



COMMUNITY UPDATE MARCH 2009



NEW APPROACH TO SPRING CLEANING – A DOWNTOWN WALKABOUT. Urban Designer Michael von Hausen will host a series of walking tours and workshops, Wednesday April 29 and Thursday April 30, to assist Pembertonians in improving the downtown. The community feedback will inform a Downtown Strategy, a major spring project for the Village's Development Services Department that will help maximize the potential of the Village centre.

Community Input Needed on Pemberton Airport's Next Move

Pemberton Regional Airport Authority Recommends Modest Commercial Expansion or Nothing, and wants to know what Public Thinks.

Over the last two months, the Community Centre and the Ts'zil Learning Centre have displayed storyboards about the future potential of the Pemberton Regional Airport to ensure the community is well informed about the planning that has been done thus far, and to gauge feedback on the Pemberton Regional Airport Authority's recommended go-forward strategy.

The benefit of a regional air service lies in its potential to support the continued development of the Sea to Sky region as a tourist destination and to create a more sustainable economy, goals which align with the SLRD's regional growth strategy goals.

In the Project Definition Report, demand for the Pemberton Regional Airport was forecast by taking into account the province's mandate to double tourism, an anticipated post-Olympics boost in interest in the region, and the use of jets providing commercial passenger service from Vancouver, Calgary, and Seattle, commencing with 370 travellers a day, growing to 1025 passengers a day ten years from now.

The current airport runway, at 3900 feet, can only accommodate small turbo props and small private jets, and services approximately 400 landings a year.

In order to operate as a commercial concern, the airfield would require runway and taxiway extensions, approach lighting, an expanded terminal, a maintenance and operations building, upgraded flood protection and serviced commercial lots.

Five potential options for the Pemberton Regional Airport were explored in the report, which can be read at www.pemberton.ca.

Servicing long-haul commercial jets is an option the community has never supported, requires an impracticable runway extension to 7000 feet, and was immediately discarded.

A limited development scenario, lengthening the runway to 5000 feet and catering simply to 35 seat small-prop aircraft and private jets, would not generate the economic return to justify the financial investment.

Lengthening the runway to 5500 feet and opening the airport to a scheduled commercial service could yield 50,000 (by 2012) to 250,000 (by 2032) passenger visits a year, an influx that supports tourism growth and potentially stimulates new business development. However, the capital outlay to develop the airport facilities to the necessary standard would not be paid back under such modest revenues. This option was also deemed not to be economically viable.

The recommended development scenario sees a 6000 foot runway catering to regional commercial traffic like WestJet's B737 to key gateways of Calgary and Seattle. The airport development would require an investment of \$60 million over the next 20 years, with a goal to potentially service up to 418,000 passengers by 2032. The airport, once operating, would directly generate 100 full time jobs, and could inject \$25 million tourism dollars into the regional economy. The Airport Authority recommended this scenario, with caps and limits to ensure the environmental and social impacts are acceptable to the community.

Maintaining the status quo is the other choice recommended for consideration. It involves the least risk and no financial outlay, but sees the Airport continue to cost the Village of Pemberton approximately \$25,000/year.

Funding for environmental and archaeological impacts is being sought, and a feasibility analysis of the Required Navigation Procedure (RNP) approach being considered. An updated financial analysis on the economic impact will be required to support any funding applications needed to move the project ahead from here.

This lengthy information-gathering process regarding the viability of developing the Pemberton airport into a commercial operation has been underway since 2005 when the Airport Land Use Plan was finalized, and is geared at ensuring that the community is fully informed as it moves into a decision-making phase.

The storyboards outlining these Strategic Options are on display at the Community Centre, the Ts'zil Learning Centre in Mount Currie, and at www.pemberton.ca, and comments are still welcome.

Community feedback is important to both the Pemberton Regional Airport Authority and Council and is an important component in assisting with determining a recommended approach to the future direction of the Airport. Residents are encouraged to take a look at the story boards and provide their comments to the Village.

An Open House for the community is planned for the spring.

■ **Grant Successes mean projects can get underway.** The Village has been successful in several major funding requests, securing \$400,000 under the Towns for Tomorrow program for universal water metering; \$6,000 from Trees for Tomorrow to enhance the treeway along Portage Road; and \$40,000 from the Local Motion fund for One Mile Lake accessibility improvements.

■ **Mount Currie Election Results.** The Village congratulates the newly elected Chief and Council at the Mount Currie Band and looks forward to working with returning and new faces over the next two years.

■ **Household economics.** Utilities bills will be mailed out this week to households and businesses in Pemberton. The Sewer rates will remain the same as last year. Water rates have been increased by 3% to account for the water looping project and to build up reserves.

■ **Easter hours at Village of Pemberton.** The Village office will be closed Friday 10 April and Monday 13 April for Easter.

■ **50+ Social Calendar.** Seniors activities include weekly tai chi classes at the Lions Villa Trailer, Saturdays from 9am - 9:45am for a drop-in fee of \$3, and the upcoming Movie Matinee trip to Whistler on Sunday, March 29. To find out more about what's planned, contact Lindsay May at Lindsay.May@vch.ca or call 604 698 5380.

■ **Elder-Goes to Squamish.** The ElderGO! bus offers service to Squamish on Thursday, April 16, for medical appointments. Call (604) 894-0242 for more information and to book your seat on the bus.

■ **Pemberton Grad Bursary.** Class of 2009 graduating students are invited to apply for the first Pemberton Bursary. Grads can apply by April 30 2009. Download the application form at www.pemberton.ca.

■ **Council Meetings Welcome Public.** Next Council meetings will be Tuesday April 7 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at 1350 Aster Street (above the Fire Hall). The location for the Tuesday April 21, at 9:00 a.m. will be advised.

■ **Brainstorm Session for OCP set for May.** The update of Pemberton's Official Community Plan will roll out early in May with the first public brainstorming session. For more information about Official Community Plans, visit the March 6 Pemberton Page archived at www.pemberton.ca.