



November 4, 2016

Chief Barbara Cote
Shuswap First Nation
PO Box 790
Invermere, British Columbia V0A 1K0

Dear Chief Cote:

Re: Town of Canmore Cougar Creek Debris Flood Retention Structure

Infrastructure Canada (INFC) has requested that the Town of Canmore notify you of the proposed Cougar Creek Debris Retention Structure Project located in Canmore, Alberta. INFC is providing funding for this project under the Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component – National and Regional Project (PTIC-NRP) of the New Building Canada Fund.

Heavy rains in the Bow Valley in 2013 caused a debris flood on Cougar Creek that resulted in widespread damage to municipal infrastructure, flood protection works, homes, property, businesses, the Trans-Canada Highway, Highway 1A and the Canadian Pacific Railway. Immediately following this flood event, the Town of Canmore implemented short-term mitigation measures on Cougar Creek including channel armoring and the installation of a debris net. These short-term mitigation measures were designed to reduce the amount of debris travelling from the watershed onto the alluvial fan and to reduce bank erosion in the creek channel if another flood event occurs before the implementation of long-term mitigation plans.

The Town studied options for long-term debris flood mitigation on Cougar Creek with a focus on selecting a structure design and location that will protect residents and infrastructure while minimizing environmental and social impacts. Multiple location and design options were evaluated for mitigating debris flood hazards while protecting the Bow Valley Regional Wildlife Corridor, maintaining access for traditional and recreational activities, and fitting aesthetically with the natural landscape. As a result of this assessment, the Town is proposing to construct a debris flood retention structure on Cougar Creek at the site of the existing debris net (LSD 14-34-24-10W5), approximately 2 km northwest of the Trans-Canada Highway (see attached figure).

The project includes a debris flood retention structure that will be 29.85 metres high and a 0.5 kilometre access road for maintenance. The structure will be a rock and earth filled embankment with a reinforced concrete central sealing wall and an open outflow with a throttle and debris rake. During normal weather conditions water and sediment will flow unimpeded through the structure. During a flood event the structure will hold back up to 730,000 cubic metres (m³) of water and debris with an outlet discharge rate of 45 cubic metres per second (m³/s). The structure will not permanently hold water. The structure is fully overtoppable, and includes a spillway and stilling basin to release water during a major event that is beyond the retention capacity of the structure.

The project was designed with careful consideration of potential effects to the environment, local residents, and other land users. The project is located in a highly scoured steep mountain creek bed with limited potential for vegetation or wildlife habitat and Cougar Creek is not a fish bearing waterway. A Historical Resources Impact Assessment has been completed and the project has received approval from Alberta Culture and Tourism pursuant to the *Historical Resources Act*.

The project requires a natural resource project review and public interest decision pursuant to the *Natural Resources Conservation Board Act* and an environmental impact assessment (EIA) is required pursuant to the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*. The Town of Canmore submitted an EIA report to Alberta Environment and Parks in July 2016 and filed an application with the Natural Resources Conservation Board in August 2016. An electronic copy of the EIA report is available on the Town of Canmore website (canmore.ca) and information regarding the regulatory review process and schedule can be obtained by contacting Mr. Tim Riordan, Manager of Board Reviews, Natural Resources Conservation Board at 780.422.1977. A Government of Canada assessment pursuant to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* is not required for this project.

Construction is expected to take 2 to 2.5 years and will begin as soon as regulatory approvals have been granted. The Town is working to secure key regulatory approvals in 2017 so that construction can be completed in late 2018 to mid-2019.

If you have any questions about this project or require additional information, please feel free to contact me by email or phone.

Sincerely,



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