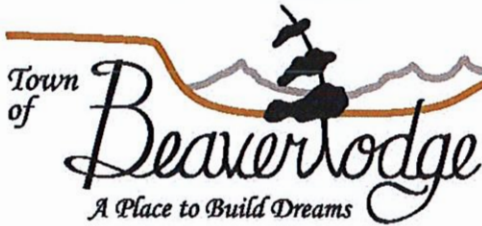


AGENDA FOR THE TOWN OF BEAVERLODGE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
TO BE HELD MONDAY NOVEMBER 28, 2022 @ 6:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 400 10 ST BEAVERLODGE, AB

| | | |
|-----|---|---------|
| 1.0 | <u>CALL TO ORDER</u> | |
| 2.0 | <u>LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</u> | PP2 |
| 3.0 | <u>ADOPTION OF AGENDA</u> | |
| 4.0 | <u>DELEGATION</u> | |
| 5.0 | <u>OLD BUSINESS:</u> 5.1 Town Hall Report – CAO Jeff Johnston | PP3-13 |
| 6.0 | <u>NEW BUSINESS:</u> 6.1 Railway Advocacy Background 6.2 Christmas Craze – Councillor Jones 6.3 Community Economic Development – Councillor Corbett 6.4 Community Enhancement Committee – Councillor Kokotilo-Bekkerus 6.5 Walking Trails – Councillor Jones 6.6 Mascot Names – Councillor Corbett | PP14-31 |
| 7.0 | <u>TOPICS FOR NEXT AGENDA:</u> | |
| 8.0 | <u>ADJOURNMENT:</u> | |



Box 30, Beaverlodge, AB T0H 0C0

Phone: 780.354.2201

Fax: 780.354.2207

As long as the sun shines, grass grows and the rivers flow – we acknowledge the homeland of the many diverse First Nation & Métis people whose ancestors have walked this land.

We are grateful to live, learn and work on the traditional territory of Treaty 8 and we make this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation and gratitude.

Beaverlodge Town Hall Report

Tuesday, September 27, 2022

7-9pm, Community Centre

Prepared by: Holly Sorgen, EmPower Up!



Summary

Jeff Johnston, CAO for the Town of Beaverlodge approached Holly Sorgen to facilitate a Town Hall meeting, specifically to consult with the community on a variety of subjects and to reinforce Council's commitment to consistent communication with its residents and business community.

The meeting began with a welcome from the mayor and then Jeff presented an update of the Town and Council's Strategic Goals and Actions. He outlined each are and progress made in each, taking question along the way. 25 residents attended this portion of the meeting.

Holly then introduced the concept of the consultative portion of the session, including – goals of the session, the process, namely roundtable discussion topics, recording and reporting and Council's commitment to ongoing connections and communication.

The goals of the consultation session included:

- Engage a good cross section of the community and its residents from young families to seniors
- Identify opportunities for the Town
- Close the loop on the conversations
 - Commitment to:
 - Listen
 - Discuss
 - Communicate
 - Act, when able and logical

17 people continued into the consultation portion of the session. The group that participated was a wide cross section of the community, including those representing the recreation sector, business owners and advocacy representatives, young families, and seniors.

8 Questions were asked of the group and each table discussed each question, recording answers and reporting back to the larger group. The following is a breakdown of the high-level trends, commonalities, and recommendations for future action for the Town, residents, and business owners.

Findings

Given the beautiful weather that evening, it was a pleasant surprise to have the number of participants who attended and contributed to the session. This is indicative of an engaged community, and the diverse nature of the participants was also a positive as those who attended represented a multitude of interests, backgrounds, experiences, communities, and interest groups.

Of the 17 people who completed the consultation portion of the evening, 17 identified one thing they committed to doing in the short term to benefit the town. This indicates that the group that attended are truly engaged, committed and are community influencers who can create change and energy in the community.

Low-Hanging Fruit

In terms of low hanging fruit, there were several areas that were identified that were easily actionable to show Council's commitment to the consultation process. These vary in cost and impact but recommendations with immediate impact and follow-on momentum include:

- Arranging a community clean up
- Hosting a service club showcase and membership drive
- Halloween engagement – town office open for trick or treat, make the Beaver a ghost
- Strengthening the Calendar on the town website and market its use to keep it current
- Increase Wi Fi access in town facilities and downtown core

Sport & Recreation

A large segment of sports and recreation representatives were actively participating in the roundtable discussions. It appeared as if the diversity of sport and recreation offerings in the community were a point of pride for residences and that there is a strong desire to continue to develop the infrastructure necessary to carry on that momentum and make Beaverlodge a Sporting Community of choice. In the short term this may include the development of a Sport and Recreation Committee to inform the development and refurbishment recreation plan for the community.

As Beaverlodge is considered a regional hub for sport and recreation, housing and hosting regional teams and enhancing the overall viable of ports activities in the West County, it is recommended that the Town consider creating a Sport and Recreation Cluster or Hub that can capitalize on regional opportunities, and/or develops a regional sport and recreation mandate and mission as it relates to regional facilities, new facilities, secondary and tertiary development for the support of a Sport and Rec Hub and see where the regional approach lends to a comprehensive infrastructure development plan.

Housing

Housing and access to housing remain priorities for the residents in attendance. As Beaverlodge is a growing community and to appeal to young families looking to locate or relocate, it is important to ensure there is sufficient real estate available for purchase and rental. At present, it is felt that there is not enough residential availability to accommodate the needs of new families moving in. One actionable item involves the creation of a Residential Development Committee to help inform the process, create a development plan, appeal to developers, and inform the process.

Also related to housing and residential needs, the group cited a need for additional Seniors Housing and Seniors supports. This may be more of a long-term plan, and it is recommended that Council's representative to Grande Spirit Foundation continue to advocate for the community's needs at that table.

Business

As a highly engaged group, those in attendance also identified ways the community and the business community could be engaged at higher levels to assist Council and Administration in some of the “work.” One suggestion that came out of the meeting was to create a Residential Development Committee to engage residents, developers, etc. to inform the housing development process.

It was also suggested to strengthen the Economic Development committee, engaging more business owners in informing economic development activities as it relates to business retention, business attraction, import replacement (buy local) and strengthening the overall local business environment. There appears to be strong support in the community for the local Chamber of Commerce so the further development of a relationship between the economic development committee and the Chamber is and should be a priority, especially as it relates to connecting with the business community.

If the committee has not yet engaged in economic development training, a further recommendation may be to engage in economic development training that is offered through many venues included Economic Developers of Alberta, and several post-secondary institutions in Alberta, including SAIT Polytechnic. University of Waterloo offers a designation in Economic Development and have recognized the EDA courses as part of the building blocks to designation. EDA also has a unique offering specific to Elected Officials for Economic Developers.

The Economic Development Committee can then inform Council’s business development strategy specifically related to the areas identified during the consultation – tax incentives, business development incentives, a local procurement policy, etc.

Health

Access to healthcare and healthcare professionals remains a priority for residents, which is the same for the entire Northwest region. With that in mind, it is imperative that council continue to advance the P3 arrangement they are developing to build a new health facility and continue work with PHAC to ensure the facility is sufficiently staffed.

As a regional hub, the Beaverlodge health facility can house primary care, acute care, and tertiary care as a one stop shop and/or the Town can consider create a health and wellness cluster for the community to further develop and full-service regional health cluster that serves all manner of healthcare and wellness needs. Strategic, regular communication to the community is essential as the plans for the new facility advance and progress.

Next Steps:

Given the excellent turn out, engaged group and Council commitment to regular communication and consultation with residents, it is recommended that similar type events are hosted once per year, in Fall, to gather data, feedback and information/recommendations from residents and business owners. Other communication events such as Coffee with Council will also continue to be valuable to the consultation process.

The group that attended was very engaged and appear to be very active in the community – effectively influencers in their social groups. It is recommended that the Town continue to communicate with those who attended, showing a willingness to continue the conversation and respond to pressing issues, anticipate those that are arising and commit to finding solutions at a community level.

Raw Data/Notes

The following is the raw data/notes from each of the groups for the 8 roundtable questions.

Framing Question:

Imagine Beaverlodge is a thriving community that young people, families and seniors feel proud to live in.

What does that look like?

Welcome:

Friendly and welcoming

Generosity of our community

Health:

Doctors

Sustainable hospital

Hospital

Health care facility – more access to doctors

Infrastructure:

Confidence in utility infrastructure

Communication – WIFI - Access throughout town

Clean water

Business:

Thriving business

Convenient local access

Strong economy

A good place to have lunch

More restaurants

Self-sufficient businesses

Events:

Community events – low cost

Parades

Community food drive

Continued community events

Community events

Education:

Public junior high

Local event centre – 1000+

Amazing schools

Seniors:

Better senior services – more things to do

More housing

Another level of seniors housing
Amenities for senior living

Youth:

Daycare placements
Outdoor activities
After school activities
Help with homework, etc.
7-16 age group
Youth programming
Weekly activities

Housing

Increased residential housing
Actionable residential development plan

Finance:

Low taxes

Recreation & Sport:

Walking trails
Youth drop-in centre
Arts and Cultural centre
More benches
Safe sidewalks
Splash Park
New rec facilities (diamonds, arena, running track, skate trail, splash park)
Recreational area: arena, skate park, walking trails
Ball diamonds
Field house
Lots of sports

Aesthetics:

Town beautification
Communities in Bloom
New signs
Welcome sign
Lights standards

Service:

Vibrant service clubs – Elks, IODE, Bethany Banner, Elks, Legion, Sons of Norway, Junior B Team
Small town atmosphere

Question 2:

What are you most proud of as a resident of Beaverlodge?

What makes Beaverlodge an awesome place to live, work and play?

Welcoming:

Space

“Community” – the people support each other, generosity

The Beaver

Community involvement and volunteerism

Town & Council

Support for events

Active programs

Ability to successfully raise a family

The way our community supports people in need, during time of need

Safe and welcoming community

Welcoming and accepting

Benefits – support in times of need

Longevity history

Health:

Hospital and staff

All 3 first responders

Hard working volunteer fire department

Culture

BACS and Art Club

Mural Society

Progress

Art and Culture Centre

Museum

Economic

Self sufficiency

Ability to make a healthy living, with economic opportunities

Businesses

Local business (supportive)

Chamber

Amenities

Churches – open, inviting, and active

Facilities that are functional need to be proud of what we have

Sufficient amenities:

Gas stations, fire dept, car wash, plumbers, electricians, hospital, police, baseball, arena, grocery stores, hardware stores

Education:

Great school

Great teachers

Recreation:

Rec centres

Sports teams – providing teams for the whole area

Sports

Recreational facilities - pool, gym

Library

Question 4:

What makes Beaverlodge a good place to do business?

Political

Supportive town and council

Connection

Personal interaction and service

Knowing your client

Personalized experiences

Friendliness

Word of mouth

Collaboration

Promote each other

Support local tribe

Economic

Lots of opportunity

Economic availability with a strong industry supporting economy

Understanding the economy

Lower taxes

Lower real estate – cost and access

Business

Walking access to businesses

Local business owners support each other

Involved Chamber

Local business gives back to their local organizations 100% great for this

Local support

Local support is prevalent

Business Chamber

Convenient

Do business with your neighbours

Ability to work together
Business owners support one another
Great connections
Great camaraderie

Employment:
Good honest hard-working employees
Employment for local youth

Question 5:

How could the town be even more appealing to residents and business?

Sports/Recreation
More support towards the sports organizations
Promotion of sports
Participating in sports development
Having people to reach out to when issues arise
Town communication
They ask how things are going

Business Supports
Knowing locations and what businesses offer
Using our local businesses for local work instead of outside companies – i.e., Electricians, plumbers, construction, engineers
Restaurants/Pubs
Fill the empty buildings
More local business and opportunities
Sign for main street
Advertise businesses more
Update the signs/businesses

Connectivity
Communication – improved Wi-Fi throughout town
Strengthen Radio signal

Housing
More places to live
Access to real estate
Currently no housing available
New housing

Health
Doctors

Aesthetics

Lights
Trees
Annual town clean up
Highway beautification
Main street décor

Employment/Volunteerism
Job opportunities in town
Volunteer opportunities and participation

Incentives
Tax incentives for aesthetics and for development
Incentives to startup businesses
Lower cost of set up
Lower taxes
Maintain the current tax and cost of living to best of their ability
Environment
Urban deer
Environmentally friendly

Question 6:

What is one thing the town could do in the next 30 days to get a quick win?

Communication
Green light to share updates on hospital
Wi Fi at town facilities and downtown core

Advertise/Promote
Local paper to advertise our town more
More advertisement at Arena – i.e., Boards for upcoming events
Make the Town calendar more well know and used
Web page calendar
Online calendar

Roads:
Leverage Alberta Transportation to finish approach by industrial park
Road maintenance on 11th

Committees:
Creation of Residential Development Committee
Strengthen Economic Development committee – more businesses involved
Partner with Blades to do leg work for sponsorships and split funds

Clean Up
Reduced frequency of recycled bin picks up

Recycling bins

Community Clean Up- make dumpster and garbage bins available

Get new flag and clean up flower bed

Arrange town clean up

Events:

Family Fall Event

Community engagement

Service club showcase and membership drive hosted by town

Activities during Christmas

Calendar

Brochure

Make the Beaver a ghost

#Beaver – leverage the beaver

Town – open for Halloween

Question 7: To be done Individually

What is one thing you can commit to make Beaverlodge the best it can be?

I can commit to active participation

Continue participating and stay in engaged in community events

Become more involved in community

If something needs to be done, “do it”

Volunteer more

Volunteer and support wherever possible

Pick up trash with my kids on our walks

Join service clubs – legion, elks

Create a plan for newcomer connections

Beaver decorating leader

Find another person to volunteer

Run for town council

Recruit volunteers for all groups

Be there for this community by continuing to service with the fire dept and work on recruiting new members for a stronger dept

Support local business

Continue to volunteer

Meet your neighbor, volunteer

I will volunteer in one more organization in town

Nichole Young

Subject: FW: Rail Advocacy Background
Attachments: Railway Advocacy Background Package - October 2022.pdf

From: Northern Alberta Elected Leaders <northernalbertaelectedleaders@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 13, 2022 10:40:38 AM
To: Northern Alberta Elected Leaders <northernalbertaelectedleaders@gmail.com>
Subject: Fwd: Rail Advocacy Background

Hello to our Northern Alberta Elected Leaders!

At our November 4th meeting in Peace River, Mayor Tom Pickard from the Town of Whitecourt had given us a briefing on this initiative. Mayor Jackie Clayton from the City of Grande Prairie has spearheaded this very important initiative, which you will find a briefing on attached.

Thanks

Jim Rennie

Executive Director

Northern Alberta Elected Leaders

Community Based Rail Advocacy

October 2022

Background

Canada's rail providers are leveraging their duopoly to maximize profits, while simultaneously failing to meet service obligations. For resource communities across western Canada, this means lost economic opportunity and significant impacts on local jobs.

It also means that our reputation with customers around the world is beginning to suffer. If we can't deliver product to market on-time, we risk losing customers and jobs to other countries.

The problem is exacerbated by railway business practices, including auctioning cars to the highest bidder (even while failing to meet service obligations) and failing to invest in infrastructure to maintain service levels over the winter months. This problem is especially acute in remote and northern communities.

Who is Impacted

These challenges affect multiple sectors and harm communities throughout western Canada. Many resource sectors are affected, including:

- Agriculture
- Chemical Industries
- Energy
- Forestry
- Mining

A Cross-Sectoral Approach

The nature of this problem often pits one sector against another as they compete for service. This benefits rail companies as they are able to maximize profits, but hurts communities. We need to come together to demand better rail service from the companies themselves and from the federal regulator.

What Should We Ask For?

- The Government of Canada to compel railway companies to publish car fulfillment statistics on a weekly basis and consider establishing cross-sectoral service requirements for railways to meet
- A detailed winter railroading strategy that seeks to maintain service levels throughout the winter months
- A legislative ban on the practice of auctioning cars
- Increased investments in infrastructure, rolling stock, and human resources with the objective of reducing times of unsatisfactory service

Who Should be Involved?

This will require a collaborative effort that brings together stakeholders to advocate for our communities. Potential partners include:

- Municipal councils
- Chambers of Commerce
- Agriculture Boards and Commissions
- Industry Associations (from affected industries identified in the previous section)
- Shippers coalitions

What Tactics Should We Use?

- The most efficient way to advocate on this file may be to use a variety of tactics, that make use of the larger group in strategic situations, while at the same time also using individual meetings, letters, and op ed columns to help spread the message more broadly.

Meetings with Influencers

- Identification of key influencers on this file (federal and provincial transportation ministers, opposition federal transportation critic, one or two key MPs). These key influencers would be targeted for meetings with a broad cross-section of the group. Effectively, this would function as a show of force on the file.
- Meetings with less influential actors, including a broader selection of MPs, would be carried out by local groups with connections to their ridings.

Use of the Media

- One large broad push that targets national level media (CBC, CTV, Globe and Mail, National Post, Toronto Star). This would include a press release signed by signatory organizations, a signature op ed piece, and media availability from key representatives.
- Outreach to smaller local media to help spread the message, with each signatory responsible for targeting media in markets where they have a major presence.

A Delegation to Ottawa

- One large trip to Ottawa with multiple delegates. The trip would focus meetings that involve the entire group and smaller meetings to help spread the message. Ideal timing for this meeting may be in late January/early February when the House is sitting and cold weather is likely to lead to poor rail performance.

Memo

To: City of Grand Prairie
Date: May 30, 2022
From: Brent Kossey
Subject: Rail Capacity Resolution Background and Talking Points

The Importance of Canadian Rail

Background

The development of transcontinental railways was integral to Canada's development. Not only did they link the country together and revolutionize transportation, but they also played a vital role in growing Canada's economy. Indeed, by tying our regions together, it brought our goods to markets across the country and around the world. Rail remains as vital to the economic security and prosperity of the nation today as it did then, transporting 50 per cent of our exports, and supporting thousands of jobs and communities across the country. However, rail transportation is under threat, creating challenges for the economy, disproportionately impacting northern communities, and threatening Canada's reputation as a supplier and trade partner at a global level.

The challenges facing communities that rely on Canada's railways include:

- Infrastructure
 - o There is a lack of capacity that is creating bottlenecks across the entire supply chain, impacting the supply of commodities needed for processing and delivery of final products to market.
 - Some key industries being impact include oil and gas, agricultural products, and wood and paper products.
 - o Ongoing maintenance of ageing rail lines.
 - o For northern communities, rail is a critical part of the local economy, taking locally harvested or extracted resources to domestic and international markets resulting in job creation. In many cases, it is also critical to ensuring communities basic necessities.
- Climate change and inclement weather response
 - o Rail companies need better plans in place to address the impact of climate change, from fires to floods that can impede or destroy rail lines, service points, and loading stations.
 - o A winter railroad strategy needs to be developed to have solutions in place to address the impacts of cold and inclement weather and the unique challenges that Canadian winters pose.
 - o Railways can play a much larger role in national climate change strategy. For landlocked areas, they offer a far less carbon intensive and efficient solution than trucking.



- Management
 - o The continued practice of auctioning rail cars.
 - o Keeping up with regulatory and industry changes.
 - o A more thorough understanding and response to the national supply chain and commodities systems. For example: If there is a strike at a major port, how does this impact supply and demand and what role can the rail system play in addressing this?

A strong rail system helps all industries, communities, and the country as a whole. It is time that the challenges impacting and caused by Canada's national railways are addressed and fixed.

Key Messages

- On behalf of the City of Grand Prairie, I would like to introduce a resolution on an issue impacting so many communities across the country – rail capacity.
- From coast to coast, our railways are the links of steel that bind us together as a country.
- While much has changed since the Last Spike was driven into the CPR track nearly 137 years ago, one thing remains the same – in a country as vast as Canada, railways play a critical role in moving our exports to market and bringing goods that enrich Canadians' lives to our communities.
- Unfortunately, Canada's two largest railways are pitting region against region, commodity against commodity, holding our communities' resources hostage as they continue to offer substandard service.
- Isolated rural communities across Canada are being disproportionately affected when facilities are forced to cut production because they can't move the product or get inputs for production processes.
- When our rail networks aren't as efficient as they should be, Canada's economy suffers as do the lives of everyday Canadians.
- CN and CP have said all the right things, but they have failed to take any concrete steps to address the situation, which is why we are asking for FCMs support
- As elected officials, we have a responsibility to act, and we need to do so now before the situation gets even worse.



Supporting the Economy by Improving National Rail Capacity

WHEREAS Canada's railway system is critical to our economy, transporting 50 per cent of our exports and supporting thousands of jobs in communities across the country; and

WHEREAS there is a shortage of carrying capacity as some industrial players are purchasing rail cars that are not being supplied despite the importance of rail to the economic activity of Canadian municipalities; and

WHEREAS suppliers of critical resources such as oil, agricultural products, and wood and paper products are especially being impacted by these delays; and

WHEREAS the inability to get these goods to market are increasing the cost of living by creating shortages of goods, thereby exacerbating inflation, making it more expensive to fill up gas tanks, build affordable housing, and feed families; and

WHEREAS delays in the transportation of goods also undermines job creation in the communities where they are manufactured, extracted, harvested, and loaded;

WHEREAS rail is among the least carbon-intensive forms of commercial transportation, and thus has a critical role to play in addressing the climate change crisis; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) petition the federal government to:

- address the shortage of rail capacity by working with Canadian National and Canadian Pacific to purchase, construct and or activate more rail cars;
- introduce legislation to prevent companies from auctioning rail cars and fine carriers when they fail to provide customers the number rail cars they ordered;
- develop a pan-commodity approach that ensures equitable and efficient service for all railway customers;
- develop a winter railroading strategy to address the challenges Canadian winters pose to service; and
- make targeted investments in Canada's rail and port systems to alleviate the bottlenecks contributing to goods shortages and inflation.

July 19, 2022

Dear National Supply Chain Co-Chairs and Task Force Members:

On behalf of Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC), we are writing to thank you for your ongoing attention to matters of supply chain performance and provide a written summary of our recommendations for inclusion in the Task Force's final report.

As you know, FPAC provides a voice for Canada's wood, pulp and paper, and wood fibre-based bio-materials producers nationally and internationally in government, trade, and environmental affairs.

Canada's forest products industry generates some \$72 billion dollars in revenues each year, operates in more than 600 forest-dependent communities, and directly employs as many as 200,000 Canadians across the country. We exported \$45 billion worth of goods to the global market in 2021, representing roughly 7% of all Canadian exports. Our sector is also one of the largest employers of Indigenous peoples in Canada and includes some 1,400 Indigenous-owned businesses.

As pandemic-driven shutdowns spread across Canada in early 2020, forest product manufacturers were deemed essential and continued to ship goods to domestic and international markets. Despite significant market demand—particularly for lumber and medical-grade pulp producers—underperforming transportation supply chains have limited the extent to which our sector could meet global demand for Canadian wood, pulp and paper, and bio-products.

FPAC has long understood the severity and impact of these issues for Canadian shippers—members have been forced to curtail or shutdown production, have lost customers, have incurred huge opportunity costs, and seen investors become wary of expanding Canadian production capacity. If we hope to continue supplying world-class goods to our trading partners worldwide, it is imperative that transportation supply chains be optimized.

In addition to the points raised by FPAC during Transport Canada's recent Commodity Supply Chain Table meeting in Edmonton and its bilateral meeting with members of the Task Force, we have organized our observations and recommendations for federal action in support of improved supply chain performance in the attached annex. **Recommendations are informed by the urgent need for commercial and, if necessary, regulatory**



solutions that improve the reliability, accessibility, and efficiency across the transportation network for shippers.

Once again, we thank the Task Force and supporting staff at Transport Canada for their efforts and attention to these matters. We look forward to discussing these recommendations in more depth at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joel Neuheimer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joel Neuheimer
Vice President, International Trade, Transportation, HR, Corporate Secretary



Annex #1 – Detailed FPAC Recommendations for National Supply Chain Task Force

General Comments

Since [2016](#), the federal government has not articulated an adequate long-term strategic vision for Canada's transportation supply chains, instead adopting a reactive posture as disruptions multiply and headwinds intensify. Among FPAC member companies, there are many who believe that on-the-ground issues are not being adequately addressed by existing policies, regulations, and legislation, and that regulators like the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) lack the resources and/or political mandate to act in support of shippers who are persistently left lacking for suitable and adequate service at competitive rates. In addressing transportation supply chain issues on a national scale, we believe that the federal government can play a much more effective role in

- a) fostering productive dialogue among stakeholders;
- b) enforcing performance standards for transportation carriers, and;
- c) investing to ensure adequate Canadian trade infrastructure.

Stakeholder Dialogue—As the scope and frequency of disruptions to transportation service have increased, forums and processes that were conceived with the express intent of facilitating information exchange on transportation issues (e.g. NRCan's Rail Working Group, Transport Canada's Commodity Supply Chain Table, stakeholder consultations, working groups, initiatives, etc.) appear increasingly one-way—shippers and associations who take the time to attend and contribute to these discussions do not see adequate reciprocity from government partners or transportation carriers in terms of information-sharing and engagement towards solutions.

FPAC would like to see Transport Canada use its power as a convenor to facilitate regular discussions on the state of transportation supply chains, with obligations for carriers (i.e. class 1 railways, container shipping lines, for-hire trucking firms) to attend and make themselves available for questions.

Enforcing Performance Standards—As one of the associations that originally requested the Canadian Transportation Agency's (CTA) own-motion investigation into possible freight rail service issues in the Vancouver area, FPAC was pleased to see the CTA's own-motion power preserved via the Supreme Court's rejection of CN's application for leave. This effectively ensured that the CTA could continue to conduct investigations in a manner that is distinct from proceedings requiring the direct engagement of shippers to initiate complaints. However, the threshold for this sort of investigation appears to remain very high and could benefit from further clarification—without that clarity, the process does little to protect shippers from established practices that, in the view of CTA staff, may not be sufficiently systemic in nature.



FPAC would like to see the CTA better equipped to take a more aggressive and proactive approach to enforcing level-of-service obligations. In our view, the U.S. Surface Transportation Board and Federal Maritime Commission represent strong practical examples of this approach. At a minimum, there is a need for additional resourcing. The massive volume of consumer complaints related to air travel that the CTA must process has been limiting its ability to take up rail shipper complaints in a timely manner. The CTA's discretion to use its own-motion power should not be dictated by a lack of resources.

Investing in Canadian Trade Infrastructure— While FPAC was encouraged by the additional funding allocated in the 2022 Federal Budget for supply chain-focused investments through the National Trade Corridors Fund (NTCF), we believe that the operational and environmental impacts of all future infrastructure projects supported by the NTCF should be reported publicly by Transport Canada. At present, very little information is available to stakeholders regarding the high-level impacts of NTCF investments on the performance of Canada's key transportation infrastructure—rather, the success of this program continues to be defined by the total amount of funding allocated.

FPAC suggests two key criteria be used to drive NTCF decisions: investments made should be able to have a demonstrated impact on eliminating a bottleneck(s) in Canada's freight supply chain and should be able to demonstrate that a reduction in GHG emissions is achieved via that investment. We also believe that Transport Canada should ensure that resiliency and flexibility for shippers are prioritized (e.g. contingency measures like increased warehousing space¹ are essential given the lack of reliability across all modes). Finally, Investments made through the NTCF should also be subject to short-, medium-, and long-term evaluation based on their contributions to supply chain fluidity and emissions-reduction – these evaluations should be shared publicly by Transport Canada.

To ensure Transport Canada is taking an evidence-based approach to selecting NTCF investments, FPAC suggests that the department commission an independent benchmarking study that compares Canada's freight transportation infrastructure, intermodal connectivity, regulatory environment, and overall performance with other national jurisdictions. Jurisdictions against which Canada could be compared should be selected based on the similarity of their geography and demography, as well as the composition of their economies.

¹ For manufacturers of perishable products with limited storage options on site (e.g. pulp & paper), there is a constant risk of lost production in the event of a disruption to rail or truck service – depending on the severity of the disruption, this can lead to curtailments and shutdowns. We have heard anecdotally from our members that warehouse capacity is especially tight in Alberta and at the Port of Vancouver.



Given our current transportation corridors run through extremely difficult geographic terrain, and urban environments where there is no additional land available for expansion, now more than ever, it is essential for Canada to have a long-term vision and goals to build the freight supply chain necessary to meet current and future needs (e.g. Pacific Gateway Strategy).

Other General Recommendations—In order to better define a national transportation strategy, FPAC suggests that a permanent national steering committee of supply chain participants be established to identify the top bottlenecks across Canada’s supply chain on an ongoing basis—with a view to seeing federal government dollars invested, in collaboration with industry partners, to address those bottlenecks accordingly—and assess freight supply chain partners respective performance in keeping the chain moving efficiently. FPAC also suggests that the Task Force revisit recommendations advanced in the [Canada Transportation Act Review Report](#) led by the Honourable David Emerson, P.C., O.B.C., many of which remain highly relevant in our current context.

Freight Rail

Canada’s freight rail system provides perhaps the clearest illustration of the systemic issues that limit our national trade competitiveness—the Canadian market is dominated by the dual monopolies of CN and CP, with no real competitive pressures to improve service standards, offer competitive rates, staff operations adequately, or fund large-scale infrastructure development. This broken market has created a situation in which rail carriers are far more attentive to shareholders’ priorities than those of shippers or the Canadian economy, particularly those that produce lower revenues per tonne-kilometre.

Forest product shippers have expressed a clear preference for shipping products and receiving inputs via rail, but service and order fulfilment challenges have hampered their ability to move typical volumes of product—let alone increase the proportion of goods moving via rail. Alarming, member companies have informed FPAC that in some cases, their customers prefer to receive products via truck to ensure greater reliability and avoid arbitrary fees. In a recent survey of FPAC member companies, 88% of respondents agreed that rail service and fulfillment issues are “having a negative impact on customer confidence and global competitiveness of [Canada’s] forest sector”.

FPAC and its members have participated in federal consultations discussing road-to-rail modal shift and climate-related contingency planning, consistently articulating the same perspective—to make meaningful progress in getting more goods onto rail and improving the resilience of the system against climate- and human-made disruption, the federal government must first ensure that the freight rail system is performing well enough to support this transition.



Recommendations

Transport Canada’s forthcoming “Regulations Amending the Transportation Information Regulations (Freight Rail Data)” [*Canada Gazette*, Part I - May 7, 2022] represent an expansion of publicly available performance data that is long overdue. FPAC has submitted a representation on the regulatory proposal that makes several recommendations—among them, that Transport Canada create an annual report on the state of Canada’s railways using the data that is collected via the regulatory mechanism. Within this report, Transport Canada should ask rail carriers to explain and discuss any significant performance issues (e.g., above-average terminal dwell, lengthening cycle times, large swings in the number of train-operating employees) that might have occurred over the previous year. Task Force members can review all of FPAC’s recommendations on this proposal in Annex #2.

While it has not been included in the proposed Freight Rail Data regulations, FPAC firmly believes that Transport Canada and the Canadian Transportation Agency should take a more active role in monitoring on-time performance and reporting out to the Canadian public, and if possible, should compel Class 1 rail carriers to provide them with on-time performance data across commodity groups and geographic areas for aggregation and publication. Even in the absence of formal penalties for inadequate performance, we believe that the prospect of greater transparency (and therefore public accountability) regarding on-time performance may well compel carriers to make the requisite improvements to their operating practices.

FPAC also supports several amendments to the Canada Transportation Act, including the following:

- Repeal of Long Haul Interswitching (LHI)—this remedy, which has proven entirely ineffective, is based on a methodology that produces an “average captive rate” rather than a truly competitive rate for shippers. Further, it has served as a useful tool for rail carriers in arguing that a complainant shipper looking to access a remedy like Final Offer Arbitration has access to alternative remedies—when in fact, access to LHI offers no meaningful advantages. For that reason, FPAC believes that the repeal of LHI would be more useful to shippers than attempting to modify the remedy.
- Amendment of Final Offer Arbitration—FPAC supports the amendment of this provision within the Act to bring arbitration under the purview of the Canadian Transportation Agency, rather than commercial arbitrators. In our view, this change would increase the resources and contextual information available to arbitrators and address problematic power dynamics and information imbalance between carriers and shippers.
- Prohibition on Confidential Contracts that Bar Access to Shipper Remedies — Railways routinely require shippers to contract out of shipper remedies as a condition of entering a confidential contract, substituting instead a conventional commercial arbitration process that either does not reflect shippers’ rights



under the Canada Transportation Act or explicitly negates them. Shippers are then faced with the choice between (a) signing away their rights and (b) paying tariff rates that are significantly higher than what has previously been negotiated and leaving themselves exposed to further unilaterally imposed rate increases. FPAC would therefore support an outright prohibition on contracting out – this would be similar to the kinds of provisions commonly found in consumer protection legislation.

Marine Shipping

Though the severity of pandemic-driven cost increases and logistical bottlenecks in the marine shipping space has receded from its peak, the outlook for containerized and breakbulk traffic moving through Canadian ports still appears bleak. In FPAC's view, it appears that neither Canada Transportation Act nor the Shipping Conference Exemption Act (SCEA) are providing aid to shippers in any meaningful or timely fashion. As a short-term measure, we believe that the Minister of Transport should invoke Section 49 of the Canada Transportation Act to begin an inquiry into the behaviour of container shipping lines since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the absence of proactive Ministerial direction, we believe that the Canadian Competition Bureau should examine the available evidence on carrier behaviour to determine if any civil or criminal wrongdoing has taken place. As you know, FPAC has also taken part in a study completed on behalf of a shipper consortium that investigates the impacts and legal underpinnings of Canada's container shipping market—this study has been shared with the Bureau, as well as the Canadian Transportation Agency and Transport Canada. Perhaps the clearest recommendation to emerge from that report is the urgent need to repeal the SCEA, which FPAC views as anti-competitive and harmful to shippers.

For-Hire Trucking

While forest product shippers would prefer the logistical, environmental, and cost-saving benefits of a functioning freight rail system, they do remain reliant on for-hire trucking to move product from facilities to customers, transloads, and ports. Carrier capacity is perhaps the most pressing issue within the for-hire trucking space, largely due to a persistent shortage of available drivers that is expected to worsen as large numbers of drivers retire. For shippers, this has produced a situation wherein additional human and financial resources must be allocated to manage the volatility of capacity and rates.

While solutions to this issue are hard to come by, FPAC does believe that the Minister of Transport could adopt a convening role with Provincial counterparts to identify opportunities to reduce barriers to entry (e.g. high costs of: insurance, licences, training). This forum could also play an active role in harmonizing training requirements across



provinces to allow for more fluid labour mobility between provinces. Another opportunity to help fill current and future needs in this area is via increased immigration. Finally, Transport Canada could work with partners at Employment and Social Development Canada to improve the accessibility of requisite training programs to under-represented demographics within the trucking labour force (particularly Indigenous peoples, women, and New Canadians).

Another opportunity to help ease shortages in this area would be to harmonize vehicle weights and dimensions, as well as related requirements on our roads across Canada.



Annex #2 – FPAC Recommendations Regarding Freight Rail Data Regulations [Canada Gazette, Part I - May 7, 2022]

Recommendation #1: Transport Canada should include data on traffic volumes at the subdivision level wherever possible (factoring in confidentiality concerns).

Recommendation #2: In the absence of defined performance standards for rail carriers, Transport Canada should offer 4-week and 52-week rolling averages for key data points by commodity and/or car type, including:

- Origin and destination dwell times
- Number of loaded cars not moving en-route
- Segment transit times
- Loaded cars not moving by major destination area
- Empty cars online
- Locomotive fleet status (i.e., the number of locomotives online, in storage, and in bad order status [e.g. not working because of a functional or mechanical issue])
- Number of train operating employees (i.e., the number of locomotive engineers and conductors that are available to move traffic)

Recommendation #3: Transport Canada should include greater detail on fleet sizes and storage, including the average daily number of railway-controlled (owned or leased) cars (excluding foreign and private cars) in service, in storage, and ordered.

Recommendation #4: Transport Canada should provide more detailed data on how operating employee counts break down regionally (i.e., sub-provincial).

Recommendation #5: Transport Canada should include data on loaded cars received at interchange by commodity and/or car type.

Recommendation #6: Transport Canada should provide some measure of variability in addition to average dwell times.

Recommendation #7: Transport Canada should provide contextual data for all metrics, including:

- Car counts to be included for origin dwell metrics
- Commodity detail to be included in terminal dwell metrics
- Commodity detail to be included in segment transit time metrics.
- Total number of loaded cars arriving in each Major Destination Area during the week

Recommendation #8: Transport Canada should provide clarification or clearer definitions in relation to the following:

- Commodity type – by STCC (Standard Transportation Commodity Codes) (first three digits) for all commodity types and commodity sub-types
- Train Operating Employees – short term versus long term disability by duration



- Through trains (Terminal Dwell Times) – trains that stop in the terminal area only for a crew change (without picking up or dropping off any cars) should be included in Terminal Dwell Time indicators

Recommendation #9: Transport Canada should create an annual report on the state of Canada's railways using the data that is collected—within this report, Transport Canada should ask rail carriers to explain and discuss any significant performance issues (e.g., above-average terminal dwell, lengthening cycle times, large swings in the number of train-operating employees) that might have occurred over the previous year.

Recommendation #10: When Transport Canada begins to publish data, it should provide back-dated information covering at least 12-18 months prior to the Regulations' final implementation to create a baseline moving forward.

Recommendation #11: Transport Canada should commission an annual review of the regulations by a third party to evaluate their relevance and integrity.

- FPAC has documented clear inconsistencies in the Transitional Metrics that neither Transport Canada nor the railways have adequately explained. It is crucial to ensure that data published is accurate and relevant to shipper needs.

