

Acquisition Issues – A Project Case Study

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Today's Message

- Acquiring a large volume of properties, coupled with a compressed delivery schedule, requires an alternative delivery model.
- Today we will outline some of the components of a model that allowed the team to acquire about 38 properties in 3-6 months versus a typical 9-12 month period.

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Project Description

- Part of the Vancouver Island Highway Project (VIHP)
- 6 Km. arterial connector road linking the existing Island Highway with the new Inland Island Highway. Project cost \$27 M.
- Known as the South Courtenay Connector (SCC) during design and construction, now known as the Comox Valley Parkway.
- Delivery schedule fixed to a very short timeline as this section had to be ready to allow the opening of a 32 km section of mainline to the south.

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Project Goals

- Provide connection between existing Island Highway and new Inland Island Highway.
- Function as part of Highway 19 until Courtenay/Campbell River section is completed.
- Ultimately improve traffic flow through city and becomes part of local road network.
- Design and construct in a fiscally and environmentally sound manner. Construction to commence July 98 and complete Fall 99.

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Dates and Timelines - 1995

- August 1995 – Comox Valley Transportation Study completed, including recommendation for an alignment generally to the South of Courtenay, rather than to the North, and connecting to 29th Street.
- November 1995 – SCC Multiple Account Evaluation, evaluating cost and other impacts of a series of broad alignment options. Report recommends construction of new connector versus utilizing upgraded existing roads.

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Dates and Timelines – 1996-1997

- April 1996 – Minister announces inclusion of SCC in the VIHP
- Oct. 1997 – Route Study. Analysis of refined alignment options. Recommends Alignment A2
- Fall 1997 – Approval in principle by ALC for Option A2, Option A4 also indicated as acceptable. Design work initiated. Commitment made for October 31st, 1999 completion date.
- DFO indicates strong concern with Option A4 due to significant fisheries issues. Geotechnical also a concern.

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Dates and Timelines - 1998

- November 1997 – Public open house indicates 80% support for Option A2.
- January 1998 – Fraser Road Residents Association petitions court on ALC approval in principle.
- February 1998 – ALC recinds approval in principle for Options A2 and A4. Cost/ Benefit Analysis of other options.
- May 1998 – ALC Public Hearing, subsequent approval of Alignment D4. New design begins, completion date remains October 31st, 1999.

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Contracting Methodology

- VIHP chose to deliver the properties through contractors rather than in-house personnel.
- All contracts were awarded prior to identification of the deliverables with fees based on unit prices.
- As affected properties were known, these deliverables were assigned via a Work Assignment Letter (WAL). This contracting method allowed maximum flexibility as the contractor was able to commence work immediately when required by VIHP.

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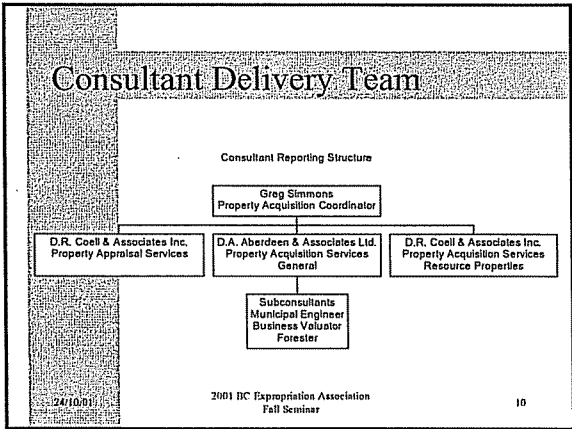
Contracting Highlights

- Have a local phone number or toll free line for owners to contact agent
- Have the agent forecast the amount and timing of expenditures to improve accuracy
- Decision by VIHP to hire appraisers outside of local area leaving local appraisers to act for owners with whom they had a greater comfort.

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Initial Design

- **Urban section- 29th Ave. curb and gutter, raised median islands, higher landscape treatment, signalization. New access configurations, 13 Properties affected.**
- **Rural Section – Cumberland I/C to E & N Railway. 25 Properties affected.**
- **Original estimate- \$11M Construction and \$8M Property.**

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Design changes – Why?

- **Rural Section largely in ALR**
- **Opposition from local stakeholder group over ALC approval process**
- **ALC holds public meeting and subsequently decides to shift alignment from A2 to D4 to mitigate Agricultural impacts**
- **10 Properties affected**

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Revised Design - Impacts

- D4 now within sensitive undisturbed fish habitat area requiring mitigation measures and approval by DFO. Also unstable soil conditions resulting in pre-load and delays.
- 6 new rural residential properties impacted-groundwater flows intercepted with surface wells at risk. Cost increased by \$2 M.
- Construction divided into 3 stages around available properties which are acquired as design is completed. Longer bridge required.
- 1998 Fisheries window missed. Bridge construction delayed to June 99.

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Impacts to Property - Urban Section Cliffe Avenue to City Boundary

- 15 properties impacted.
- 5 fee simple requirements, some with changes to access.
- 10 properties required access reconfiguration only.
- Goal was to close as many accesses onto 29th Street as practical to improve safety at higher traffic volumes.
- No delay due to ALR related design changes.

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Impacts to Property - Rural Section City Boundary to BC Hydro Corridor

- 11 properties impacted by fee simple requirements.
- All shown as partial takings on Property Acquisition Plans.
- 5 of the properties were added as a result of the ALC design change.
- Goal was to construct with minimal intrusion into ALR while limiting impact to environment and residential properties.
- ALR issues resulted in a complete redesign that caused significant delay.

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Lafarge Site – Acquisition Issues

- Acquisition of land and gravel within right of way
- Existing industrial use was “legal non-conforming”
- Relocation-owner could not relocate onto remainder until adequately zoned. Acquisition team facilitated rezoning on behalf of owner.
- Timing- minimize disturbance as supplying concrete to the VIHP.
- Relocation to current environmental standards.
- Labour dispute between owner and their employees during relocation- risk of project shutdown

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Impacts to Property – Rural Section Grant/Small/Minto Road Area

- 5 fee simple partial acquisitions.
- 4 LTC's to reconfigure or tie in accesses.
- Goal was to secure a temporary route for traffic to allow Cumberland Road to be closed so that the intersection structure could be built early.
- Secondary addition to scope – to increase safety of Cumberland/Minto intersection and accesses.
- No delay due to ALR related design changes.

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Solutions, Outcomes

- Go to RFP for agent and appraiser at preliminary design stage, and concurrently. Philosophy must match. Flexibility in approach.
- In a position to act immediately when acquisition plans become available.
- Assign agent prior to deliverables -RoW footprint 'defined'- to give advice to design team and identify potential difficulties or cost saving opportunities.
- Total buyouts can be identified and acquired prior to design completion.

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Solutions, Outcomes, cont'd

- Generally, more time to deal with owners issues vs. risk of "last minute" deals.
- Single point of contact, all enquiries thru agent. Maintain consistent approach and gain a source who is knowledgeable of all issues. Crucial for litigation.
- Same agent for owner with multiple properties, or similar property types and issues.
- Pre-Advance Costs - Form signed at outset of negotiations, for payment of expert fees upfront.

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Lessons Learned

- Roll Plan, showing requirements at early stage. benefits- communications, planning, strategy, surplus lands
- Aerial Photography- before and after- benefits- facilitated negotiations, assisted with appraisal issues, increased estimating accuracy.
- Water well assessments 12 months prior.

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Lessons Learned cont'd

- Scheduling Software
- Flagging Right-Of-Way-- rural areas

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