

To: Electoral Area Services Committee

Date: 2018-09-05

From: Dawn Smith, Planner II

File No: 3020-20-D63

Subject: Crown Land Tenure Application, Referral Response – Bridal Falls Gondola, Electoral Area “D” and “E”

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Fraser Valley Regional District Board respond to the referral by the Province of British Columbia regarding the Bridal Falls Gondola Corporation - Crown Land Temporary Licence (two years) for 4202 hectares to investigate an adventure tourism destination including a gondola, summit commercial uses, and backcountry trail network in the Mount Cheam area, with the following comments:

1. Provincial Temporary Licence uses for study and investigative purposes does not require Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) land use approvals provided no construction or significant land alteration occurs;
2. FVRD zoning and Official Community Plan amendment approvals are required should the project proceed to development stage.
3. The applicant should maintain ongoing communication with the FVRD and stakeholders through the investigative phase.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Foster a Strong & Diverse Economy

Support Healthy & Sustainable Community

PRIORITIES

Priority #4 Tourism

Priority #5 Outdoor Recreation

BACKGROUND

The FVRD has received a referral from the Province of British Columbia requesting comments on a Temporary License (up to 2 years) to investigate the potential for a gondola, summit commercial facilities and backcountry trails over 4202 hectares (10, 383 acres) in the Mount Cheam area. The referral asks FVRD to consider:

- the possible impact of this project on FVRD’s interests;
- any concerns the FVRD may have with the project;
- any requests the FVRD may have for additional information; and
- suggestions as to how to avoid, mitigate or resolve any identified impacts.

A Temporary Licence is issued by the Province to allow an applicant to investigate a potential location, and it does not provide approval for construction or development of the project. Prospective developers of Crown land can obtain a temporary license approval to undertake exploration and technical studies for matters such as; geohazards, riparian and terrestrial habitat studies, hydrology, climate, and servicing (water/septic).

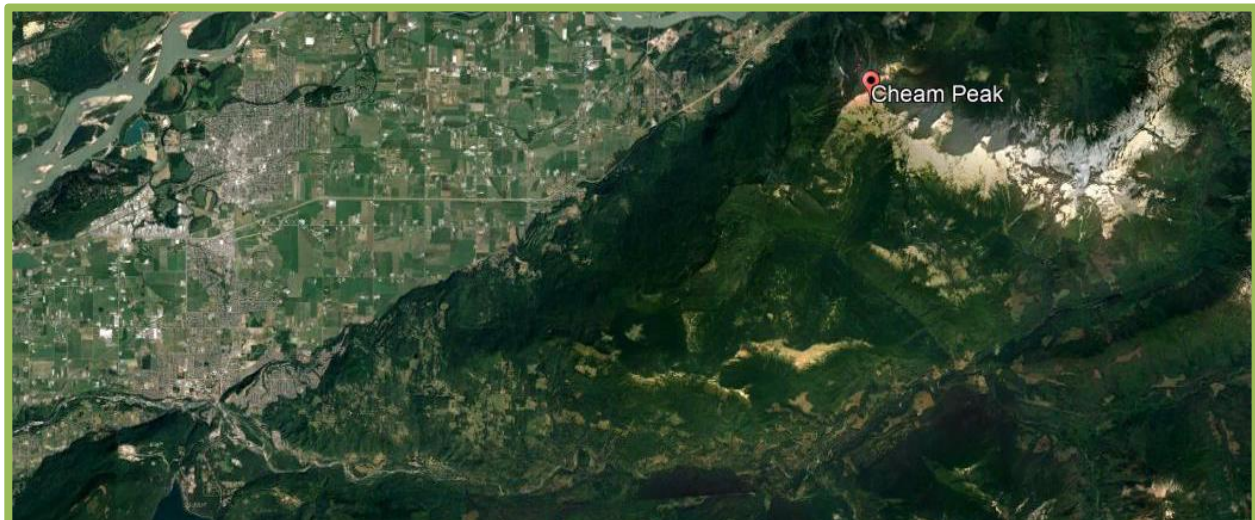
PROPERTY DETAILS

Electoral Area	D and E		
Address	No address – Crown Land		
PID	Not applicable		
Folio	Not applicable		
Lot Size	4202 hectares (10, 383 acres)		
Owner	Province of BC Crown Land	Agent	Bridal Falls Gondola Corporation
Current Zoning	Limited Use (L-1) and Institutional (L-2)	Proposed Use	Gondola, summit commercial facilities, and backcountry trail network
Current OCP	Forest (F) and Natural Resource (NRES)	Proposed OCP	No OCP amendment proposed
Current Use	Crown forest	Proposed Zoning	No zoning amendment proposed
Development Permit Areas	Yes, DPA 3-D (Slope Hazards) and DPA 5-E (RAR)		
Agricultural Land Reserve	No		

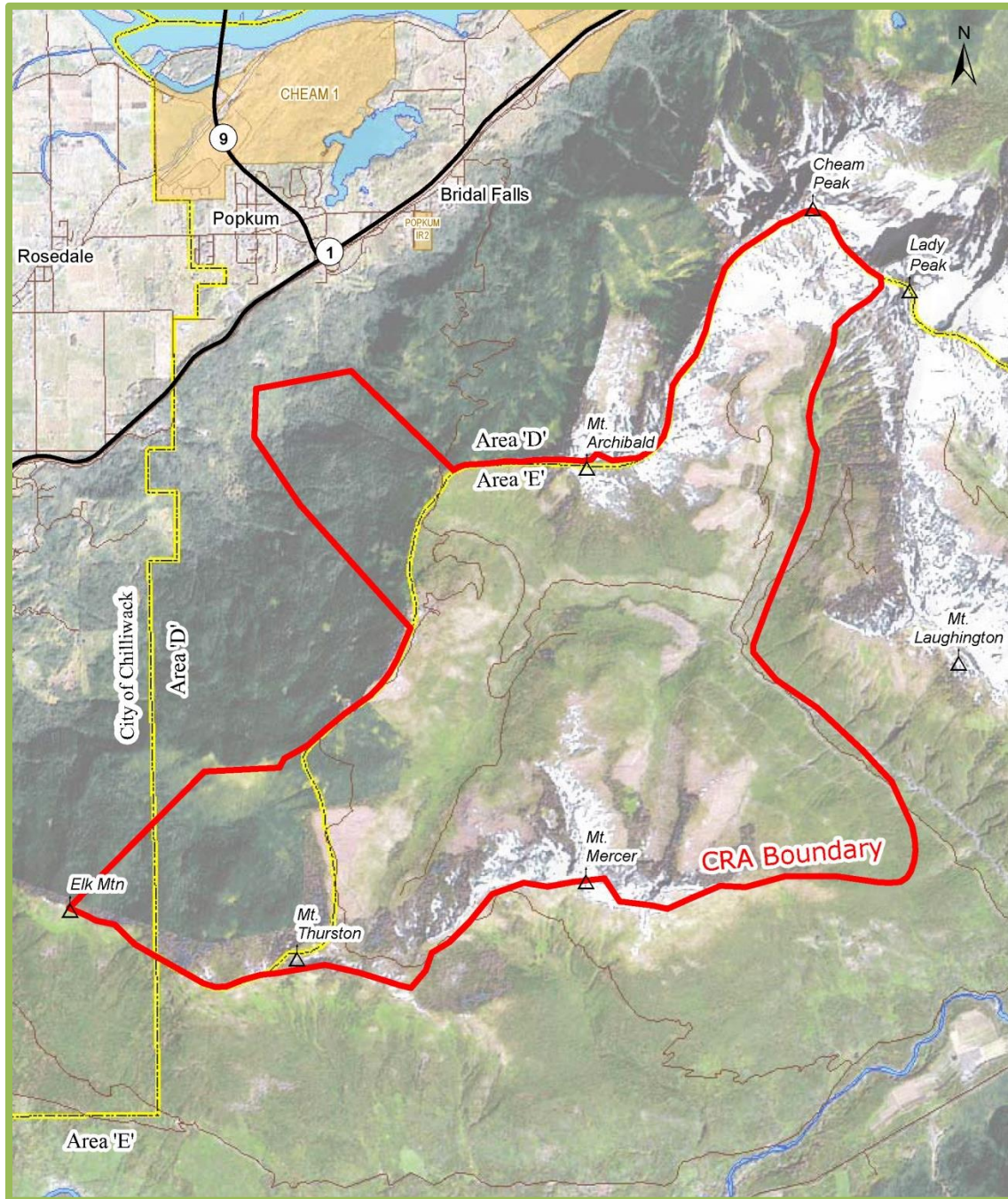
ADJACENT ZONING & LAND USES

North	^	Crown Forest
East	>	Crown Forest
West	<	Crown Forest
South	v	Crown Forest

OVERVIEW LOCATION MAP



PROPOSED TEMPORARY LICENSE AREA



Bridal Falls Gondola Corporation

The Bridal Falls Gondola Corporation (BFGC) is proposing investigative activities to determine the feasibility of new adventure tourism project to access the sub-alpine and alpine region above Bridal Falls and the Mount Cheam backcountry. Annual visitation numbers are projected to exceed 500,000 persons per year, over 1300 visitors per day on average.

Should the project proceed beyond the investigative phase, it would comprise three development sites;

	Component & Location	Description
1	Bridal Falls base area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ parking area for approximately 600-700 vehicles ▪ administration offices ▪ gondola building with covered reception area (FN and pioneer displays and story telling ▪ guest Services, washrooms and ticket sales ▪ coffee Shop/Restaurant with seating for 50 -100 ppl, ▪ retail store ▪ mechanical/electrical rooms and repair shop, first aid room, staff and locker rooms ▪ conference building for meetings, weddings and events
2	Summit commercial buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reception area ▪ guest services & information area ▪ coffee shop and two restaurants for 400 people ▪ conference/events seating for approx. 300 additional guests ▪ interpretive centre and First Nations cultural art & gift shop, first aid room, general office, staff rooms and multiple viewing decks ▪ summit lodge is estimated to be approx. 15,000 - 20,000 sq. ft. ▪ outside decks - 5000 sq. ft.
3	Backcountry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ network of Walking & Hiking Trails (interpretive and non-interpretive) Elk Mountain and Mt Thurston, Fraser Valley Regional District Trail as well as the trail system that currently leads to the top of Mt Cheam ▪ two tea houses located in the vicinity of Mt Archibald and Mt Mercer ▪ viewing platforms

The applicant has provided a comprehensive list of proposed investigative activities and parameters in their application for the Crown tenure. A summary of the proposed activities is provided below, refer to attached referral/application for more details:

Investigative Activities - Summary	
Environmental	Collect weather data via remote weather station.
Geohazard	Geohazard studies, including testing and bore holes to determine best location all potential new buildings and structures.
Engineering & Road Access	Determine access route assessment and upgrade options. Consult with MOTI and FLNROD.

Hydro	Determine power demand & power source and servicing for the base and summit areas.
Telephone/Communication systems	Determine needs and source for the base and summit areas.
Water	Determine water demand, sources and design requirements for all facilities with low flow and ultra-low flow high efficiency fixtures. Creek flow monitoring equipment may be required.
Sewer	Determine sewer demand, location of any septic fields, for base and summit facilities (system will be independent and self-reliant). No negative implications for creek water quality or downstream water systems. Digging test holes may be required.
Stormwater	Hydrological studies for developed areas
Natural Gas/Propane	Determine needs and source for the base and summit areas.

DISCUSSION

FVRD Policies

Zoning and Official Community Plan

The investigative uses are primarily technical studies and field work, with no associated construction or significant land alteration, these uses are permitted in the L-1 and L-2 zones. Should the applicant proceed beyond the investigative phase to develop the project, several FVRD land use approvals will be necessary.

- Zoning Amendment to newly created zone or zones suited to the development proposal.
- Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment to newly created designation or designations and associated policy to reflect adventure tourism commercial use.

The gondola, summit facilities and backcountry uses would introduce a significant land use change to the Bridal Falls uplands and Mt Cheam alpine area. The project provides an opportunity to strengthen the tourism commercial destination at Bridal Falls in a high profile location which would enhance the gateway to the community from Highway's 1 and 9. This is a significant opportunity for the community to refresh the tourism commercial character of the area. However important technical issues must be addressed and consultation with the community, stakeholders and First Nations will be necessary. The FVRD anticipates that the consultation process will identify additional issues for the proponent to

address. While still at an early stage, the FVRD can provide preliminary advice with respect to technical requirements for the project. We expect that these technical issues will inform the investigative works and allow the applicant to prepare a comprehensive zoning and OCP amendment application should the project proceed.

Preliminary Review Requirements for Zoning and Official Community Plan Amendment		
ITEM	Issue	Details
1	Site Servicing	<p>Engineering report to confirm feasibility of water service (onsite or connection to FVRD system) and Class "A" sanitary sewer service (to be owned and operated by the FVRD) for the upper and lower terminus sites.</p> <p>Options for servicing must be consistent with FVRD policies for sewer and water servicing. Report to be prepared in co-ordination with the FVRD Engineering Department.</p>
2	Conceptual Lot Layout / Development Plan	Comprehensive plan prepared by a professional (i.e. designer, architect, etc.) of the proposed development, including the location of uses, key buildings, parking, parks and recreation connections, natural features (waterbodies/creeks), sloped areas and services (water source, road access, etc.).
3	Viewshed Analysis	Illustration of proposed gondola structures, parking area, and cleared routes areas from Popkum and Bridal Falls.
4	GeoHazard Assessment	<p>Subject lands are in a known geohazard location for sediment flood, debris flow, alluvial fan, rockfall, and debris slide.</p> <p>Geohazard report by Qualified Professional (QP can be P. Eng or P.Geo) to support proposed development uses and location. Report should identify areas for avoidance or future mitigation to be addressed at subsequent site specific review. Report must include completed FVRD-APEGBC Geo-Hazard Assurance Statement. QP report to be prepared in consultation with the FVRD Planning Department.</p>
5	Traffic Assessment	Traffic impact and access/egress assessment to identify appropriate road and transportation access routes, upgrades and design. Assessment to be completed in co-ordination with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.
6	Riparian Area Assessment (RAR)	Creeks and watercourses are a significant feature on the Bridal Falls slopes. The Riparian Area Regulation (RAR) requires an assessment for development within 30 metres of a watercourse. Identification of potential riparian zones and avoidance of RAR assessment areas is recommended in the design and layout of development areas.

7	Environmental Assessment	<p>In addition to RAR, the Bridal Falls area provides habitat for terrestrial species. The Mount Cheam backcountry is a sensitive sub alpine environment which is susceptible to damage from increase use, wildlife impacts, litter, and wildfire hazards.</p> <p>An overview Environmental Assessment in parallel to the RAR approval to identify species of concern, and potential development layout considerations to avoid and minimize impact on terrestrial habitat.</p>
8	Stormwater Management Plan	<p>Upslope lands in Bridal Falls are particularly sensitive to down slope water movement as it moves to the groundwater areas of West Popkum – location of FVRD community water source (well), Cheam Wetlands and the Fraser River.</p> <p>P. Eng report to outline technical advice for onsite stormwater management to ensure water quality protection in co-ordination with the GeoHazard consultant. Technical design and layout to be identified in later Development Permit stage.</p>
9	Site Profile	A Site Profile will be required by the Province of BC under the Contaminated Sites Regulation.
10	Fire and Emergency Response	The number of anticipated visitors to the base, plus the integration of the development into backcountry areas and forest slopes, creates unique challenges for fire and emergency response, for example in ensuring appropriate fire flows, road/route access, the capacity of the local volunteer fire department and Search & Rescue, emergency responder training and equipment, emergency response times and emergency routes. A fire and emergency response assessment would be required to assess implications for emergency management/response and outline options for fire, search/rescue and emergency management. Report to be prepared in consultation with FVRD Emergency Management Department.
11	Architectural Design	Confirmation of form and character - architectural design scheme for buildings and structures, including building finishes, colour scheme, height, signage, landscaping and lighting.
12	Consultation Plan	<p>Community engagement with Popkum and Bridal Falls residents, business owners, First Nations, Crown Land users and others will be a critical component to the success of the development.</p> <p>The applicant is encouraged to engage the community early and</p>

		share development plans, technical reports and architectural designs.
13	Archeological Impact Assessment	Prepared in consultation with the Province of BC and first nations.
14	Application fees	\$25,000 for Official Community Plan amendment (\$20,000) and Zoning amendment (\$5000).
15	Planning Consultant Services	To ensure oversight and co-ordination of the engagement process, connection of the technical reports to OCP amendment policies and zoning. The FVRD will provide guidance and advice to direct the planning consultant as they prepare the Plan policies.

COST

Fees are not collected for referral responses. Rezoning and Official Community Plan amendment fees of \$25,000 will be collected should the project proceed to FVRD land use approvals stage.

CONCLUSION

The proposed Provincial Temporary License will permit the applicant to undertake technical studies and field work to investigate the feasibility of an adventure tourism destination in Bridal Falls and the Mount Cheam backcountry. No FVRD approvals are required for the proposed investigative uses. However should the development proceed; the project will require FVRD zoning and Official Community Plan amendment approvals. The project could introduce a significant land use to the Bridal Falls and Mount Cheam area; the applicant will need to address technical issues and consultation in a comprehensive manner.

COMMENTS BY

Graham Daneluz, Deputy Director of Planning & Development	Reviewed and supported.
Margaret Thornton, Director of Planning & Development	Reviewed and supported.
Mike Veenbaas, Director of Financial Services	No further financial comments
Paul Gipps, Chief Administrative Officer	Reviewed and supported