traffic tends to ignore speed signs driving either too slowly or too quickly for the roadways and road conditions. A mind-map was also provided illustrating relationships between impacts, underlying causes, and possible solutions.

- **Mike Bowater**– Contract Manager, Timberwest – *Challenges for business and trucks on the roadways, safety information and opportunities for coordinated industry efforts.*

Timberwest’s priority is safety for employees and the community.

There was a cultural shift in the forest industry starting in 2004, moving towards safety first. There has also been an engagement from leadership down to staff and even contractors to focus on safety first.

To support that vision, in addition to internal training, there is CVSE policing, log truck driver assessment/mentoring program, and weigh-ins for every truckload. The latest safety feature is the installation of real-time GPS data tracking that measures speed by the minute.

- **Robert Moonen** – CEO, BC Forest Safety Council – *Industry roadway challenges, accident severity and trends, industry initiatives and logging value to the community*

The roads haven’t seemed to have changed in 20 years despite the exponential growth (18%) in the region.

Statistically, only one, out of the 1.4 million loads of logs in BC, doesn’t make it safely to its destination, but the goal is to reduce that even further. The industry created its own association to manage safety. Training has been done with drivers on the anatomy of a rollover and the physics behind it. As an industry, this work has reduced the number of logging truck rollovers since 2013 by 50%. In all there were 20 in BC in 2015 and just over 10 in 2016. In recent surveys to logging truck drivers, speed was one of the number one concerns of the truck drivers.

5. **Questions and Exploring Solutions** – Over 45 residents were in the room and several took the opportunity to voice their thoughts, concerns and solutions. Where appropriate, the panelists responded.

Mike Hicks has applied to the Premier and is working to meet with the Ministry of Transportation on the issues relating to Otter Point and West Coast Roads. In particular, the lack of shoulders on Otter Point Road has been identified as a priority. Although MoT has indicated that there will not be an overhaul of the West Coast Road, there is a commitment to each year work to improve the road.

Community Comments:

First question was why the Ministry of Transportation was not at the event. **Answer:** They declined but detailed notes will be provided to them.

Why don't the trucks take the Circle Route to Ladysmith which should be the shortest route? **Answer:** The shortest route is to travel through Sooke and then up the Malahat. **Clarification:** Are offroad trucks used? **Answer:** Most trucks are highway trucks.

Noise is a big concern on Gordon's Beach. Motorcycles, followed by gravel trucks then logging trucks are the third. The motorcycles, in particular, shake the house with the noise. Speed is a factor in this issue. Currently Gordon's Beach is posted at 80km and the request is to drop it to 60km/hr. **Answer:** Request has been made to Premier Horgan's office to reduce the speed limit. **Clarification:** Speed limit change needs enforcement coupled with noise enforcement. **Request from RCMP** to the attendees to provide data on when (dates, times on average) highest dangerous/noisy traffic happens.

Otter Point to Jordan River – with the exception of dangerous corners - is 80km/hr. Too many drivers are unfamiliar with the roads and this creates a dangerous situation. There is the feeling that the road should be no more than 70km/hr until past Sandcut. It was asked of the room to all write to the Premier about the road and make requests to make it safer, we can't just rely on Mike Hicks or OPSRRA. **Answer:** OPSRRA sent a letter to Premier Horgan's office re: safety issues along the route back in September. **Clarification:** Mike Hicks suggested that there should be a Ministry of Transportation study on the affected roads.

(Four consecutive requests) Safe routes to and from schools are a priority as so many young families are moving here. Infrastructure needs to be put in place for students to walk or bike or ride to school along the roadways with a 20-year plan to reinforce community. Ideally these are segregated paths. As well, trees to be trimmed to improve visual lines.

One request was to complete the rumoured four-lane highway to Sassenos to alleviate traffic line-ups on West Coast Rd.

Widen the roads so that vehicles don't come over the centre line.

Reminder to locals to be smart on the roads, walk in a way that is visible and not too close to traffic; commendation went out to the professional drivers who are courteous

Clean the cement barriers (it has been a couple of years since the last cleaning). Debris has built up resulting in an even smaller shoulder and in the winter the drainage holes are being blocked which has increased the amount of ice on the road.

Overloaded private trucks that come to pirate firewood from the area are filled to the point of being unsafe. **Answer:** CVSE cannot address private passenger vehicles. However, they can work with local enforcement agencies to assist.

Four of the curves on Otter Point Rd. need adjusting for safety. People are unable to stay within their lane and/or hold the road. The corner at Muir Creek and Jordan River were also noted as being dangerous and exceeding a 90 degree turn.

Noise, truck traffic and speed is having an impact on property values on West Coast Rd. BC Assessment should reexamine the value for those.

Seasonal flow of traffic relating to logging trucks and tourists is an issue. May is heavy with logging trucks, perhaps 3x as much as other times of the year.

Speed is an issue on the road particularly in the high risk Muir Creek area. Do traffic fines help to cover the costs for a new RCMP officer? Is there something we can do to help? Discussion ensued regarding the fines and consequences for speeding in Ontario vs. BC. **Answer:** No, fines do not go back to the issuing force. There is a volunteer program Speed Watch and they need volunteers – please email Jeff McArthur (Jeff.MCARTHUR@rcmp-grc.gc.ca) to be a part of this group. Options for increasing the force includes a write-in campaign to your MLA to ask for more RCMP resources. Mike Hicks promised to reach out to the Ministry of Transportation to request a site review of the roadways with an MoT representative travelling with OPSRRA to point out the issues.

Recent road improvements on West Coast Road includes the white reflective signs done by MoT.

Should the public shoot videos of the speeders? **Answer:** It would reduce resources on the road and after that only a very limited ticket can be issued (no points, no assessment to the driver).

Discussion regarding traffic cameras. A lot of private driveways are a direct access to the highways, unfortunately trees/brush are creating sightline issues. It was requested to everyone to keep their front areas trimmed and a reminder to everyone in the room to slowdown.

There has been a dramatic increase in the motorcycle traffic in the last 10 years. Roughly 100 – 150 bikes a day have been counted that are more tourists than local residents. An iPhone decibel reader shows many of them exceeding 100 decibels.

Road rage is increasing, particularly tailgating which is very dangerous on this road. There are few places to pass slow moving traffic between Jordan River and nearly to Langford. The road to Tofino has mandatory pull-out zones and that would be something that would help a lot. **Answer:** there have been signs asking for drivers to be courteous and pull over, but safe-to-use shoulders are limited, and in many places the signs have been defaced.

Increasing number of ATV drivers using the forest in Blueberry Flats for recreational purposes has been noted. During dry summers, it is a safety risk to have those vehicles on the tinder dry forest. A request went out to TimberWest to once again post a security person to limit access during fire season.

Concerns exist that truck drivers are using Jake brakes on flat straightaways. Residents are being forced to wear industrial earplugs to protect their ears when working outside. There was a request to send the commercial trucks along the circle route.

6. Final Remarks

Bill Dushenko reviewed the final steps and wrap-up for the meeting, including follow-up with the Ministry of Transportation and the Premier. By working collaboratively with our community stakeholders and agencies, the hope is to make a difference in addressing these important issues in our communities.