

Bridal Veil Mountain Resort



BC's Next Great All-Season Mountain Resort

Indigenous Consultation and Engagement Frequently Asked Questions

(as of June 8, 2021)

Which First Nation Communities are you consulting with regarding this Project?

The BVMR team is engaging in proper and respectful consultation with all 24 Stó:lō communities within S'ólh Téméxw, the traditional territory of the Stó:lō people.

While this engagement is mandated by the Province of BC's All Seasons Resort Policies and Guidelines, our actions are guided by the core Indigenous values upon which BVMR was founded. First and foremost is the belief that no major resource projects in Canada should proceed, unless the local First Nations upon whose traditional territories the proposed project is located, are invited to be meaningfully engaged and become major owners in the project. This focus on joint management and equity ownership in the BVMR Project are the foundations of our Stó:lō consultations. Those consultations are being conducted in full accordance with all Stó:lō community consultation protocols.

Additionally, the BVMR Project will be jointly planned and developed to the highest environmental standards and sustainability principles with the participating Stó:lō communities, applying Stó:lō cultural, traditional and land stewardship values.

What consultation have you carried out with the local Stó:lō Communities so far?

BVMR has initiated a broad consultation process with the local Stó:lō Communities and Leadership, aimed at having collaborative, respectful and meaningful discussions. Our engagement work with the Stó:lō began in early January 2021, when Bridal Veil Mountain Resort Ltd. began its formal consultation process with the 15 Stó:lō Member Communities of the S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance (STSA), as managed by the People of the River Referral Office (PRRO) in Stó:lō. All the Project documents, including the EOI that was filed with the Province, were made available to the 15 Communities. Additionally, we filed a comprehensive Formal Response to initial issues raised by the PRRO on the BVMR Project in early March, which was circulated to the 15 Communities. Our active and ongoing consultation with these Stó:lō Communities includes filing updated Project documents and new information regularly with the PRRO, which makes that material available to the 15 Communities through its online portal.

We have also reached out to the nine other Stó:lō Communities that are not members of the STSA, to initiate respectful consultation and engagement with them, in accordance with each Community's local consultation protocols. We are now actively engaging five of those Stó:lō communities, fully respecting their own consultation processes and procedures.

As of early June 2021, we are actively involved in various stages of Community consultation and engagement with 20 of the 24 Stó:lō Communities. One of the four remaining Stó:lō Communities has formally withdrawn from the Provincial consultation and engagement process.

What additional engagement has the Proponent had with the Stó:lō Communities?

In addition to the engagement efforts described above, in early January 2021, we sent a personal letter to all the Stó:lō leaders, including Chiefs and Councilors, in all 24 Stó:lō Communities. The letter introduced the Project, acknowledged it was on the Traditional lands of the Stó:lō people, and asked for their advice and guidance on how we could follow their protocols and begin our formal engagement processes with all of the Communities.

In these challenging times with COVID, most Stó:lō Communities are closed and are following their own COVID protocols to protect their Members. This has made direct meetings and meetings impossible. However, we have been actively following up with them through our advisor on Indigenous matters and have been directly calling and are in communication with many of the Communities.

In April, we again connected with all 24 Stó:lō Communities and each Community's Leadership personally, providing our Project announcement press release and website address, and again asking how we can continue to properly engage with their Community, in accordance with each Community's protocols and procedures. In addition, we have reached out to the broader Indigenous communities and business organizations in S'ólh Téméxw.

To date, we have provided detailed presentations about BVMR to 10 Stó:lō Communities. The presentations include information about the project provided by BVMR's owners, Brent Harley and Associates (the mountain resort designer) and our advisor on Indigenous matters. Additional Community presentations are planned for June.

Generally, we have had a positive response to our engagement with Stó:lō Leadership and we will continue to provide Stó:lō Communities and Leadership with Project updates through direct and ongoing correspondence. Although the BVMR Team has been very active and engaged throughout S'ólh Téméxw, it is important to note that the Project is still in the very early stages of its consultation and respectful relationship-building with the Stó:lō Communities.

What roles will local First Nations have in this Project?

We strongly believe that any project undertaken on Stó:lō lands must involve the participating Stó:lō Communities in whatever capacity they deem appropriate. Recognizing that the proposed site is in S'ólh Téméxw, the traditional and unceded lands of the Stó:lō people since time immemorial, our core values are to first work closely with local Stó:lō Communities and Leadership to explore: opportunities for meaningful involvement; joint equity ownership and management; jointly designing the Project with the Stó:lō to the highest environmental standards and Stó:lō traditional, cultural and land stewardship values; as well as laying the foundations for a mutually respectful partnership, to jointly advance BVMR with the participating Stó:lō. To that end, we have initiated a broad Stó:lō consultation process aimed at having collaborative and meaningful discussions with Stó:lō Communities, to achieve these core values.

Additionally, we see Stó:lō ownership and meaningful participation as key foundations for this Project, and believe their business expertise and Indigenous world perspectives would contribute greatly to the success of the Project. From an environmental perspective, we recognize that the Stó:lō have used and protected these lands for thousands of years and no one understands them better. If this Project proceeds, every decision we make together would honour Stó:lō cultural and traditional values, and the Stó:lō commitment to environmental responsibility and land stewardship protection.

Notably, Bridal Veil Mountain resort has the opportunity to be the first four season mountain resort in Canada to be jointly developed, owned and operated in a full partnership with local participating First Nations Communities.

What are some of the issues and comments the Proponent has heard from its consultations and engagement with the Stó:lō Communities?

With the Stó:lō Communities and Leadership that the Proponent has engaged with to date (June 2021), several issues and comments have been raised in the various engagements and Project presentations.

- 1) Overlapping land claims:** In our consultation with the STSA and the PRRO, and in presentations with a number of Stó:lō Communities, we have received territorial land maps of several Stó:lō Communities and Tribes that present overlapping land claims in the proposed areas of both the Cascade Skyline Gondola (CSG) and Bridal Veil Mountain Resort. Stó:lō has complex land territories, that ultimately, only the Stó:lō Communities and their Members can resolve, and this will guide and determine the future of any project on their lands.
- 2) Gondola blindsided?:** The Cascade Skyline Gondola was not “blindsided” by the announcement of the BVMR Project. The Bridal Falls Gondola Corporation, Cheam First Nation’s co-owner in the CSG project, was aware the BVMR Project was advancing more than a year ago, in early 2020, when the Province of BC was supporting the filing of an Expression of Interest for the BVMR Project. Soon after the EOI filing, the BVMR team reached out to all Stó:lō, including the Cheam First Nation and began its initial consultation and engagement.
- 3) BVMR’s Stó:lō engagement approach:** In almost all of our discussions with the Stó:lō, Stó:lō Leadership have said they respect that we have engaged with them at the earliest stage of the Province’s project application process. They have also positively acknowledged our goal and efforts to fully include all Stó:lō Communities that may wish to participate in the collective Indigenous ownership of the BVMR Project.

4) Protection of the Lands: Without question, the dominant issue that the Proponent has heard in all of its consultations and engagements with the Stó:lō, is the critical importance of protecting the environment, Mother Earth, the watersheds, special Stó:lō sites, fish and wildlife. The BVMR Project was specifically located as far away as possible from the very important Stó:lō lands around Mt. Cheam and the Three Sisters. A core value of the BVMR proponents and investors is that these are the lands of the Stó:lō People, and any proposed development must be jointly planned and developed with the Stó:lō to the highest environmental and sustainability standards, within the Stó:lō cultural, traditional and land stewardship values. After all, who knows these lands better than the original occupants of the lands for nearly 10,000 years. In addition, and most importantly, under the All Seasons Resort Policies and the approval processes and procedures required for a four-season destination resort, BVMR’s final approved Master Plan with the Province would impose a very high level of environmental and sustainable land use standards and controls, that BVMR would be legally obligated to honour and implement. These Resort Policies provide a much stronger level of land management and environmental stewardship protections than the comparable policies for the CSG Project, under the Provincial Adventure Tourism Policies.

5) Indigenous Clean Energy: Climate change has been raised as a concern and that has raised issues surrounding the electrical and energy requirements needed to service BVMR. Across Canada, Indigenous Communities are leaders in clean power, such as wind, solar, biomass and geothermal. Working with the participating Stó:lō Communities, these clean energy options and a whole host of climate change and sustainable planning guidelines can be jointly considered for BVMR.

6) Unfortunate Commercial Competition:

It is certainly unfortunate that the current Provincial engagement process must choose between two very good, but very different types of proposed commercial projects. The CSG Project is a well-planned, sightseeing-based gondola project, very much like the Sea-to-Sky Gondola in Squamish. The BVMR Project, is a comprehensive four-seasons destination mountain resort, with major ski hill and year-round recreational and sightseeing amenities, two sightseeing gondolas, a unique Alpine pedestrian village, and a major base village with residential, hotel, commercial and Indigenous cultural facilities. BVMR is more like a Sun Peaks, Big White or Whistler.

7) Working Together:

We have certainly heard the concerns raised by a number of Stó:lō Communities, about two First Nations-focused projects competing against each other. In the spirit of collaboration, BVMR Ltd. has always been willing to meet with the proponents of the Cascade Skyline Gondola project. Hopefully, with open respectful and constructive discussions, it may be possible for these two projects to jointly and respectfully agree to a new pathway forward, by working together.

8) The Stó:lō Will Decide:

The BVMR team has pledged directly to the Stó:lō Communities and their Leadership, that if the participating Stó:lō Communities do not support the BVMR project on their lands, then the BVMR project will not proceed. In the end, we believe the only proper way forward is for the Stó:lō people to make the final decision on both projects, under the current provincial engagement process.

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