
TRANSPORTATION AND HEALTH IN THE ALBERNI CLAYOQUOT REGIONAL DISTRICT

BACKGROUND

The population of the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District is approximately 31,500 and is shaped by the realities of rural and remote living. Overall the area has relatively poor health status compared to Island Health and BC on the whole – for the past thirty years the region has an average life expectancy of 78 which is 3 years less than BC and Vancouver Island averages of 81 and up. In a region where tourism is a primary industry transportation barriers not only impact everyday lives of residents but also have a huge impact on the safety of visitors. With over 20 000 visitors to the Pacific Rim National Park daily during tourism season the issue of transportation and accessibility is heavily tied to economic prosperity of the region. The attached table outlines transportation barriers which create inequities in access to nutritious food, health and community services for both residents and visitors.

LOCAL ACTION

To begin addressing social indicators of health local government, non-profit, government and business partners are working together to address complex needs of their communities with support from a multidisciplinary network, the Alberni Clayoquot Health Network (ACHN). Over the past three years the region has been working collaboratively to identify next steps and pull together partners to begin addressing the complex issue of transportation and health equity. To be more effective together, the Alberni Clayoquot Health Network spearheaded the conversation about what we can do to improve access in our region and improve health equity.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- There is lack of a coordinated approach in transportation networks, schedules and options.
- Transportation is tied to mental and physical health and regional prosperity.
- Increase in access produces a long term cost savings in health and increases economic opportunities in communities.
- Transportation challenges impact the health and safety of community members and visitors.
 - Recent changes in regulatory bodies for emergency helicopter landing pads have deactivated Heli-pads at the Bamfield Health Centre and Tofino Hospital. This has resulted in increased transportation time of urgent care patients, in Bamfield this increase is between 2 and 3 hours.
 - Time is as much a factor as money when it comes to affordability. Many people in the region cannot travel to and from an appointment in one day and have limited access to nutritious food options.
- Rural, remote and First Nation communities face additional challenges to access health, food and community services.
- Multidisciplinary approaches are required to address access challenges.
- Stakeholders and community members are eager for solutions.

SUCCESSES TO DATE

- Consistent buy in from local leadership and government - participation from municipality staff, mayor and council, First Nation communities and organizations, regional district directors, local ministries, transportation providers and community organizations in local working groups and action tables.
- Identification and implementation of action items and in community projects
 - Scheduling of 2018 BC Transit Feasibility Study for West Coast communities
 - Implementation of Wheels for Wellness program in west coast communities
 - Transportation assets and route mapping project to document and track infrastructure, gaps and opportunities - <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/1/viewer?ll=49.16015796978352%2C-125.44881752487794&z=9&mid=1S52juwgrb-Yh9CZME87PsiMs7h8>
 - \$35,000 fundraised through partnership with municipalities, community partners and private donations for purchase of program van for Wheels for Wellness implementation

RESEARCH AND CONVENING

- Regional transportation consultation on transportation in the region
- How We Get From Here To There Transportation Report for the ACRD
- June 11th, 2015 Dialog To Action Workshop with local decision makers and community partners
- Regional Transportation Action Table
- West Coast Transportation Working Group

OPPORTUNITIES

By strategically engaging community partners and applicable levels of government we aim to address accessibility in our region one issue at a time. We invite you to be part of the process and actively encourage:

- Continued staff involvement in local planning efforts
- Adoption of a health equity lens when implementing regulatory changes
- Consultation with local communities on transportation planning and infrastructure opportunities
- Working across ministries in order to identify and address challenges to access and implementation of solutions
- Participation in locally convened initiatives which aim to address challenges identified and implement solutions based on reallocation of resources

We welcome your participation in our efforts to increase access in our region. For more information please contact the ACHN Coordinator – Marcie DeWitt, achn@acrd.bc.ca, 250-726-5019. All reports and information on transportation convened through the Alberni Clayoquot Health Network in the ACRD are available here – www.achn.ca/wp

Transportation Breakdown for ACRD		
Community	Accessibility	Implications
Alberni Valley 25 000 Residents*	Road Access Transit System	The Alberni Valley area hosts the city of Port Alberni, Tseshaht First Nation, Hupacasath First Nation and Uchucklesaht First Nation as well as 5 electoral areas. Metro adjacent – choice of grocery, health services, K-12 and post-secondary schools and employment present in community, Emergency services and critical care available
Bamfield 155 Residents *	Logging Road Access Only **	Electoral Area - Limited grocery, health, K – 7 and employment services present in community Heli-pad for emergency access has been relocated
Anacla – Huu-ay-aht Nation 73 Residents *	Logging Road Access Only**	Huu-ay-aht First Nation - Limited grocery, health and employment services present in community
Macoah -Toquaht Nation 19 Residents	Road Access ** Approx. 13 km off Highway 4 33 km from nearest amenities	Toquaht First Nation - no health services on site, small general store
Hitacu (Ittatsoo) - Yuu-thlu-ilth-aht Nation 274 Residents*	Road Access ** 15 kms from amenities	Ucluelet First Nation - no grocery in community, limited amenities, most employment located out of community
Ucluelet 1627 Residents *	Road Access **	Municipality - Grocery, health services, K- 12 schools and employment present in community
Esowista/ TyHistanis - Tla-o-qui-aht Nation 176 Residents *	Road Access ** 15 – 25 kms from amenities (between Ucluelet and Tofino)	Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation - no grocery in community, limited amenities, most employment located out of community
Tofino 1867 Residents *	Road Access **	Municipality -Grocery, health services, hospital, K – 7 schools and employment present in community Heli-pad for emergency access has been relocated
Opitsaht - Tla-o-qui-aht Nation 150 Residents *	Boat Access Only 10 minute ride \$10 each way Subsidized school boat	Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation - No grocery in community, limited amenities, most employment located out of community
Ahousaht – Ahousaht Nation 622 Residents *	Boat Access 30 – 40 minute ride \$20 each way Float Plane Approx. \$43 each way (scheduled flights and/or seat fills make flight more affordable)	Ahousaht First Nation - No grocery in community, basic health services available Mon – Fri 9 am-5pm, K – 12 schools, some employment opportunities
Hot Springs Cove – Hesquiaht Nation Approx. 20 Residents accounted for in Area C	Boat Access Only 1 – 1 ½ hour ride \$60 each way Float Plane Approx \$80 each way (scheduled flights and/or seat fills make flight more affordable)	Hesquiaht First Nation - no grocery in community, basic health services available up to 3 days a week 9am-5pm, K – 8 school, some employment opportunities
Alberni Clayoquot Regional District Area C 677 Residents *	Varied Access Rural residences outside of incorporated municipalities and nations	No grocery in community, limited amenities, most employment located out of community
*Based on 2011 stats (with exception of Ahousaht and Hot Springs – data not available) communities seeing growth. First Nation communities expect ongoing growth with new community developments and treaty ratification process		
** Road Access – residents must have access to vehicle or transport for health services and in many cases grocery and employment. Low economic status is a barrier to transportation in the region - which serves as a barrier to employment and accessing healthy food. Bus travels once daily between Tofino Ucluelet for 8 months/year, caters to tourism (increase in runs) during summer season is approx. \$20 one way.		