



## For Immediate Release

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### Kicking Horse River Access Feasibility Study Released

With funding assistance from the Province of B.C., through the Rural Dividend Program (Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations) and the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, the Town of Golden commissioned a report in late 2016. The purpose of the report is to investigate the feasibility of cost effective alternate access options to the Lower Canyon of the Kicking Horse River to support recreation and tourism access which is critical to the local river rafting industry in Golden.

Now complete, the study included consultation with rafting industry stakeholders, CP Rail, and provincial transportation engineers, leading to the investigation of three potential options: modifying the existing access route with safety-enhancing infrastructure, modifying the river bed to remove obstacles to create safer rafting conditions, or constructing an alternative highway egress point that would avoid the crossing of railroad tracks by rafters. All options were analyzed to determine their relative value and feasibility in the long term measured against economics, safety and engineering, recreation, and tourism.

The study has concluded that the most feasible option for further investigation is the modification of the stream channel to smooth the gradient and reduce the degree of difficulty in navigating the Kicking Horse River between the Upper and Lower Canyon. The aim with this proposed solution would be to eliminate the need for crossing the Trans-Canada Highway and CP Rail tracks by providing an opportunity for continuous rafting between the Upper and Lower Canyon.

This investigation will require more comprehensive consultation with First Nations, provincial and federal government agencies, bathymetric surveys, deeper hydraulic modeling, and environmental studies to support regulatory approval. To this end, the Town of Golden is working with the Province to undertake preliminary queries to gauge the level of consultation and process requirements in order to move this file forward.

The Town of Golden is currently exploring funding options to advance the next stage of investigation into this potential long-term solution with a goal to eventually re-establish Commercial River Rafting in the Lower Canyon of the Kicking Horse River.

In 2016, the Canadian Pacific Railway closed access to the lower Kicking Horse River for the commercial white water rafting industry so they could meet Transport Canada's 2014

Grade Crossing Regulations. The new regulations allow for the safe management of all federally regulated grade crossings. The result has been a significant impact to a major tourism and economic driver in the Golden area which attracts an estimated 40,000 visitors annually; 15,000 of which specifically raft the Lower Canyon.

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