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## Sicamous-to-Armstrong Rail Trail COMMUNICATIONS POLICY & STRATEGY – FINAL

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The Sicamous-to-Armstrong Rail Trail inter-jurisdictional owners (Splatsin, CSR, RDNO) agree to uphold a high standard of communication between the Governance Committee, the Operational Committee and the elected bodies of the owner jurisdictions and stakeholders, including the general public, related to the design, development, ongoing management and maintenance of the Sicamous-to-Armstrong Rail Trail.

### Sharing the Vision – Unfolding the True Story

All communications will uphold the shared vision for the Sicamous-to-Armstrong Rail Trail as articulated through the joint inter-jurisdictional leadership meetings, including the desire to strengthen relationships and unfold the true story within Secwepemc Nation territory fundamental to the vision.

***The Shuswap North Okanagan Rail-Trail Vision:*** to protect environmental, agricultural, and Secwepemc cultural values, and create tourism and transportation benefits for the region, through the development of the entire abandoned Sicamous-to-Armstrong rail corridor as a continuous non-motorized greenway for walking & cycling (in the immediate short term); – and to link with the Vernon-Kelowna rail-trail greenway and 200 km south to Osoyoos in order to realize the full tourism value of this unprecedented opportunity. (“Three Sections; One Vision”)

***Strengthening Relationships and Unfolding the True Story*** within Secwepemc Nation territory is fundamental to this approach in the North. It is an initiative being led by Splatsin leadership in partnership with municipal/regional leadership; and seen as complimenting/linking with the Okanagan rail-trail efforts to the south. The parties intend for the relationship created by the Memorandum of Understanding and the opportunity to work together in pursuing the Okanagan Shuswap Railway to promote communication and strengthen relationships between their respective communities and residents. (MoU, 2015)

The strategic vision and goals for the Shuswap North Okanagan Rail-Trail include the following:

- a commitment to work together cooperatively (MoU 2015)
- unfolding the true story within Secwepemc territory and promoting communication and strengthened relationships between Secwepemc & municipal/regional communities and residents (MoU 2015, Pacific Caucus Briefing & Presentation 2016, FAQ May 2017)
- the protection of sensitive environmental and cultural sites along the corridor (MoU 2015);
- creation of tourism and transportation benefits for the region (Splatsin Brief 2015)
- revitalization of Splatsin culture and connections back to the land (Splatsin Brief 2015)
- maximizing the recreational and economic potential of the corridor (FAQ, May 2017);



- acknowledge agricultural values and the role of the Agricultural Land Commission (ToR 2019)
- maintaining a continuous corridor for both walking & cycling recreation (and active transportation) in the near term, and potential use as a flexible multi-modal transportation corridor in the future, for the joint benefit of the jurisdictions (MoU 2015, ToR 2016, FAQ 2017)
- linking with the Okanagan Nation Territory and the Vernon-Kelowna rail-trail greenway and the Kelowna-to-Osoyoos greenway trail initiative in the south, in order to realize increased tourism value. (See: “Three Sections; One Vision”, Pacific Caucus Presentation Brief, July 11, 2017)

### **Guiding Principles**

As outlined in the Governance Committee Terms-of-Reference, all communications will be guided by the following principles:

- To work collaboratively together.
- To seek consensus on matters requiring decisions.
- To work toward the establishment and continuation of mutual trust among the jurisdictional owners and stakeholder jurisdictions.
- To maintain public confidentiality on matters that are designated as such.
- To be prepared for meetings in order to contribute meaningfully to discussions and deliberations.
- To ensure a high standard of communication between the Governance Committee, the Operational Committee and the elected bodies of the owner jurisdictions and stakeholders.
- To reasonably commit to maintaining membership within the committee to the end of its term.

As well, the Parties agree to be guided by the Shuswap Local and Secwépemc Governments Communications Agreement, the purpose of which is to i) establish and maintain a long-term, cooperative government-to-government relationship and open communication across the Shuswap watershed portion of Secwépemc’ulecw1, ii) complement existing local protocols, and iii) support the development of local agreements where none exist. (See: Shuswap Local and Secwépemc Governments Communications Agreement, Sept. 2018)

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Representative members of the inter-jurisdictional owners (Splatshin, CSRD, RDNO), including elected officials, committee appointees, staff, and contracted personnel, should refer all questions and inquiries



from the media to the Governance Advisory Chair, Co-Vice Chairs, appointed Secretariat or lead Technical Operational Committee staff. When speaking publically, representative members of the inter-jurisdictional owners must convey the interests of the Sicamous-to-Armstrong Rail Trail.

Representative members of the inter-jurisdictional owners (Splatins, CSRD, RDNO) may choose to express their personal views to others outside the Committee but may not speak on behalf of or in any way create the impression that they are speaking for the Committee as a whole. In order to ensure open and honest dialogue; Committee members should not discuss comments or opinions expressed by other Committee members without their knowledge and consent.

Regular communications and reporting will be maintained by the Technical Operational Committee on behalf of the owners and representative members, including regular updates to the public through media releases and information made available online.

A secretariat working on behalf of the Technical Operational Committee will be appointed to act as the point person for all external communications with the public, community groups, government agencies, and the media for all matters being undertaken jointly or being coordinated for the entire Sicamous-to-Armstrong Rail Trail.

### **Communications Strategy**

The following communications strategies will address key internal (inter-jurisdictional leadership, technical staff, agency, consultant, and community leadership) and external (public, trail users, adjacent property owners) audiences regarding the design, development, and long-term management of the Rail-Trial corridor.

Specifically:

1. **Minutes of the Inter-jurisdictional Governance Advisory Committee** will be posted publicly online to each of the Inter-jurisdictional Government websites following formal receipt at Splatins Council and CSRD/RDNO Board meetings.
2. **Regular news releases and information bulletins** will be issued jointly on behalf of the Inter-jurisdictional partners to provide Governance Advisory meeting, design/development milestone, and fundraising updates, sent to all inter-jurisdictional governance partners via designated staff contacts, for circulation through their respective online and media contact networks and to elected officials.
3. **Questions from media** will be directed to the lead Technical Operational Committee representatives and designated Secretariat, as noted above.



4. **Communication updates** from Governance Advisory Committee meetings and milestone to key internal stakeholders including provincial and Federal government representatives (MP, MLA) and funding partners.
5. **Creation of a joint website project page** (available to link to each jurisdictional website) for central posting of project content and updates including schedules, timelines, process, general information and background, engagement opportunities, fundraising updates, mapping, and development progress.
6. **An email link for contact**, questions, and feedback will be established on the website.
7. **Direct correspondence to Adjacent Property Owners and Key Stakeholders** (via email and/or postal service), when required, for purposes of consultation, permitting, agreements, and information on timelines, scheduled work, and potential impacts.
8. **Splatsin Community Meeting** – a community information meeting is proposed for Splatsin members to provide an overview on the design plan for the rail trail and provide direction for development and telling of the true story.
9. **Agricultural Land Commission** – communication and consultation with agricultural operators will be guided by the Agricultural Land Commission following submission of a permit application. The Technical Operational Committee will work with ALC staff to provide information updates on the process, including a preliminary presentation to the Spallumcheen Agricultural Advisory.
10. **Public Information Meetings** – three public information meetings will be held (Sicamous, Enderby/Splatsin, Armstrong), in early fall, to provide an overview of the design plan for the rail-trail and update on progress.
11. **Specific questions related to permits and encroachment agreements** – will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, directed to the relevant staff at each jurisdictional office (Splatsin, CSR, RDNO). The news releases and information bulletins will assist administrative staff answer general questions. And questions from media will be directed to the lead Technical Operational Committee representatives and designated Secretariat, as noted above.
12. **Reports to Granting Agencies, MP, MLAs** – will be coordinated by the Technical Operational Committee through the designated Secretariat in collaboration with the lead proponent for the respective grant, with copies to the MP and MLA.
13. **Liaison with the wider Shuswap-Okanagan Corridor** – ongoing correspondence, updates, meetings, and collaboration with representative leadership throughout the wider Sicamous-to-Osoyoos corridor committed to linking a contiguous greenway for pedestrian and bicycle travel will be maintained by the Technical Operational Committee through the designated Secretariat.