

To: Electoral Area Services Committee  
From: Hasib Nadvi, Manager of Planning

Date: 2023-11-09  
File No: 3020-20 D65

**Subject: Crown Referral for Bridal Veil Mountain Resort Updated Expression of Interest, Electoral Areas D & E**

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## RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** the Fraser Valley Regional District Board respond to the referral by the Province of British Columbia regarding the Expression of Interest update for the proposed Bridal Veil Mountain Resort (BVMR) and associated uses, with the following comments:

1. FVRD requests that the Province find a path forward to review the two competing proposals, BVMR or Cascade Skyline Gondola, and determine the process for a single applicant to proceed through the Crown Tenure process. Such a decision should be guided by the following:
  - a. A consensus-based approach and meaningful engagement with the indigenous communities;
  - b. Robust engagement with the public and interest groups; and
  - c. Ongoing consultation with local governments.
2. The Province is asked to work with the FVRD to coordinate review and approval processes that involve the following being completed before granting final approvals that enable either of these projects to be developed:
  - a. FVRD major Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment, Zoning Amendment, and Development Permit approvals supported by comprehensive technical reporting are required should the project proceed to the development stage, and before the project proceeds to such development stage, a robust Indigenous consultation and accommodation process must be completed by the Province in a meaningful manner.
3. FVRD supports the **Province's interest in developing a consensus**-based approach with local Stó:lō communities for reviewing and approving major tourism and recreation proposals in this area.
  - a. It is the responsibility of the Province to address matters of Aboriginal rights and title with respect to the proposed Crown land tenure. The Province should address matters of aboriginal rights and title to the lands through the Crown land tenure and All Season Resort application process and not leave outstanding matters of rights and **title to the Regional District's OCP and zoning amendment application processes.**
  - b. FVRD acknowledges Aboriginal rights and title claims. FVRD will seek to meaningfully engage with potentially impacted Indigenous Nations during the OCP and Zoning Amendment application process. The role of the Regional District in the course of the

Official Community Plan and Zoning Amendment applications process is to engage with the potentially impacted Indigenous Nations; identify any negative impacts and advocate to avoid any potential negative impacts to rights and title.

4. The applicant should maintain ongoing communication with the FVRD, Indigenous Nations, and other interest groups through the provincial review process.

## BACKGROUND

The Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) received a second referral from the Provincial Mountain Resort Branch for the Bridal Veil Mountain Resort (BVMR) Project on August 11, 2023. The purpose of the second referral from the Province is stated below:

*The Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport (TACS) through the Mountain Resorts Branch (MRB) has received an updated Expression of Interest (EOI) in relation to the Bridal Veil Mountain Resort (BVMR), a proposed all-season resort near Chilliwack BC. We are reaching out to you to share this updated information on the BVMR proposal and advise on next steps of the major project review process. We would also like to advise you of the Province's interest in developing a consensus-based approach with local Stó:lō communities for reviewing and approving major tourism and recreation proposals in this area.*

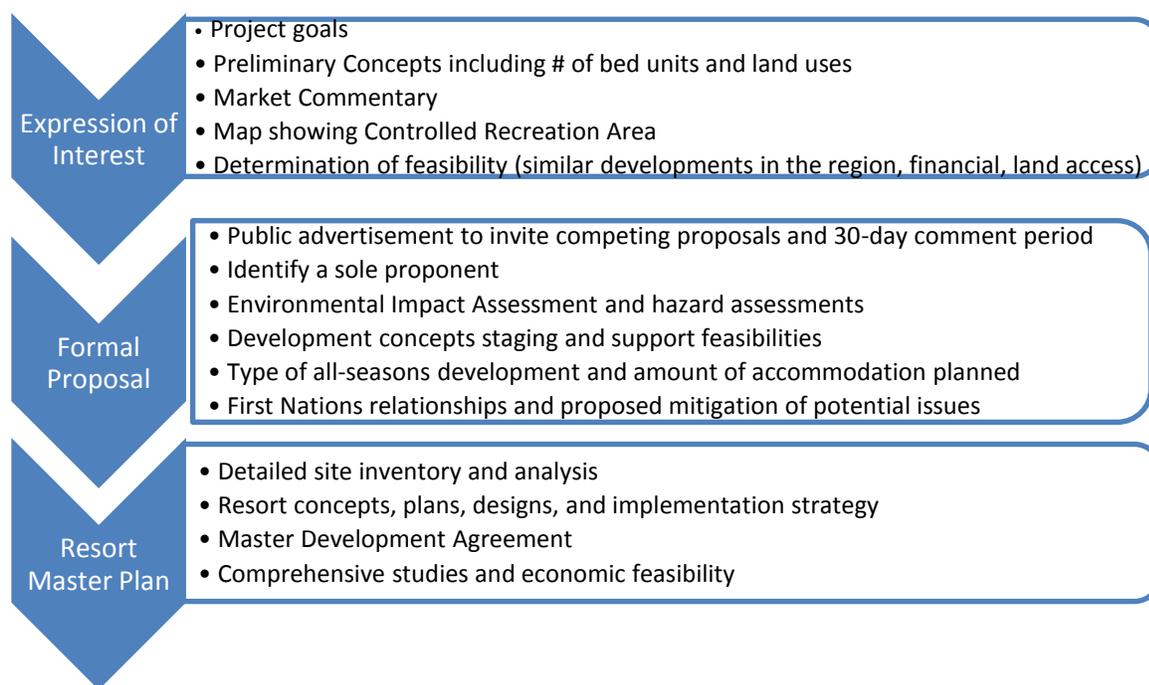
*The purpose of this referral update is to share information with you and gather any comments, questions or feedback that you may have. The information received will help guide the Province in identifying the next steps in the review process, including consideration of acceptance of an application under the All-Seasons Resort Policy (ASRP).*

The Board has received past referrals from the Province respecting two projects with overlapping land areas; Bridal Veil Mountain Resort (BVMR) and Cascade Skyline Gondola (also known as Bridal Falls Gondola). They are mutually exclusive projects and the two proposal areas overlap substantially. A summary of the referrals is presented below:

Year	Cascade Skyline Gondola	BVMR
2018	Temporary 2-year investigative License	N/A
2021	Temporary Investigative License Extension	EOI Referral
2022	Crown Land Tenure Application	N/A
2023	N/A	EOI Update Referral

Both the 2018 and 2021 referrals for the Cascade Skyline Gondola were for a temporary Crown license for investigative purposes. The purpose of the Crown Land Temporary License was to investigate an adventure tourism destination including a gondola, summit commercial uses, and a backcountry trail network. Upon completion of the investigative phase, the proponent applied for a formal Crown Land Tenure application.

In 2021, the Province made a joint referral which included the Expression of Interest (EOI) for the Bridal Veil Mountain Resort. Under the Province of BC's All-Seasons Resort Policy, an EOI is the first step toward getting a Resort Master Plan approved. An EOI generally outlines project goals, preliminary concepts, and market commentary; identifies resort development opportunities and constraints; and, identifies the proposed controlled recreation area. During the EOI process, local governments were given an early opportunity for comments. All steps include local government and other stakeholder consultation. Each step could take significant time to complete.



With all of these past referrals, the general comments from the Regional District highlighted the following:

- Official Community Plan amendment, zoning amendment, and development permit approvals are required before the construction or development stage.
- If the projects proceed with applications, a robust public, First Nation, and stakeholder consultation process will be required.
- It is the responsibility of the Province to address matters of Aboriginal rights and title with respect to the proposed Crown land tenure. The Province should address matters of aboriginal rights and title to the lands through their own process and not leave outstanding rights and title issues **to the Regional District's OCP and zoning amendment application processes.**

### PROPERTY DETAILS

Electoral Area	D & E		
Address	Bridal Falls Road, Crown Land		
PID	n/a		
Folio	n/a		
Lot Size	4,772 ha		
Owner	Private, Crown Provincial	Applicants	Bridal Veil Mountain Resort Project
Current Zoning	Rural (R), Limited Use (L-1), Institutional (L-2)	Proposed Zoning	Amendment required
Current OCP	Limited Use (LU), Rural (R), Forest (F)	Proposed OCP	Amendment required
Current Use	Golf Course, Crown Forest	Proposed Use	Tourist Recreational
Development Permit Areas	1-D – Rock Avalanche, 3-D – Geohazard, 5-D/5-E Riparian Areas		
Agricultural Land Reserve	No		

### ADJACENT ZONING & LAND USES

North	^	Rural (R), Park (P1), Park Reserve (P2); Golf Course, Forest, Park
East	>	Limited Use (L-1); Forest
West	<	Rural (R), Limited Use (L-1), Institutional (L-2); Forest
South	v	Limited Use (L-1), Institutional (L-2); Forest

### AERIAL MAP



## DISCUSSION

The Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport (TACS), through the Mountain Resorts Branch (MRB), has received an updated Expression of Interest (EOI) for the BVMR. As of August 11, 2023, the FVRD is in receipt of a referral from the provincial MRB regarding the updated proposed access routes submitted as part of the EOI process (*Attachment A*). The Province is seeking the Regional District's comments on the following:

- The proposal in general;
- Newly proposed access options; and
- Potential coordination of local and provincial government review and planning processes.

FVRD has provided preliminary comments on the general proposal as well as comments on land use during past referrals. Previous included detailed feedback on the technical requirements for major OCP and zoning amendment applications intended to assist the proponent in preparing application packages. An excerpt from the previous referral comment from the June 2021 Corporate Report is provided below:

*The OCP designations for these areas are Rural (R) in the Bridal Falls Uplands area and Forest (F) in the alpine areas. Both the projects are abutting the Limited Use (LU) areas. The policies under the Limited Use designation in the Bridal Falls uplands area identify the need for a comprehensive neighbourhood plan. Should there be a need for a neighbourhood plan, staff will have to determine the scope of a neighbourhood planning process. Even though both the OCP amendment and zoning amendment applications require legislated public consultation processes, it is important to consider the entire area as a whole in relation to either of the proposed developments rather than considering developments on an ad-hoc basis. The BVMR proposes residential units within the development as well. It is important to understand how the housing needs, diversities, and establishment of a tourism commercial corridor will be met by the relevant proposal. Should there be a need for a neighbourhood plan, below are key considerations:*

- *Land use concept plans for diverse housing densities, residential, gateway commercial, and tourism-related uses*
- *Comprehensive community services such as water, sewer, parks, and trails*
- *Environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. watercourses, wildlife, vegetation, and geohazard area assessments)*
- *Archaeological value identification*
- *Financial impacts on FVRD*
- *Robust public and indigenous engagement*

### Access Routes

This report will focus on the updated access route plan as this is new information since the earlier referral. Four conceptual road access routes are proposed, from the East, West, and South, to facilitate access to the base area village (*Attachment B*). Comments are high-level and preliminary in nature because it is early to provide detailed comments on the potential access routes without details of the development, phasing of construction, and technical studies.

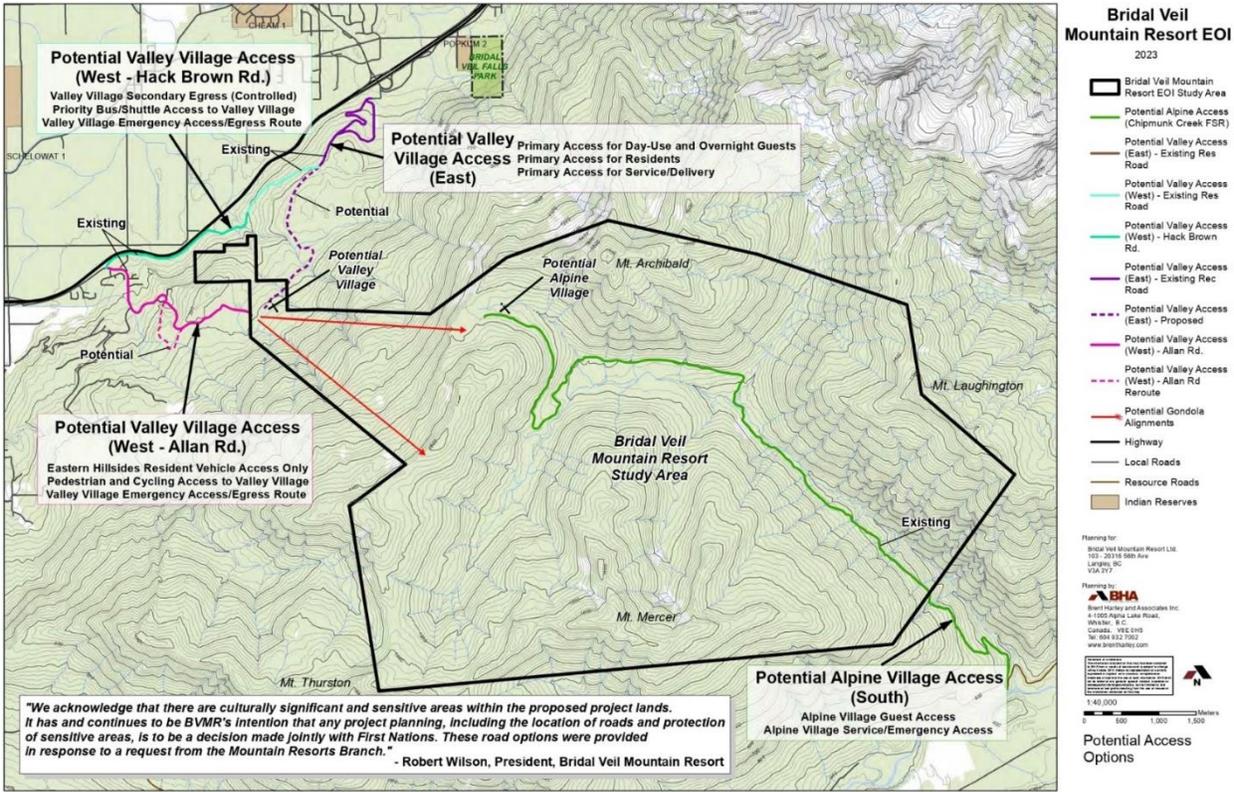
The table below summarizes the proposed access routes and provides preliminary staff comments on the routes that are primarily within the Regional District.

Access Route	Description
Potential Valley Village Access – East	<p>The proposed East access route would originate from the Highway 9 interchange with Highway 1, then travel southwest, climbing to the proposed Valley Village base and staging area. The route would provide access for guests, residents, and village services. This route is in Electoral Area D.</p> <p><u>Staff comments</u> Staff recommend that the primary access to the proposed development is from Highway 1. Traffic impact and access/egress assessment would be required to identify appropriate road and transportation access routes, upgrades, and design requirements. This assessment would need to be completed in coordination with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.</p> <p>Discussion of adding a transit stop at the proposed location is required. The service area creation and year-to-year operations and maintenance costs will need to be understood by FVRD and BC Transit.</p>
Potential Valley Village Access – West (Allan Rd.)	<p>This route is within the City of Chilliwack boundary and the City should be consulted about it. The Allan Road access route would serve the residents of the Eastern Hillside Neighbourhood. Further, Allan Road may be incorporated as an emergency egress and access route; being integrated as appropriate into the Valley Village concept in support of emergency planning and preparedness.</p>
Potential Valley Village Access – West (Hack Brown Rd.)	<p>This route originates in the City of Chilliwack and the City should be consulted about it. An alternative access option, for future consideration, would originate at the Annis Road interchange and extend from the end of Hack Brown Road along an existing resource road, connecting to the proposed East Access to the Valley Village. As envisioned, it would act as a secondary access route and a possible complement to the Valley Village access route from the Highway 9 interchange.</p>
Potential Valley Village Access – South	<p>This route starts in the Alpine area, which is Crown land, and connects to the Chilliwack River Valley in Electoral Area E. The existing Chipmunk Creek Forest Service Road has been identified as an additional route to access the Alpine Village. This route would support guest village services as well as guest and emergency access.</p> <p><u>Staff comment</u> Staff recommends that Chilliwack River Valley (CRV) is not identified as a primary access route. To explore emergency egress routes through the CRV, there is a need to understand traffic impacts and review the overall emergency management strategy for the CRV. CRV is a single-access community that could benefit from a secondary emergency egress route. Section 8.1 of the Area E &amp; H OCP Bylaw 1115 states community concerns regarding the lack of reliable alternative traffic routes, traffic volumes in summer months, and bottlenecks at Vedder and Tamihi bridges. While forestry roads may provide potential emergency access</p>

roads, their conditions are not dependable. The OCP identifies Army Bench FSR as a potential alternative egress route. Discussion is required to understand the tenure, feasibility, operation, and maintenance of the alternative access route. In the case of high-traffic generating uses, the policies of the OCP recognize the need for more than one legal access, especially for emergency vehicles and traffic impact analyses.

Currently, emergency response is provided by the CRV Fire Department. Often the volunteer fire department is the first responder. Further information is required to understand the impact of a secondary egress route from the proposed mountain resort on the volunteer fire department.

Table 1: Proposed access routes



Indigenous Engagement

The proposal lies in the traditional territory of several Indigenous Nations. FVRD supports the Province's interest in developing a consensus-based approach with local Stó:lō communities for reviewing and approving major tourism and recreation proposals in this area in alignment with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA). FVRD acknowledges Aboriginal rights and title claims. Matters related to shared indigenous interests and Aboriginal rights and title claims are important to be addressed at the onset of the development interest, especially since the proposal involves significant development on Crown land.

Even though the BVMR and the Cascade Skyline Gondola are mutually exclusive projects, the two proposal areas overlap substantially. Due to the competing nature of these proposals, it is critical that the Province address matters of Aboriginal rights and title with respect to the proposed Crown land tenure during the provincial approval process. During the development application process, the role of the Regional District process is to engage with the potentially impacted Indigenous Nations; identify any negative impacts, and advocate to avoid any potential negative impacts to rights and title. However, local governments are not equally empowered to address matters of Aboriginal rights and title. As such, the Province should address matters of aboriginal rights and title to the lands through the Crown land tenure and All-Season Resort application process and not leave outstanding **matters of rights and title to the Regional District's OCP and zoning amendment application** processes.

It is difficult for the FVRD to invest finite staff resources in multiple major proposals. It is also an inefficient use of staff resources to process competing development applications in the same area. In addition, it is critical that the Province address matters of indigenous interest and rights and title through the provincial framework at the proposal stages to understand and facilitate indigenous interests. Staff would be happy to participate in a consensus-based approach to learn about Aboriginal rights and title and shared interests. FVRD encourages the Province to establish a path that determines the process for a single applicant to proceed through the Crown Tenure. Such decisions should be guided by:

- a. A consensus-based approach and meaningful engagement with the indigenous communities;
- b. Robust engagement with the public and interest groups; and
- c. Ongoing consultation with local governments.

The Regional District would be happy to discuss a coordinated authorization process in conjunction with our development approval process once either of the proposals is selected to proceed through the formal application processes.

## CONCLUSION

Staff are appreciative of the Provincial referral to provide an update on the EOI process and access route options. Should the development proceed, the project will require FVRD major OCP and zoning amendment, and Development Permit approvals. It may also trigger a neighbourhood plan to ensure the project and other associated developments in the Bridal Falls Uplands are being considered as a whole rather than on an ad-hoc basis.

FVRD acknowledges Aboriginal rights and title claims. Matters related to shared indigenous interests and Aboriginal rights and title claims are important to be addressed at the onset of the development interest. **FVRD supports the Province's interest in** developing a consensus-based approach with local Stó:lō communities for reviewing and approving major tourism and recreation proposals in this area. It is recommended that the Province finds a path to internally coordinate to finalize one of the proposed projects (i.e., BVMR or Cascade Skyline Gondola) in this area. Once a proposal is finalized to

proceed, FVRD recommends creating a coordinated approval process so that all of FVRD's requirements are met prior to the formal approval.

## **COST**

Staff time expended.

## **COMMENTS BY**

**Graham Daneluz, Director of Planning & Development:** reviewed and supported

**Kelly Lownsbrough, Director of Corporate Services/CFO:** Reviewed and supported.

**Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer:** Not available for comment.

## **Attachments (3):**

1. Referral letter from the Mountain Resort Branch
2. BVMR Expression of Interest Update Description
3. BVMR Access Route Options Map