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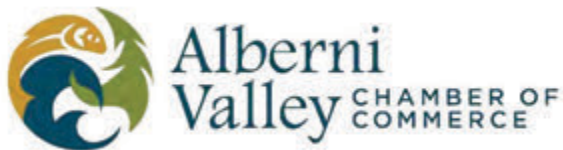
Highway 4 Disruption and Resiliency Solutions

Alberni - Clayoquot
Chambers of Commerce

icet ISLAND COASTAL ECONOMIC TRUST *The Highway 4 Disruption and Resiliency Solutions Report was supported and funded by Island Coastal Economic Trust*

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Summary of Findings

Introduction

On June 6th, 2023, Highway 4, between Cathedral Grove/MacMillan Provincial Park and Koen Road (approximately seven kilometres), was closed in both directions at approximately 3:30 p.m. due to the growth of a wildfire at Cameron Bluffs above Cameron Lake. Although the emergency operations centre only activated for one day, the highway remained completely closed for two full weeks until June 23rd when the highway partially reopened with single lane alternating travel until July 17th. Throughout much of the summer and fall 2023, full daytime midweek closures with midday flushing occurred along with single lane alternating traffic at all other times.

Despite there being an alternate supported route for essential travel, the movement of goods, residents and travelers to the region was severely hampered by the initial full closure of Highway 4 and subsequent travel restrictions throughout 2023. The initial closure and ongoing disruptions had an immediate social and economic impact on island coastal communities and businesses in the Alberni-Clayoquot region and the ongoing restrictions continued to negatively impact the region's residents and economy.

In an effort to better understand the closure impacts and identify effective solutions, the Alberni-Clayoquot Chambers of Commerce (Tofino, Ucluelet, Port Alberni) supported an impact review and resiliency report.

The summary of findings and comprehensive report were informed by a broad-based engagement approach that included surveys, workshops, and focus groups, as well as research on practices from regions and areas frequently impacted by disruptions.

Six Major Closure Impacts

The following list introduces the six major impacts from the Highway 4 closure and continued disruptions as captured through project engagement activities.

1

Major delays and interrupted deliveries – up-and downstream:

Exports and imports to the region of essential goods and commercial supplies stopped and partial alternative road openings and closures continued to create uncertainty and delays in regional deliveries and shipping. These delays increased costs and decreased revenues for many businesses.

2

Significant loss of revenues and increased costs:

In addition to the delays in receiving business supplies/materials throughout most of June and the summer, visitor travel to the Alberni-Clayoquot region was also impacted significantly resulting in lost accommodation revenues. The traffic at the Highway 4 Junction counter in June 2023 was 38% below both 2022 and 2024 and remained comparatively low until November 2023. Lost revenue also occurred as a result of an inability to ship product. Increased costs were as a result of adapting to non-conventional shipping practices and of efforts to retain staff so as not to lose them altogether. Reported losses scaled up across local businesses during just the two-week Highway 4 closure amounted to a total estimated loss of \$60.5 million. Real losses to accommodation revenues alone for June 2023 alone, were estimated at \$9 million.

3

Serious disruptions to important services (health and other):

Equally important to the economic impacts experienced, service supply issues that already existed were exacerbated due to the highway closure and continued disruptions. Health care appointments were cancelled or delayed and transporting medical staff to the region became challenging and resource intensive. Transportation services halted and alternative opportunities became more limited due to the damage to vehicles and product travelling on secondary routes.

4

Increased anxiety and stress for business owners, compounding COVID financial stress:

The closure and disruptions coincided with COVID CEBA loan repayments for 28% of businesses surveyed and compounded the financial stress many businesses were already experiencing. Adapting to new processes, managing customers requests and dealing with the uncertainty created by the disruption and limited communication were overwhelming for staff.

5

Degradation of the workforce and workforce income:

Immediate impacts on the workforce were experienced, especially in tourism, due to a lack of work and therefore employment income. An estimated 1,280 staff were either laid off temporarily or left businesses due to a lack of work. Travel to work was also impacted, with 35% of the 279 businesses surveyed indicated that the highway closure had an acute impact on their workforce ability to get to work during or shortly after the disruption. Impacts on the workforce continued throughout 2023 with the continued highway disruptions.

6

Longer-term tourism revenue and reputation impacts:

Travel uncertainty, highway delays, misaligned ferry sailings and inconsistent tourism business refund policies throughout 2023 further degraded an already challenging visitor experience. The situation led to the immediate closure of some tourism experiences (until the route opened) and the permanent closures in some cases for businesses that could not weather the storm and continued disruptions. This loss of tourism experiences/services impacted the entire visitor experience.

Seven Solution Themes

A list of solution themes and associated action ideas emerged from the engagement and secondary research completed for this report. These themes were considered, evaluated and elaborated on during focus groups and through a workshop with regional rightsholders and stakeholders. Many organizations and levels of government can contribute to the seven solutions.

These solution themes were:

1

Critical infrastructure

Build critical infrastructure, such as alternative land routes, enhanced marine and air infrastructure, to ensure essential services and supply chains are not disrupted.

Possible Leads: Province, Alberni Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

2

Mechanisms and processes to improve communication

Add capacity to improve communications to public/visitors and stay relevant in a sea of social media reporting.

Possible Leads: Province - Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, BC Wildfire Service (BCWS), Tourism Emergency Response Team (TERT), Emergency Operation Centres (EOC), Destination Marketing/Management Organizations (DMO)

3

Planning and preparedness at multiple scales

Create/strengthen interagency governance, logistical and communications systems; build personal relationships between agency staff; provide training and contingency planning.

Possible Leads: Province, Alberni Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD), Communities, DMOs

4

Short and long-term recovery funding

Identify new/potential funding sources such as new tourism funds for disruption responses, BC emergency financial assistance, delayed government remittances and insurance solutions early, and secure.

Possible Leads: Province – Tourism Emergency Management Committee (TEMC), Federal DMOs, Chambers, Economic Development Organizations (EDO)

5

Business continuity planning assistance

Encourage and support business continuity planning across the region. Tailor mechanisms and approaches for delivering assistance so they are appropriate for a given sector and business capacity; continuity planning should coordinate and align with public sector continuity planning.

Possible Leads: Chambers, DMOs, EDOs, Province, Community Futures

6

Deeper business and community connections

Foster and deepen business and community connections throughout the region. Create structures such as an economic emergency preparedness group.

Possible Leads: Chambers, DMOs, EDOs, Province

7

Alternative business models

Develop alternative business models that reduce seasonality of local economies, especially in tourism and agriculture, to help businesses be less vulnerable to seasonal hazards.

Possible Leads: ACRD Agriculture/Sustainability Department, Alberni Farmers' Institute Tourism DMOs, 4VI (Vancouver Island DMO)



Next Steps

This review of impacts and exploration of solutions needs to be shared broadly in order to develop the momentum and commitment required to implement actions that ensure the region is better prepared to handle future disruptions. We recommend the follow next steps:

- 1** Create a communication plan and co-fund a campaign for stakeholders to share the Highway 4 closure and ongoing disruption consequences, economic impact and solution themes in order to develop implementation support from other levels of government or agencies.
- 2** Develop an implementation committee structure among the stakeholders and rightsholders considering connections to existing or new sub-committees for specific issues, e.g., Transportation Advisory Committee for land transport and other.
- 3** Consider the solution theme action ideas in more detail, assess them for effectiveness versus resources, and develop implementation plans for prioritized actions.

Further report details on the project purpose, methodology and findings follow.



Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to engage with businesses, stakeholders and rightsholders in the ACRD region to better understand the impacts of the 2023 summer highway disruptions and to identify the key strategies for supporting affected businesses in the case of future challenges and for creating long-term resilience. The desired project outcomes are:

- ➔ An assessment of the impacts experienced by the region's local businesses, industries, and the tourism sector due to the highway closure and continued disruptions including a quantification of the economic losses.
- ➔ Identification of gaps and challenges in the region's long-term resiliency (including infrastructure, policies, programs, etc.), and strategies to address those gaps.
- ➔ Identification of individual and shared strategies to support business continuity and resilience in the event of future emergencies/challenges.
- ➔ Recommendations for investment by provincial, federal, and other agencies in the region to support economic resiliency.



Methodology

Input was sought on the immediate and ongoing impact experienced by the region's local businesses and industries as well as on strategies to address gaps identified with respect to the region's resiliency from similar disruptions. Research included understanding the government emergency frameworks that apply in this situation as well as practices from other jurisdictions facing similar ongoing disruptions.

More specifically, engagement included:

- Drawing findings from the Alberni-Clayoquot Chamber/ Destination Marketing Organization Cameron Bluffs Impact Survey that was administered shortly after the disruption in 2023 and had a strong uptake from approximately 280 businesses.
- An initial workshop open to key organization stakeholders and all regional rightsholders in Fall 2023, attended by representatives from the Hupscath First Nation, Huu-ay-aht First Nation, Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce, Alberni Tourism Association, Community Futures, Tofino Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, Alberni Clayoquot Regional District, City of Port Alberni, and the Ucluelet Chamber of Commerce.
- Interviews with industry and/or economic development agencies leaders in the region.
- Six online focus group discussions across the region.
- Final workshop open to key organization stakeholders and all regional rightsholders in Spring 2024, with contributions and attendance by representatives from the Ahousaht First Nation, Huu-ay-aht First Nation, Yuułuᑭiᑭᑦᑎᑦ First Nation, Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures, Tofino Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Tofino, Alberni Clayoquot Regional District, City of Port Alberni, Village of Tofino, District of Ucluelet, 4VI/Tourism Ucluelet, and the Ucluelet Chamber of Commerce.

Research included:

- Understanding government frameworks for emergency planning and supporting continuity planning in the region.
- Scan and summary case development to inform resiliency strategies and continuity planning.

Summary of Impacts

The following section provides a list of closure and ongoing disruption impacts and issues along with a summary of the related comments and findings.

Consequences of the Closure

THEME	SUMMARY OF RELATED COMMENTS/FINDINGS
<p>Major delays and interrupted deliveries – up - and downstream</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays and disruptions of fuel, groceries and other critical needs such as pharmaceutical delivery caused immediate and ongoing concerns. • Exports from industrial, agricultural and fishing enterprises were specifically impacted requiring new storage or shipping approaches. • Standing supplier or delivery agreements held by specific organizations prevented them from receiving alternatively sourced goods. • Delayed deliveries had knock-on revenue/cost impacts for businesses requiring supplies or products for retail, construction and capital projects. • Partial road opening and closures continued to create uncertainty and delays in deliveries and shipping.
<p>Significant loss of revenues and increased costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost revenues –Reported losses extrapolated across local businesses during the two-week Highway 4 closure alone amounted to an estimated loss of \$60.5 million. Losses were estimated at \$14.9 million in Port Alberni, an estimated \$14.5 million in Ucluelet and an estimated \$31.2 million in Tofino. (See Economic Impact Section.) • Short term lost revenues were a result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays getting business supplies/materials, product and visitors to the Alberni-Clayoquot region during most of June and throughout the summer with continued disruptions. • Short-term inability to ship resources or products, especially in agriculture and marine retail, to market, resulting in lost sales. • Businesses experienced increased costs as a result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special packaging arrangements to prevent damage to goods on interim alternative travel routes. • Using alternative routes which led to mechanical and suspension damage to trucks. • Adapting to new processes. • Trying to retain the workforce through the disruption so as not to lose them altogether.

<p>Serious disruptions to important services (health and other)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The disruption exacerbated service supply issues that already existed in the area, such as a lack of health care professionals, veterinarians, etc. • An inability to access important health care appointments led to significant delays in accessing future make-up appointments. • Transportation of medical staff or nursing services to the Alberni-Clayoquot region were delayed due to fuel limitations, and flights for medical staff were costly. • Transportation services tried to use alternative routes; however, damage to vehicles resulted in a reduction in services. • Veterinarian and medical supplies for domestic and livestock animals, as well as abattoir services for livestock ready for market, became limited.
<p>Increased anxiety and stress for business owners, compounding COVID financial stress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees and business owners experienced a significant amount of stress adapting processes and managing customers and clients during a time of uncertainty. • The closure and ongoing disruption coincided with COVID CEBA loan repayments for 28% of businesses,¹ which compounded the financial stress many businesses were already experiencing. • June is typically the start of the busiest time of the season for many of the tourism businesses, and the length of delays and uncertainty about ongoing revenue impacts heightened anxiety.
<p>Degradation of the workforce and workforce income</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of work, and therefore employment income, created immediate impacts on the workforce, especially in tourism. • An estimated 1,280 staff were either laid off temporarily or left businesses due to a lack of work. • Employment insurance was not available to all employees and not immediately, creating an ineffective support system. • Workers experienced challenges traveling to employment to/from the eastern side of the island and faced increased commuting costs once routes opened. • Workers who couldn't retain employment or who required income left the area; the flow of new workers was also reduced during that time, creating an even bigger ongoing work force issue than usual in the Alberni-Clayoquot region.
<p>Longer-term tourism revenue and reputation impacts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel uncertainty, highway delays, misaligned ferry sailings throughout 2023 further degraded an already challenging trip experience. • Inconsistent deposit/refund approaches resulted in confused visitors, lost deposits and complaints from visitors to destination marketing organizations. • Visitors adjusted their travel choices throughout 2023 to avoid the uncertainty of the Alberni-Clayoquot region and booked elsewhere. • Extraneous business loss and additional costs led to the immediate closure of some tourism experiences (until the route opened) and to permanent closures in some cases. • Loss of tourism experiences/services impacted the entire visitor experience.

¹ Chamber Survey. Those answering "Yes" to the following "Is your business still paying off a CEBA (Canadian Emergency Business Assistance) loan?"

Response/Recovery Issues

THEME	SUMMARY OF RELATED COMMENTS/FINDINGS
<p>Lack of a funding support response (insurance, government resources, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many businesses did not have reserves and cash flow in June to get through a 15-day disruption and beyond, especially when many were repaying CEBA loans. • Even when available, insurance support didn't materialize immediately. • A lack of, and inconsistent access to, business interruption insurance relief was the one of the largest concerns for businesses. Only one out of 279 businesses who participated in the survey indicated they could claim insurance. This lack of access was in some cases related to the timing of emergency declaration processes/protocols. • Emergency funding and/or remittance relief was not offered to businesses from other levels of government.
<p>Lack of streamlined and effective communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication challenges - mostly related to the initial communications during the disruption and alternative route opening - were one of the most consistent reoccurring themes and led to uncertainty and an inability for resident, visitors and organizations to adapt/prepare as required. These communication challenges continued during the highway closures and partial openings, albeit with some improvements. • The volume of communication through the variety of public, private and citizen channels was overwhelming and led to a lack of cohesion and clarity. • Overwhelmed businesses and business organizations were unable to communicate effectively to customers, visitors and suppliers and the lack of clear communications led to cancellations. • Post-disruption communications by provincial organizations did not provide certainty to visitors about the travel experience and did not support the recovery.
<p>Lack of room inventory in Port Alberni and Parksville/Nanaimo (for people to stay if road closes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a lack of accommodation at either end of the highway to support people displaced by the travel disruption.

Economic Impact

CONTEXT

When considering the economic impact of the Highway 4 closure it is important to highlight that the primary economy of the ACRD is diversified across forestry, fishing/agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism activities. These core industries support a host of other industries such as construction, retail, health, transportation and public admin. All industries combined accounted for a regional labour force of 15,645 and just under 2,000 business in 2021. ²

The ACRD and regional labour force and economy is highly dependent on highway access to and from the region. Of the ACRD labour force, 63% or 9,835 people commute to a fixed workplace³ and 39% or 3,815 of them commute between communities within the ACRD. Another 1,025 or 17% of the commuting workforce travels outside the ACRD to a fixed workplace and 70% or 725 of them travel to the Nanaimo, Comox Valley, Strathcona or Cowichan Valley Regional Districts.

The regional workforce on the east side of Vancouver Island travels to the ACRD for work as well, with about 490 commuting from Nanaimo, Comox Valley, Strathcona or Cowichan Valley Regional Districts to a workplace within the ACRD.

In addition to labour force travel, many industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, fishing and wood products/forestry rely on the highways for shipping products or receiving supplies. In the case of tourism, over 96% of the individual 600,000 annual visitors to Tofino travel by vehicle and the large majority of those are travelling from the east side of the island to, or through Port Alberni using Highway 4.

Most people travel to the Vancouver Island region during the peak summer months, July to September, and just over one-quarter of other Canadians, US and other international travellers visited during the spring months from April to June. While a large amount of the \$1.77 billion (2014) Vancouver Island tourism economic impact is due to visitation to the southern portion of the island, the ACRD area also accounts for a significant amount of economic impact from the three tourism centres of Port Alberni, Ucluelet and Tofino. Tofino estimates annual spending at \$295 million, 2,670 direct tourism jobs, and \$57 million in tax impact with \$24 million of that targeted to provincial governments (2019)⁴. The District of Ucluelet generates between \$50 and \$60 million dollars in spending each year, employing 400-500 people⁵ and contributing \$19 million in tax impact, with \$8 million of that targeted to the provincial government in the past years,⁶ which was approximately one-third of Tofino's.

This contextual information makes clear that the ACRD region is a significant economic generator for the province that highly depends on the flow of goods and people to and from the region.

“The closure has caused us in Parksville to commute to Port Alberni through the Bamfield Cowichan road. Four hours before work, four hours after work. Making it a very long day.

Our son manages the shop so he travels back and forth along with myself or another. We are not able to be open every day. We closed our shop all last week and are open this week every second day.”

² Canada Census 2021

³ Canada Census 2021, Commuting destination by main mode of commuting, age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions Employed labour force aged 15 and over.

⁴ Economic Impact of Tourism 2019 <https://tourismtofino.com/site/assets/files/5754/economic-impact-of-tourism-in-tofino-2018-4mar2019.pdf>

⁵ <https://ucluelet.ca/community/parks-recreation/ucluelet-tourism-plan>

⁶ 2016 Resort Municipality Initiative economic impact report

ECONOMIC IMPACT METHODOLOGY

An economic impact assessment examines the effects of a project, industry, event or policy on the economic region under study. The steps of an assessment are broadly as follows and each step has a range of approaches to aid in the development of results.

1. Measure the direct impact of the event, project, policy, etc.
2. Build an economic model of that contribution/impact on the regional economy.
3. Estimate the direct, indirect and induced impacts on categories such as gross domestic product, employment, wages and salaries generated and impacts on taxes.
4. Communicate the results to decision makers, stakeholders and others.

Steps 1 and 4 are within the scope of this report. Considering the extent of the Highway 4 disruption through all four steps is outside what is possible with the inputs provided or captured within the extent of this project. Additionally, the economic impact review focussed primarily on the immediate closure and disruptions in June 2023, despite the clear understanding and engagement indicating that impacts continued throughout 2023.

The methodology for capturing the impact of the Highway 4 closure on the Alberni-Clayoquot region economy is based on the following information.

1. Engagement sources:
 - a. Considering the findings in the Cameron Bluffs Impact Survey conducted by the Alberni-Clayoquot Chambers and Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) to their members and across the regional business community that was administered shortly after the disruption in 2023 and had a strong uptake from approximately 280 businesses. Economic losses captured in the survey were extrapolated to reflect total losses from the business community.
 - b. Individual input from some larger businesses in the region or business that experienced a significant impact to revenues
2. Economic metrics
 - a. A high-level review of the impacts on hotel revenue in the areas where the Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT) was collected in 2022, 2023 and 2024.
 - b. Comparison of Employment Insurance (EI) claims in the region from 2022/2023.
 - c. Reporting on the impact of the highway closure.

Engagement Sources

The Cameron Bluffs Impact Survey (Appendix C) was conducted by the Alberni-Clayoquot Chambers and Destination Marketing/Management Organizations (DMOs) with their members and across the regional business community shortly after the Highway 4 disruption in 2023. The survey had strong uptake throughout the region (280 businesses responded), though uptake in Port Alberni was somewhat less than in Tofino and Ucluelet on a relative basis. Economic losses captured in the survey were scaled up to reflect total losses due to immediate disruptions, by using total business license numbers from each of Tofino, Ucluelet and Port Alberni.

Key findings:

- Of the 279 survey participants only 17 indicated no economic loss during the two-week closure period.
- The total reported loss for survey participants amounted to \$10.2 million with \$1.5 million reported in Port Alberni, \$6 million reported in Tofino and \$2.9 million in Ucluelet.
- Extrapolating the reported losses across local businesses with business licenses (not-homebased) amounts to a total estimated loss of \$60.5 million during the two-week closure. Losses were estimated at \$14.9 million in Port Alberni, \$14.5 million in Ucluelet and \$31.2 million in Tofino.

“We, like many businesses here, rely on tourism and visitors, especially in the summer. Our revenue is down 56% for the month of June and if other businesses are experiencing similar declines due to the road closure we may see some otherwise viable businesses have to close as a direct result. Especially those less established than ours, of which there are many given how many businesses have opened in the past few years here.”

Figure 1 Survey reported and extrapolated loss during the two-week road closure



period (June 6-24) by community

Source: Cameron Bluffs Impact Survey, 2023

- The largest loss reported in the survey amounted to \$600,000, and 26 of the 279 survey participants reported losing \$100,000 or more in revenue.

Other:

- 35% of the 279 businesses surveyed indicated that the highway closure had an acute impact⁷ on their workforce during or shortly after the disruption. This finding isn't surprising given the number of employees commuting around and out of the ACRD.
- A total of 230⁸ staff were either laid off or left businesses during the disruption, with many business cutting back hours or paying staff just to keep them available when they highway opened. Extrapolating the survey report across all businesses resulted in an estimated 1,280 employees being laid off or that left for lack of work.

“We unload and transport fresh seafood to other locations and our customers had to redirect their boats to unload in other locations which in turn cost us lost revenue and our employees lost wages.”

⁷ Chamber Survey, Those indicating 1 or more in response to the survey question “How many staff have you lost or laid off as a result of this situation?”

⁸ Part time staff were counted as 0.5

Economic Data

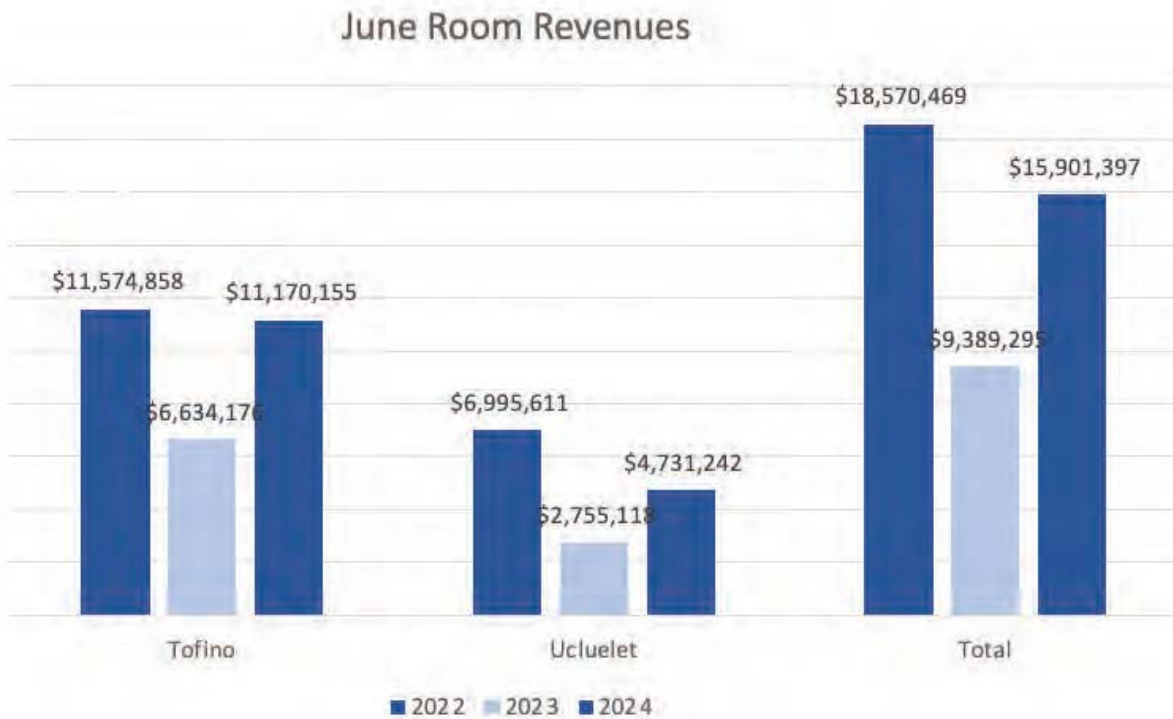
MUNICIPAL REGIONAL DISTRICT TAX AND HOTEL REVENUE IMPACTS

The Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) is an up-to three percent tax applied to sales of short-term accommodation in participating areas of British Columbia collected on behalf of municipalities, regional districts and eligible entities. Both Tofino and Ucluelet have been collecting MRDT for over a decade; as such, MRDT figures scaled up to reflect room revenues provides a good indication of tourism activity. The Alberni Valley started collecting MRDT in February 2023, as such there is no comparison from 2022.

The Highway closure and ongoing disruptions had an immediate impact on room revenues in the region at least through June 2023. Room revenue combined for Tofino and Ucluelet in June 2023 was \$9.2 million or 49% lower than in June 2022. Tofino room revenue was \$4.9 million or 43% lower, while Ucluelet was \$4.2 or 61% lower. Despite June 2024 room revenues in Ucluelet not returning to 2022 levels, both communities generally recovered room revenue over the course of 2023 and the first half of 2024 as compared to 2022. Despite the return of room revenues, many tourism operators indicated that costs increased during this timeframe.

“We will not be able to see the actual impact of the closure until our month end to calculate how much revenue was lost for our Cafe and Sports Bar. Currently our tracking has us down over 500 room nights for the hotel alone. We have had to cancel many shifts for staffing due to cancellations and low numbers.”

Figure 2 Estimated June Room Revenues for Tofino and Ucluelet 2022-2024



Source: BC Stats and Ministry of Finance; September 6, 2024

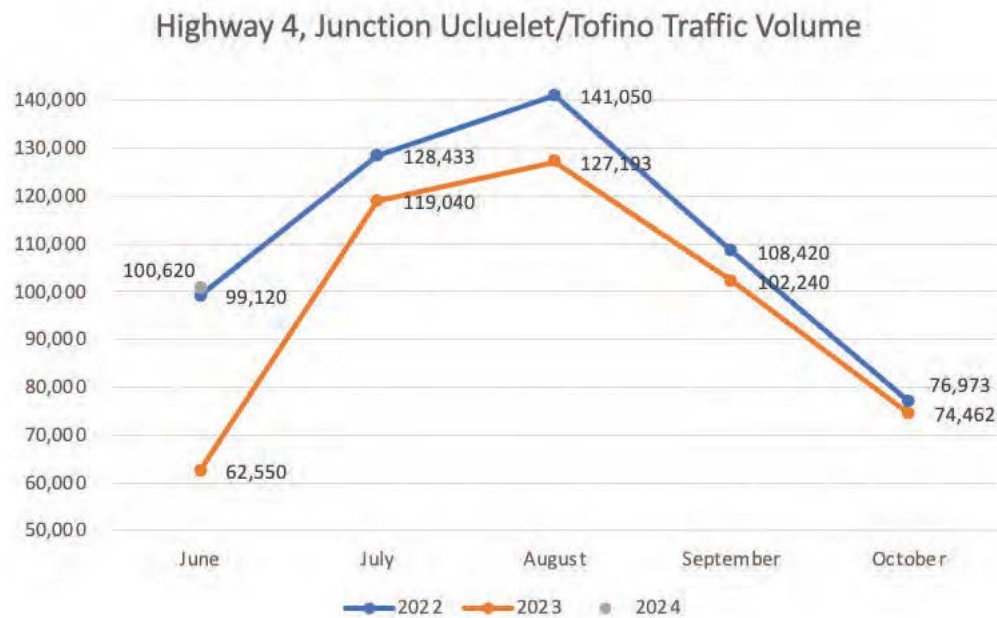
OCCUPANCY RATE

Tourism Tofino also has occupancy rates estimated by a third party using input from accommodators. Comparing June occupancy in Tofino from 2022 to 2023 reveals a drop of 35% between those two years.

TRAFFIC

The only active Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) traffic counter on Highway 4 during the closure was at the Tofino/Ucluelet junction area. This traffic counter captures visitor, business and local traffic and so it is not a perfect representation of visitor traffic. That said, it can provide another window into some of the economic impacts from the Highway 4 closure. The traffic at this counter in June 2023 was 38% below both 2022 and 2024. The traffic at this counter continued to remain below 2022 traffic counts right through the summer visitor period to October 2023. By November 2023, traffic volume increased and generally matched the 2022 November counts.

Figure 3 Highway 4, Junction Ucluelet/Tofino Traffic Volume June-October 2022-2024



Source: Destination BC Tourism Dashboard; September 6, 2024

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS

Many employers reported that employees were not easily able to access employment benefits during the disruption. Some employees had not worked the required hours and others had to wait initially before applying. The number of employment insurance beneficiaries receiving regular benefits⁹ in the ACRD during 2023 were slightly higher at 1,930 for the period of June-October compared to 1,810 during the same months in 2022. Of those receiving benefits in June, the percentage receiving benefits without any declared earnings was 87% in 2023 compared to 83% in 2022. Further analysis will be required to understand if these differences from year to year are a result of the Highway 4 closure.

“Everyone is doing there best but hard on us as owners and on staff as generally they are new employees to town. We have tried to give our staff work instead of offering to lay off mostly for moral and so that they will stay and many are laid off from other jobs and do not qualify for employment insurance.”

2022	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Total
Regular benefits	350	440	400	270	350	1810
Regular benefits with declared earnings	60	50	40	40	30	220
Regular benefits without declared earnings	300	390	370	230	320	1610
Regular benefits with declared earnings %	17%	11%	10%	15%	9%	12%
Regular benefits without declared earnings %	83%	89%	90%	85%	91%	88%

2023	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Total
Regular benefits	300	440	500	320	370	1930
Regular benefits with declared earnings	40	50	70	40	60	260
Regular benefits without declared earnings	260	390	440	270	320	1680
Regular benefits with declared earnings %	13%	11%	14%	13%	16%	13%
Regular benefits without declared earnings %	87%	89%	86%	88%	84%	87%

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0323-01 Employment insurance beneficiaries by census division, monthly, unadjusted for seasonality

⁹ Benefits paid to claimants who have temporarily or permanently lost their job. To be eligible for regular benefits, claimants must have become unemployed through no fault of their own.



Summary of Existing Programs, Resources and Case Learning

Provincial

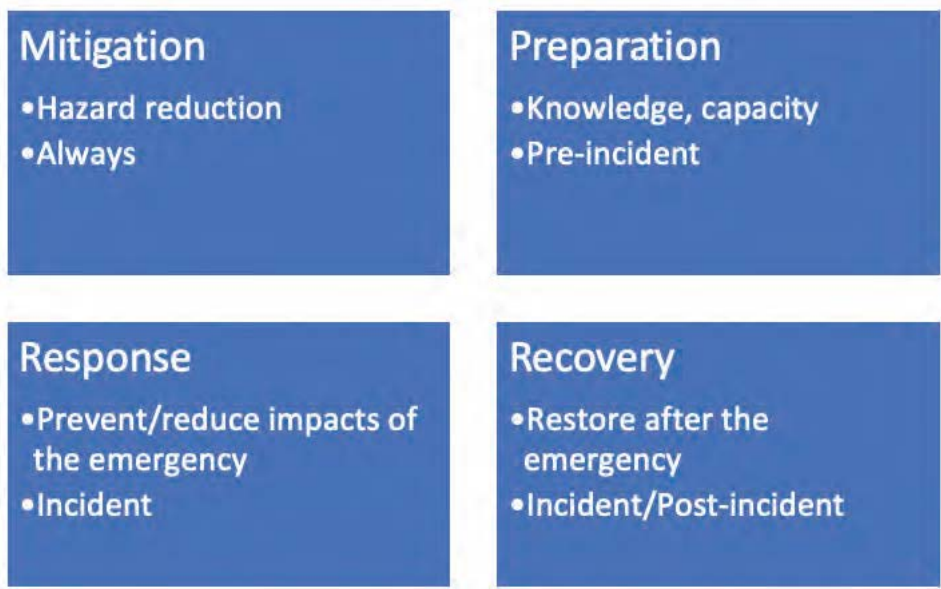
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IN BC

Emergency management planning and responses in Canada is carried out by all levels of government and partners such as Indigenous communities, municipalities, volunteer and non-governmental organizations, private sector, infrastructure owners and operators and volunteers.

Provincial and territorial governments have responsibility for emergency management within their respective jurisdictions. The federal government exercises leadership at the national and international levels relating to emergency management responsibilities in its particular jurisdictions and on lands and properties under federal responsibility. While these two levels of government have responsibilities across their respective jurisdictions and lands, in an emergency, **the first emergency response is almost always local or provincial given that emergencies most often occur locally**. If the local capacity is overwhelmed, provincial and federal agencies can respond to requests for assistance.

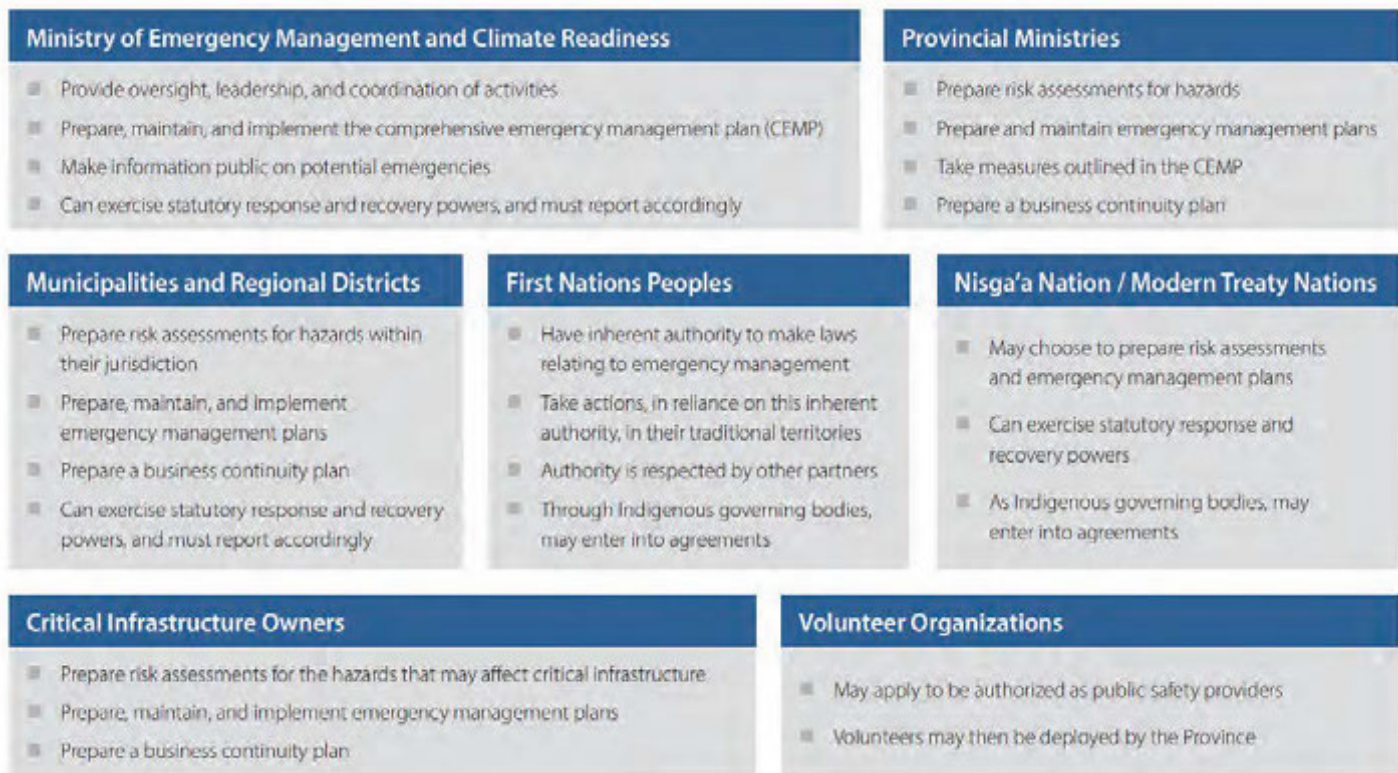
Emergency management consists of four components: prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Traditionally the focus has been on preparedness and response; however, there has been a shift in focus to proactive prevention/mitigation and recovery. BC's new emergency management approach (Modernized Emergency Management Legislation), adopted in 2023, addresses each of these components.

Figure 4 EM BC Framework



The modernized approach to emergency management in BC outlines the emergency management roles for various actors. Implementation for the new approach currently includes developing policy and guidance to support local authorities and others as well as post-emergency financial assistance. As of 2024, these regulations are still in development.

Figure 5 Emergency Management Roles in BC



POST-EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE UNDER REVIEW

Under BC's original Emergency Program Act, regulations set out a framework for providing financial assistance (commonly referred to as "disaster financial assistance" or "DFA") to restore uninsurable losses that are essential to homes, livelihoods, or communities. The current provincial financial assistance program supports the reestablishment of basic essentials and is not designed to cover all losses. Financial assistance is not available for all emergencies and the provincial government must declare an event as being "eligible" in order to begin accepting applications. This program is currently under review in 2024 and 2025 in order to better align with the adoption of the new approach to emergency management in BC as well as to a federal program that intends to reimburse provinces for a portion of recovery costs.

BC TOURISM EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

In 2022, the tourism industry along with provincial ministries and agencies developed a framework to support the sector with emergency management throughout the four components, namely mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Given the importance of tourism to the region's economy it is worth noting that the intent of the framework in aligning with the BC emergency management system is to reduce the industry's vulnerabilities and risks and impacts on the visitor experience during emergencies. Implementation of the framework is carried out by a Tourism Emergency Management Committee (TEMC) made up of core representatives from Destination BC (DBC), Emergency Management BC (EMBC), Regional Destination Management Organizations (RDMOs), B.C. Destination Marketing Organizations Association (BCDMOA) and Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC).

Resources from the TEMC include emergency communications modules, emergency messaging guidance and hosts industry resources such as Local Economic Recovery and Restart Toolkits, as well as Prepared BC guides for tourism operators and small businesses.



Regional

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS WITH ACRD GOVERNMENTS

Indigenous Community Emergency Planning

In addition to the roles described in Figure 5, under the federal Emergency Management Act, First Nations need to maintain an essential level of preparedness for emergencies and disasters on their lands.

Municipalities and Regional District Emergency Planning

The Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) coordinates emergency services and Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) support to all areas within the regional district and the City of Port Alberni. Services and actions identified include emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery measures. The ACRD Emergency Program collaborates with emergency response organizations, local authorities, First Nations, provincial agencies, volunteers, and stakeholders to reduce disaster risks and improve regional resiliency.

Tofino and Ucluelet both have emergency management plans in place that outline how the communities will manage major emergencies or disasters and collaborate with other jurisdictions.

Communities also have EOCs that centralize information about the emergency, coordinate emergency response among municipal departments and agencies, identify critical needs, and establish emergency response priorities. In addition, the EOC provides timely information to the public concerning the major emergency or disaster. Emergency support services (ESS), a provincial program for local authorities and Indigenous governments to deliver services to the public in an emergency, are also present to help provide short term assistance such as food, lodging, clothing, emotional support, etc.

APPLYING POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

Applying the emergency planning framework

Emergency management planning is a whole group effort and is continuously improving through learning, engaging with stakeholders and reviewing the on-ground response and recovery experience related to emergencies and disasters. BC is in the midst of an emergency planning evolution and the ongoing process provides an opportunity for communities to provide input.

The Highway 4 disruption response and recovery efforts benefited from previous years of developing and continuously improving emergency management approaches. Many efforts during the response and recovery were effective and well executed. Despite these efforts the disruption still caused significant impacts on the Alberni-Clayoquot region communities. Table 1 identifies which component and incident timeframe activities require further planning/execution improvement in order to address the impacts experienced.

Table 1 Consequences of the Highway 4 Disruption

Impacts	Planning component
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major delays and interrupted deliveries – up- and downstream Significant loss of revenues and increased costs Increased anxiety and stress for business owners, compounding COVID financial stress Lack of streamlined and effective communications Lack of a funding support response (insurance, government sources, etc.) 	Response – During the incident Recovery – During and post-incident
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious disruptions to important services (health and other) Lack of room inventory in Port Alberni and Parksville/ Nanaimo (for people to stay if road closes) 	Response – During the incident
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degradation of the workforce and workforce income Longer-term tourism revenue and reputation impacts Lack of a funding support response (insurance, government sources etc.) 	Recovery – During and post-incident

Using the emergency management framework as a guide, the solutions offered to reduce these impacts during the inevitable future disruptions are contained in mitigation efforts, preparation and heightened response and recovery activities and programs. The responsibility for these improvements, like emergency planning itself, needs to be shared.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING

One preparation approach that has been employed to some success in other jurisdictions and which is now required by government entities in BC is called business continuity planning.

Business continuity planning develops and then tests a plan for keeping a business/organization going during an unplanned disruption or unforeseen event. These plans include some of the following components:

- An understanding of the types of disruptions that are most likely to impact the business
- A sense of/list/assessment of the critical functions and processes that keep businesses running smoothly
- Measures in place to address disruptions in the supply chain and resolve employee displacement and loss of the workforce
- Trained employees who are aware of business continuity procedures and/or how to respond in the event of a disruption
- Adequate insurance coverage for mitigating financial losses during a broad set of disruptions
- Strategies for financial resilience (adjusting costs, increasing revenues) in the face of unexpected events
- Annual training scenarios to practice implementing the plan.

Experience of recent disasters in Canada has shown that businesses and organizations that already have business continuity plans respond to and recover from unexpected events more quickly and effectively. A detailed emergency response and business continuity plan can maximize the chances of a successful recovery by eliminating hasty decision-making under stressful conditions.¹⁰ In fact, one of the benefits of well-practiced business continuity plans is reduced uncertainty and the related stress that comes with trying to operate during disruptions.

¹⁰ https://www.bceda.ca/disaster_preparation_and_recov.php

CONTINUITY PLANNING CASES

Several community and business continuity cases explored as part of the background research provided an opportunity to learn from other jurisdictions and businesses. The most relevant cases for this work included the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo in Alberta, New Orleans in Louisiana and a collection of large and small business examples (Appendix A).

Common themes:

1. Urgency and importance – The urgency or importance of developing continuity planning for businesses and/or led by government jurisdictions as a response to repeated natural disruptions or one major disruption in one situation.
2. Common steps used – Business continuity planning generally includes a common set of steps that includes: 1. Understanding the business financial model and critical functions; 2. Understanding and assessing risks; 3. Developing strategies and plans for the business to continue (IT, Suppliers, Employees, Communications, Operations); 4. Training others; 5. Testing and learning; 6. Reviewing and adapting.
3. Part of a larger approach to disruptions – Business continuity planning is just one component of the activities required to help a jurisdiction to respond and recover to a disruption. It is vitally important for organizations and their actions to support/rely on the actions implemented by other larger entities such as provincial governments.
4. Support for small business – Larger government or business entities have resources for business continuity planning; however, this is not usually the case for smaller organizations, which rely on external supports. The experiences in Wood Buffalo and New Orleans both highlight the benefit of supporting the capacity of businesses to develop continuity plans.

BUSINESS FEEDBACK ON CONTINUITY PLANNING

Interviews and focus groups with businesses in the ACRD/West Coast included continuity planning as one of the main topic areas. Questions explored the prevalence of continuity planning and how continuity planning was approached or used during the immediate and ongoing disruption to businesses. The main findings concluded that:

5. Very few businesses in the region have continuity plans.
6. Continuity approaches were employed during the disruptions; however, these were ad-hoc and due to the resourcefulness of some local businesses rather than pre-planned.
7. Incomplete continuity support is provided in existing emergency planning and preparation tools provided by emergency management BC.

Strategies used to continue business during the Highway 4 disruption

1. This disruption took most businesses by surprise so the strategies that were enacted were on the whole reactive rather than proactive.
2. The disruption from COVID and other road disruptions conditioned some of the response (e.g., cost cutting), but overall, there was a minimal degree of preparedness for another disruption. Ironically, one lesson from COVID was that businesses could expect funding support – which did not come.
3. Many businesses were forced to adjust their pricing; however, they still carried fixed costs for staffing, overhead and inventory.
4. Collaboration was an effective ad hoc strategy.
5. The use of the FSR road, along with surrounding communications, was helpful for some businesses, residents and visitors and less helpful for others who required a paved disruption-free route.

If we did not make alternate arrangements (driving and getting our stock/ heat pumps, furnaces, air conditioners, etc.) we would have lost roughly \$214,036.24 in revenue. We are also out approximately \$3000 in hotel fees, \$1300 in food costs for employees, \$700 in flights, and about \$800-\$1000 in gas.

Available business continuity plans and programs

1. There is very little awareness amongst interviewees of available business continuity support, programs or businesses that have business continuity plans. Continuity plans and pre-identified measures to mitigate business disruptions were limited to a handful of larger entities.
2. Some of the larger businesses reported having related plans for immediate emergency management (response to onsite emergencies), and staff trained in implementing them, but the extent to which these were used or deemed useful during this disruption is unclear.
3. There is a need for business continuity supports that meet the needs of small businesses that are currently in survival mode (i.e., do not have time and resources for planning as they are just trying to keep their business afloat).
4. There is a need for all levels of government to share responsibility to support impacted businesses with funding for short- and longer-term recovery and preparedness. There is also a need for a community-wide approach to planning rather than putting the onus (exclusively) on businesses.

What might business continuity support look like?

With respect to business continuity support, the process needs to be easy as smaller businesses' time and energy for planning is limited and is focussed on the core business instead of what "might" happen. Some ideas to support business continuity include:

1. Creating templates and guides based on business types to allow businesses to generate a continuity plan more easily.
2. Providing funding to businesses to develop continuity plans – funding could be used by the business to hire someone to help create the continuity plan with them.
3. Community /region wide approach or cohort – A guidebook and template could be used as part of a cohort program that is delivered through a few workshops that help the businesses focus on developing their continuity plans with others. The cohort model provides an opportunity for learning from others as well as a social contract of sorts to compel participants through the process. Creating plans and testing the plans in scenarios with other businesses reduces the initial need for each business to have multiple key staff included in the training.
4. Sector wide template customized by one-on-one interviews – Combining a sector guide and template with funding for a trained facilitator to interview businesses and lead a scenario workshop could provide the opportunity for business owners to receive a plan that is 80% completed.



Summary of Solution Themes

Over the course of the situation assessment, impact analysis, emergency systems review and case study research a list of solution themes and associated action ideas emerged. These solutions became the main content to consider, evaluate and elaborate on during focus groups and the final workshop with rightsholders and stakeholders. Slides and notes from this workshop are in Appendix B.

These solution themes are:

1. Critical infrastructure

Build critical infrastructure, such as alternative land routes, enhanced marine use and air infrastructure, to ensure essential services and supply chains are not disrupted.

2. Mechanisms and processes to improve communication

Add capacity to improve communications to public/visitors and stay relevant in a sea of social media reporting.

3. Planning and preparedness at multiple scales

Create/strengthen interagency governance, logistical and communications systems; build personal relationships between agency staff; and, provide training and contingency planning.

4. Short and long-term recovery funding

Identify new/potential funding sources such as new tourism funds for responses, BC emergency financial assistance, delayed government remittances and insurance solutions early, and secure.

5. Business continuity planning assistance

Encourage and support business continuity planning across the region. Tailor mechanisms and approaches for delivering assistance so they are appropriate for a given sector and business capacity; continuity planning should coordinate and align with public sector continuity planning.

6. Deeper business and community connections

Foster and deepen business and community connections throughout the region. Create structures such as an emergency preparedness group.

7. Alternative business models

Develop alternative business models that reduce seasonality of local economies, especially in tourism and agriculture to help businesses be less vulnerable to seasonal hazards.

The following table outlines the solutions themes and associated actions in more detail:

THEME	Possible actions to support solutions themes <i>(should be reviewed and developed into an implementation plan)</i>
<p>1. Critical infrastructure</p> <p>Build critical infrastructure, such as alternative land routes, enhanced marine use and air infrastructure, to ensure essential services and supply chains are not disrupted.</p> <p>Possible Leads: Province, ACRD TAC</p> <p>Consequences addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed/ interrupted deliveries • Loss of access to services • Long-term impacts to tourism / travel reputation 	<p>Land routes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a guarantee of safety on the immediate Cameron Lake slope to avoid ongoing impacts. • Prioritize land transportation options in the region (including rail), inform the ACRD Board and then collectively advocate for these options to higher levels of government. (TAC). • Develop a specified scope and associated budget for the exploration and prioritization of transportation options including a secondary route in and out of the Alberni Valley. • Finalize an Emergency Detour Planning Study to look more closely at potential alternate access options for the Alberni-Clayoquot region (MOTI). • Improve coordination with the ferry traffic and better communication between entities (Ferry/MOTI) . • Ensure electronic communication signage for early notification and train people to be ambassadors on alternate routes to support first time travelers. • Seek out and provide clarity on insurance for personal or rented vehicles using alternative routes. <p>Marine routes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the success of using the Alberni Valley marine highway to move products and extend planning for shipping from Port Alberni to Ucluelet. Port Alberni Port Authority was able to assist Catalyst Paper with shipping requirements. <p>Air routes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the Port Alberni float plane dock and servicing area for customers. • Develop specific actions that support and build off the successes of using fixed wing aviation transport. <p>Supply chain resiliency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify warehousing opportunities and spaces in the Alberni-Clayoquot region or east coast that can act as “buffers” for the disrupted flow of goods. • Conduct a supply chain study to identify vulnerabilities from certain types of disruptions and possible alternative routes solutions, e.g., land to marine options.

<p>2. Mechanisms and processes to improve communication</p> <p>Add capacity to improve communications to public/visitors and stay relevant in a sea of social media reporting.</p> <p>Possible Leads: Province (MOTI, WILD, TERT), EOCs, DMOs</p> <p>Consequences addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased anxiety and stress for business owners • Long-term impacts to tourism / travel reputation • Lack of communications (channels, messages) – mixed messages • Confusion and wariness of visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure early monitoring of communication and miscommunication on social media. • Work with MOTI and Wildfire BC to improve communications and to increase their certainty of messaging. • Ensure an Information Officer corrects any miscommunication, as well as provides frequent accurate updates to avoid public panic or fear. • Ensure EOC ‘s have two staff assigned to communications - one for social media and another for media. One person managing both is too much, especially at the beginning of an incident. • Create pre-determined communication plans with specific messaging developed in a timely manner, e.g., for helping educate the public on how to travel safely on unfamiliar (gravel) roads. • Ensure the Ministry of Jobs Economic Development and Innovation works collaboratively with the Chamber of Commerce on procedures for future incidents. • Develop and distribute a central e-mailing list for communicating what is going on to avoid using social media – even non-members, etc. • Create a volunteer or paid program to support human to human communication with real time information. • Promote the use of the Voyent Alert app for the region.
<p>3. Planning and preparedness at multiple scales</p> <p>Create/strengthen interagency governance, logistical and communications systems; build personal relationships between agency staff; and provide training and contingency planning.</p> <p>Possible Leads: Province, ACRD, Communities, DMOs</p> <p>Consequences addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased anxiety and stress for business owners • Long-term impacts to tourism / travel reputation • Lack of communications (channels, messages) – mixed messages • Confusion and wariness of visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a schedule to meet regularly to build relationships and trust before future incidents. Pre-established relationships and familiarity between agencies were key factors to the effectiveness of the response. • Initiate ongoing training to bring people together to learn and feel more comfortable with the in a response, especially as additional and necessary people are trained and assigned to roles for emergency response. • Develop the ability to enact emergency responses sooner to address indirect impacts from emergencies. • Work with Wildfire BC to understand and address wildfire prioritization protocols to ensure a holistic consideration of possible impacts and therefore resource allocation. • Require another category of “emergency” that allows adequate resource responses to situations like what was experienced for the two weeks. • Develop a list of “what if’s” for future responses with group lodging activations that last longer than two days. Example: Develop floor plans for sleeping assignments, set up shower facilities, and plan for ongoing food services. • Create a plan for essential service providers (for example, nurses and teachers who work in the Alberni valley couldn’t get in and out), and identify and secure their availability in times of crisis.. • Confirm what actions can be taken when provincial task numbers are not provided for needed resources. Example: extended group lodging was provided after the detour route was opened. • Develop tools to quickly assess the needs and realistic expectations of visitors/ evacuees.

<p>4. Short and long-term recovery funding</p> <p>Identify new/potential funding sources such as new tourism funds for responses, BC emergency financial assistance, delayed government remittances and insurance solutions early, and secure.</p> <p>Possible Leads: Province (TEMC), Federal DMOs, Chambers, EDOs</p> <p>Consequences addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of revenues /increased costs • Increased anxiety and stress for business owners • Immediate impact on staffing • Lack of a funding support response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with provincial agencies to develop funding systems to help businesses retain staff and keep businesses afloat in some situations, especially given the importance of tourism to the province. • Develop support for a policy to delay remittance – GST, MRDT, payroll taxes, etc. as having this cash flow could be more valuable to businesses than new funding. • Advocate for a modernized financial assistance program during the province’s 2023 and 2024 consultations for the B.C.’s Modernized Emergency Management Legislation. • Consider creating a resort municipality relief fund, where some portion of the resort community’s hotel tax (or some other source of revenue) gets paid into a fund, which could be applied for/accessed by a community at a time of economic interruption to help relieve their businesses. • Support businesses to ensure they know about and how to access appropriate insurance. • Better understand and deploy Service Canada Work Sharing Agreement approaches where it makes sense. • Develop a provincial disaster insurance program, like ICBC, to fill the gaps related to the private market. • Learn from the review of the Disaster Recovery Economic Assistance Initiative and apply to future situations – many businesses did not/could not access it.
<p>5. Business continuity planning assistance</p> <p>Tailor mechanisms and approaches for delivering assistance so they are appropriate for a given sector and business capacity; continuity planning should coordinate and align with public sector continuity planning.</p> <p>Possible Leads: Chambers, DMOs, EDOs, Province</p> <p>Consequences addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of revenues /increased costs • Increased anxiety and stress • Immediate impact on staffing • Lack of a funding support response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a community/region wide approach to business continuity planning programming. • Provide support to make business continuity planning easy and effective such as templates by business type, and coaches to customize. • Align continuity planning with the provincial Tourism Emergency Management Committee. • Leverage new emergency management legislation to require government ministers, municipalities, regional districts, critical infrastructure owners, and public sector agencies to have business continuity plans. Make sure plans include essential workers’ housing during disruptions.

<p>6. Deeper business and community connections</p> <p>Foster and deepen business and community connections throughout the region; create structures such as an emergency preparedness group.</p> <p>Possible Leads: Chambers, DMOs, EDOs, Province</p> <p>Consequences addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed/interrupted deliveries • Increased anxiety and stress • Loss of revenues /increased costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an emergency preparedness business group: a “command central” for businesses to connect, collaborate and support each other’s needs such as sharing of supplies and infrastructure. • Leverage the successes after coming out of COVID and this incident, e.g., learnings on how to collaborate, diversifying the supply chain. • Match up short term community needs and the skill/assets sets that exist, for example, using commercial kitchens to prep food for locals or for food banks if they not required for tourism. • Develop a community wide continuity plan to support each other and businesses. • Use continuity planning processes to collaborate and develop logistics plans to support businesses through disruptive incidents.
<p>7. Alternative business models</p> <p>Develop alternative business models that reduce seasonality of local economies, especially in tourism and agriculture, to help businesses be less vulnerable to seasonal hazards.</p> <p>Possible Leads: ACRD Agriculture, Alberni Valley Agriculture Institute Tourism DMOs, 4VI</p> <p>Consequences addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed/interrupted deliveries • Increased anxiety and stress • Loss of revenues /increased costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue tourism DMOs’ efforts to increase visitation during shoulder seasons and smooth out visitation. • Identify and pursue the West Coast multiplex as infrastructure supporting offseason visitation for concerts, trades shows and other. • Research which agriculture sectors may have the ability to shift the timing of harvest and livestock finishing to avoid higher risk (for disruption) seasons and support this shift.



Next Steps and Collaboration

This review of impacts and exploration of solutions needs to be shared broadly in order to develop the momentum and commitment required to implement actions that ensure the region is better prepared to handle future disruptions. In order to do this, the following next steps are recommended:

1. Create a communication plan and co-fund a campaign for stakeholders to share the Highway 4 closure and ongoing disruption consequences, economic impact and solution themes in order to develop implementation support from other levels of government or agencies.
2. Develop an implementation committee structure among the stakeholders and rightsholders considering connections to existing or new sub-committees for specific issues, e.g., Transportation Advisory Committee for land transport.
3. Consider the solution theme action ideas in more detail, assess them for effectiveness versus resources and develop implementation plans for prioritized actions.



Appendices

Appendix A. Resiliency Case Studies

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Wildfire

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WOOD BUFFALO - HORSE RIVER WILDFIRE (2016)

INCIDENT

The Horse River Wildfire was first spotted on the afternoon of May 1, 2016, in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB), Northern Alberta. Due to extremely dry, warm, and windy conditions, it quickly spread throughout the region, and almost 88,000 people were evacuated. While no loss of life occurred because of the Wildfire, during the evacuation two young lives were tragically lost on Highway 881 in a motor vehicle accident. By the middle of June, the Wildfire was under control and RMWB communities began to shift their efforts to recovery.

IMPACT

The community lost 1,595 buildings and structures, containing 2,579 dwelling units. Overall, the 2016 wildfire resulted in an estimated \$3.8 billion in insurable losses. Some studies showed the event led to an overall socioeconomic impact nearing \$10 billion. It's the costliest natural disaster in Canadian history.

ACTIONS TAKEN

Prior to the fire, the 10 municipalities that make up the Region, had taken many steps to prevent, mitigate and prepare for an emergency, including planning for business continuity. The Regional Emergency Operations Centre and Incident Command System guided the response. Recovery was focused on the following pillars: People, Rebuild, Environment, Economy and Mitigate. A key learning coming out of this event is the importance of up-to-date business continuity plans.

PLAN AT A GLANCE

Components of RMWB's Business Continuity Guidebook

- What, why, and how of business continuity planning
- Six steps for developing a plan
- How to stay informed in the event of an emergency
- Tips for being prepared
- Facts from past events



LESSONS LEARNED

Enhance and update existing Business Continuity Plans: In alignment with the CSA Z1600-14 Standard and Sendai Framework, the RMWB is now working to maintain and update their existing Business Continuity Plans with current operational processes and organizational structures. Regular updates are important because they capture organizational and process changes, and provide an opportunity for the RMWB to incorporate leading practices that were identified since the last update. See Business Continuity Guide Book and Template below.

Formalize existing Business Continuity Plans as part of standard operating procedures during emergencies and disasters: One recommendation made to the RMWB following this emergency was to establish a designated individual or group whose role it is to create, maintain, and update its Business Continuity Plans. This also includes maintaining staff awareness around the Business Continuity Plans, including awareness of their purpose and their practical implication for departments and individuals. Familiarizing staff with existing Business Continuity Plans helps integrate them into emergency or disaster responses.

Legal and regulatory compliance: The RMWB's Municipal Emergency Management Plan is more robust than the guidelines provided through the provincial Community Emergency Management Plan and has started to meet some aspects of the Canadian Standards Association's Z1600-14 Emergency and Continuity Management Program.

CONCLUSION

Over the past three decades, the communities and residents of the RMWB have experienced multiple wildfires in their region, which have resulted in temporary road closures and evacuations; though none quite at the scale of the Horse River Wildfire.

This history of wildfire provided the RMWB with the opportunity to enhance its government operations and business continuity planning as well as the maturity of its emergency management capabilities.

RESOURCES: [RMWB's Business Continuity Guidebook](#) and [Business Continuity Template](#)

Sendai City, Japan, Earthquake and Tsunami

SENDAI CITY, JAPAN - GREAT EAST JAPAN EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI (2011)

INCIDENT

In 2011, Japan was hit by the Great East Japan Earthquake (GEJE). The unprecedented scale of destruction offered many lessons for infrastructure resilience, risk identification, reduction, and preparedness, and disaster risk finance.

IMPACT

The event resulted in the total destruction of more than 123,000 houses and damage to almost a million more. The costs resulting from the earthquake and tsunami in Japan were estimated at \$220 billion USD.

ACTIONS TAKEN

In response, the local government, along with national and international organizations, initiated a comprehensive recovery and reconstruction effort.

To support local businesses, the Sendai City Government provided financial assistance, tax relief measures, and subsidies for rebuilding efforts. They also established temporary business support centers to provide guidance on administrative procedures and access to resources.

PLAN AT A GLANCE

Components of Sendai City's Business Continuity Plan (BCP) - 2014

- Concrete actions that need to be taken by each department when a large-scale earthquake or tsunami happens
- Officials understand their roles and how to prioritize their duties.
- Based on our experiences and the lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake.
- The plan aims to protect the lives, health and property of citizens, minimize the effect on citizens' lives, and allow work responding to disasters to start quickly, as well as to continue to provide basic government services and return to normal operations as soon as possible, even if a large scale disaster prevents the city offices from functioning as normal.



LESSONS LEARNED

Numerous lessons across multiple sectors have been learned over the past decade because of GEJE reconstruction and analysis. Three common themes are:

Proactive planning is vital: Even though disasters will always be unexpected, if not unprecedented, planning for disasters has benefits both before and after they occur.

Collaboration is key: To strengthen the resilience of infrastructure, preparedness, and finance for the next disaster in Japan, national and local governments, infrastructure developers and operators, businesses and industries, communities and households have been building better systems by prearranging mechanisms for risk reduction, response and continuity through collaboration and mutual support.

Resilience is an iterative process: Many adaptations were made to the policy and regulatory frameworks after the GEJE. Past disasters show that resilience is an interactive process that needs to be adjusted and sustained over time, especially prior to a disaster.

CONCLUSION

These lessons from the GEJE on the importance of BCPs and pre-arranged agreements both emphasize larger principles that can be brought to bear in the context of emergent climate and public health crises. They demonstrate that collaborative efforts between government agencies, business associations, and community leaders can help expedite the recovery process and restore economic activity after disaster strikes.

By making disaster preparedness a key consideration for all organizations, and bringing diverse stakeholders together to make plans for when a crisis strikes, these strengthened networks and planning capacities have the potential to help mitigate emergencies and benefit everyday operations of organizations and countries.

RESOURCES: [Sendai City Business Continuity Plan](#) and [Sendai Report](#)

Gaile Media Business Continuity

INTERNET MARKETING GAILE MEDIA FIRM GOES MOBILE IN FACE OF HURRICANE HARVEY (2017)

INCIDENT

In August 2017, Hurricane Harvey slammed into Southeast Texas, ravaging homes, and businesses across the region. Over 4 days, some areas received more than 40 inches of rain. By the time the storm cleared, it had caused more than \$125 billion in damage.

IMPACT

Numerous small businesses were devastated by the hurricane. Gaile Media, a small Internet marketing agency, was almost one of them. Despite being located on the second floor of an office building, Gaile's offices were flooded when Lake Houston overflowed.

ACTIONS TAKEN

The flooding was so severe, nobody could enter the building for three months. When Gaile's staff were finally able to enter the space after water levels receded, any hopes for recovering the space were quickly dashed. The office was destroyed, and mold was rampant. Yet, business continued as usual with owner Brandon Gaile and his staff working from home and accessing files from the cloud.

PLAN AT A GLANCE

Components of a Robust Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

While specific details of Gaile Media's Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery (BC/DR) plan are not available, typical components that are commonly included in such plans, include:

- Risk Assessment and Business Impact Analysis (BIA);
- Business Continuity Strategies;
- Emergency Response Plan
- Backup and Recovery Plan
- IT Disaster Recovery Plan
- Crisis Communication Plan
- Vendor and Supplier Continuity Plan;
- Training and Awareness Program
- Testing, Maintenance, and Review
- Documentation and Governance



LESSONS LEARNED

While the company never returned to its building, its operations were hardly affected. Key lessons from Gaile Media's approach to weathering Hurricane Harvey and maintaining business operations are:

Risk Assessment: is vital for identifying and preparing for potential threats to business operations. This includes assessing both internal and external factors that could disrupt business continuity.

Comprehensive Planning: Gaile had taken the time to develop a Business Continuity / Disaster Recovery Plan, and familiarize staff with it.

Backup Systems and Redundancies: Having backup systems and redundancies in place can help businesses maintain operations during emergencies. As directed through its Business Continuity / Disaster Recovery Plan, Gaile kept most of its data stored in the cloud, which allowed staff to work remotely through the storm and after. Even with the office shuttered, they never lost access to their critical documents and records.

Employee Training and Awareness: Employees play a critical role in business continuity. Gaile Media likely advocates for employee training and awareness programs to ensure that staff members understand their roles and responsibilities during emergencies.

Be adaptable

When it came time to decide where to relocate, the owner decided to keep the company decentralized, allowing workers to continue working remotely (and providing a glimpse of how other businesses around the world would similarly adapt to disaster during the Covid-19 pandemic three years later). What is more, is the move to remote work has saved Gaile thousands of dollars a year in overhead – rent, utilities, and commuting costs.

CONCLUSION

Had the company kept all its data stored at the office, the business may never have recovered. Gaile's Business Continuity / Disaster Recovery Plan helped them identify risks and take proactive steps to protect core business functions during and following an emergency.

New Orleans Business Continuity Guide

NEW ORLEANS BUSINESS CONTINUITY GUIDE

PARKWAY BAKERY & TAVERN

Jay Nix, Owner



Parkway Bakery and Tavern has a long history, dating back to 1911, when it opened as a bakery in the Bayou St. John neighborhood. The restaurant has experienced a number of storms, including catastrophic flooding during Hurricane Katrina, and managed to reopen just two months later with a renewed understanding of their risk.

In 2012, Jay Nix experienced a different kind of risk that affected his business: an extended power outage due to Hurricane Isaac. With the hurricane approaching, Jay and manager Jamie Kennedy had to decide how to prepare. Shuttering the restaurant prematurely would mean loss of revenue and they still weren't sure whether the storm would affect New Orleans. However, if it did affect their business they faced the potential loss of their perishable inventory.

Understanding the effect a power outage would have on its inventory, Justin Kennedy, manager and head chef, decided to act preemptively: he rented a refrigerated truck. Justin began transferring the frozen items to the refrigerated truck. The remaining inventory was documented for insurance purposes, and then given out to neighbors who were also suffering from the power outage. The outage lasted 10 days, during which Parkway needed to stay in touch with its employees so they would know when to come back to work.

Before the event, Jay made sure he had an updated list of all employee contact information, and set up a designated time and phone number for employees to check in. Jay and Justin understood their business depended on their staff, and provided incentives for employees to come back after the extended closure. In Jay Nix's words, "If you have your people back, you can make anything happen."

Another issue they dealt with was the need to communicate with their customer base, and how to inform them when they would be open again. They decided to take out an ad in the newspaper to announce their reopening after the power was restored.

Jay also helped make the neighborhood more resilient to future flood damage and became a business leader within the water management community and installed an innovative parking lot that reduces street flooding in their neighborhood.

For more information on how to "Know Your Key Customers, Contacts, Suppliers and Vendors," see the OFB-EZ toolkit, p. 10.

For more information on "Working Together as a Community," see page 9 of this guide.

For more information on "Protecting Your Inventory & Perishables," see page 10 of this guide.

For more information on assessing risk to your business, see Section 2: Assessing Your Structure and Level of Risk of the New Orleans Building Hardening Guide.

DONG PHUONG BAKERY

Kevin Tran, Son of Owners



The Tran family started Dong Phuong Bakery in the 1980s on Chef Menteur Highway in New Orleans East. Kevin Tran's parents immigrated to New Orleans in the 1970s, and took over an existing Vietnamese restaurant, expanding it to include a bakery.

The family business was fortunate during Hurricane Katrina. While many other parts of New Orleans East were hard-hit by the flooding, Dong Phuong's did not flood. The restaurant benefitted from having a fairly secure building, with a backup generator, shuttered windows, and a site on relatively high ground. Leaks in the roof and a flooded storage unit caused some damage, but were repaired quickly.

Compared to other parts of the city, the population in this part of New Orleans East came back quickly to rebuild. Dong Phuong's customer base returned, even as demographics shifted after the storm. As a result of having to close the restaurant before dark in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when National Guard troops were still patrolling the city, the family decided to stick with the shorter business hours and downsized their menu to make things easier for the staff.

The tightly run family business means that the owners are always present. Kevin's parents and uncle know their emergency policies and procedures by heart and due to the small staff size, it is easy for them to keep in touch with employees. Low employee turnover – two of their waitresses have been with Dong Phuong's for over 25 years – means that employees return after an evacuation. Dong Phuong's ability to return quickly following an event speaks to the value of it being a small, community-based business.

For more information on how to "Know Your Operations," see the OFB-EZ toolkit, p. 6.

For more information on how to "Know Your Employees," see the OFB-EZ toolkit, p. 8.

For more information on assessing risk to your business, see Section 2: Assessing Your Structure and Level of Risk of the New Orleans Building Hardening Guide.

Toyota Business Continuity Practices

TOYOTA'S OUTSTANDING BUSINESS CONTINUITY PRACTICES(2011)

INCIDENT

Toyota Motor Corporation, one of the world's leading automakers, faced a significant challenge when the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami (GEJE) struck on March 11, 2011. The disaster caused widespread devastation, loss of life, and infrastructure damage throughout Japan, affecting numerous businesses, including Toyota.

IMPACT

Registering 9.0 on the Richter scale, the GEJE was one of the most powerful earthquakes ever recorded. It caused a tsunami with waves that reached heights of up to 133 feet (40.5 meters) in some areas. As a result, there were nearly 16,000 fatalities, more than 6,000 injuries, and extensive infrastructure damage.

ACTIONS TAKEN

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, Toyota temporarily shut down production at all of its plants in Japan as a safety precaution. This decision was made to ensure the safety of employees and assess the impact of the disaster on its facilities and supply chain. Next, Toyota quickly mobilized teams to assess the damage to its production facilities, infrastructure, and supply chain network. This assessment was crucial for determining the extent of the impact on its operations and formulating a recovery plan. Finally, Toyota prioritized the well-being of its employees and provided support to those affected by the earthquake. This included assistance with housing, transportation, and other essential needs. Additionally, Toyota contributed to relief efforts in affected communities by providing financial support and donating vehicles for transportation and rescue operations.

PLAN AT A GLANCE

Toyota's Business Continuity Management Principles

Regardless of the magnitude and impact of a disaster, Toyota will prioritize humanitarian aid and community recovery before looking to restart its own operations. With this overarching objective, Toyota has sought to engage directly with communities, through signing multiple collaborative disaster aid agreements with numerous cities across Japan, particularly those which are at higher risk.



LESSONS LEARNED

Toyota's response to the crisis stood out as exceptional in several key ways:

Resilience through Diversified Supply Chain: Toyota's proactive approach to diversifying its supply chain allowed it to mitigate the impact of supply disruptions caused by the disaster. This diversification strategy set Toyota apart from many other companies in the region that relied heavily on single-source suppliers, making them more vulnerable to disruptions.

Swift Recovery and Minimal Production Disruption: Toyota's ability to resume production relatively quickly, reaching full production capacity within months, was exceptional. This swift recovery contrasted with the experiences of other automakers and manufacturers that faced extended production shutdowns and delays.

Effective Business Continuity Planning: Toyota's adherence to ISO 22301 standards and its comprehensive business continuity management system (BCMS) demonstrated the effectiveness of its planning and preparedness efforts. This level of planning and its execution set Toyota apart as a leader in business continuity management.

Employee Safety Priority: Toyota's commitment to employee safety was evident in its actions during and after the disaster. The fact that there were no fatalities among its employees due to the earthquake and tsunami was an exceptional achievement.

CONCLUSION

Toyota's exceptional response to the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami can be attributed to its proactive business continuity planning, diversified supply chain, efficient communication, and unwavering commitment to safety. These qualities distinguished it from many other companies in the region that faced greater challenges and uncertainties during the crisis. Toyota's case serves as a valuable benchmark for businesses seeking to enhance their resilience and preparedness for similar disruptions. It underscores the critical importance of proactive planning and implementation in achieving exceptional outcomes during times of crisis.

New Orleans Emergency Preparedness Plan

Incident (s)

Hurricane Katrina, a catastrophic Category 5 hurricane, struck the Gulf Coast of the United States, particularly devastating the city of New Orleans, Louisiana, in August 2005. The storm's powerful winds and storm surge lead to widespread flooding that inundated homes, businesses, and infrastructure.

Impact

The impact on businesses was profound, with many facing severe damage, destruction, and economic losses. Small businesses, in particular, struggled to recover, facing challenges such as property damage, supply chain disruptions, and loss of customers. Major industries like tourism, hospitality, and fishing were significantly affected, with long-term repercussions on employment and economic stability. The hurricane exposed vulnerabilities in disaster preparedness and infrastructure, prompting calls for improved resilience and emergency planning.

Actions Taken

NOLA Ready, launched in 2010, is the emergency preparedness campaign and communication system initiated by the New Orleans Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (NOHSEP). It promotes the concept of business continuity, especially in a city vulnerable to natural disasters.

Following Hurricane Katrina, NOLA Ready broadened its focus beyond individual preparedness to include initiatives aimed at enhancing the resilience of businesses within the city. NOLA Ready collaborated with organizations and industry stakeholders to develop comprehensive business continuity strategies. The strategy [guide](#) for businesses is a key resource and [other resources](#) are also available.

These continuity strategies encompass a range of measures designed to ensure that businesses can continue operations and fulfill their commitments to employees, customers, and stakeholders, even in the face of adversity. Key components include risk assessments, continuity planning, and the establishment of protocols for communication, resource management, and alternate operating procedures.

Through outreach, training, and resources, the campaign equipped businesses with the knowledge and tools necessary to identify potential risks, mitigate vulnerabilities, and implement effective continuity measures.

NOLA Ready also facilitates collaboration and information sharing among businesses, fostering a culture of resilience and mutual support within the local business community. By encouraging partnerships and networking, the campaign helped businesses leverage collective expertise and resources to enhance their preparedness and response capabilities.

At a Glance

Planning promoted for businesses include three steps:

1. Plan: Understand hazards for disruptions and potential impacts on businesses
2. Implement: Write a [preparedness plan](#)
3. Practice: Test exercises and evaluation

To support these efforts NOLA Ready launched the [Partners in Preparedness program](#) to engage and support New Orleans small business owners, employers, and their employees in preparing for emergencies. Partners in Preparedness is a training (to build capacity) and recognition (to spread the word and normalize) program. ALL partners receive the Partners in Preparedness SEAL and CERTIFICATE. These icons and certificates can be displayed on social media accounts, webpages, or on business or organization's walls to show a commitment to preparedness.

Lessons Learned

NOLA Ready work goes far beyond business continuity planning and considering all the various functions four important lessons stand out:

1. Community and business engagement: Involving residents and businesses in preparedness efforts, considering concerns and needs is important. This engagement is where the business continuity resources live.
2. Effective communication: Using multiple communication channels through a recognizable handle helps to increase the effectiveness of communication.
3. Adaptability: Situations requiring an emergency response or potential solution to disruptions need to be adaptable to the specific situation.
4. Partnerships: Collaboration is critical with all levels of government, community organizations and businesses.

Conclusion

By integrating business resilience into its broader preparedness framework, the campaign has helped strengthen the city's overall resilience and ability to recover from disasters, ensuring that New Orleans remains a resilient and vibrant economic hub even in the face of adversity.

Appendix B Workshop and Notes

WCS

ACRO Hwy 4 Resiliency

Solutions workshop June 24/2024

Welcome

Today's Objectives

- Confirm final incident themes
- Share and refine strategies/solutions
- Prioritize strategies/solutions

Also...

- Update on what we've done and heard
- Share key learnings

Agenda

- Realize
- Agenda review
- Introductions
- Quick look back and review of steps
- Framework installation
- Confirm final themes
- Strategies/solutions introduction
- Practications exercise
- Next steps

Online meeting tips:

- Mute your mic please
- Feel free to turn off video
- Use the "thumbs" up function
- Feel free to use the chat for questions or comments
- Take a break.

Project Purpose/Outcomes

Purpose:

To engage with businesses, stakeholders and rightsholders in the ACRO region to understand the impacts of the 2023 summer highway closure and to identify the key strategies for supporting affected businesses in the case of future challenges and creating long-term resilience to future highway closures and disruptions.

Process and timeline

Engagement

- DISCUSSING 1 & 2**
 - Engage with Stakeholders (Business, BCRA, Rightsholder, First Nations, Residential and Commercial) and community of interest.
- Focus group #1**
 - Use the Framework of Common and ACRO
 - Identify and confirm the key themes and incidents
 - 22 small group 1 session
 - Facilitated by business development representative and facilitator
 - Facilitated by business development representative and facilitator
 - Facilitated by business development representative and facilitator
- Output**
 - Key learnings
 - Final report

Framework - Jargon

- Impact and Priority Needs Themes - high level
- Strategy/Solution Themes - high level areas of improvement to address needs/gaps
- Ideas - shared in reports, in workshop or interviews/focus groups

Impact themes

- Transportation (road closures, bus and other services, accessibility)
- Loss of access to services (health, education)
- Loss of income, employment (BCRA, other services, ACRO, other services)
- Loss of services and other services (accessibility, BCRA, other services)
- Loss of services and other services (accessibility, BCRA, other services)

Needs themes

- Make information, take alternative routes
- Need for more information, more information, more information
- Need for more information, more information, more information
- Need for more information, more information, more information
- Need for more information, more information, more information
- Need for more information, more information, more information
- Need for more information, more information, more information
- Need for more information, more information, more information
- Need for more information, more information, more information
- Need for more information, more information, more information

BREAK

Emergency Management - BC

Emergency Management - BC

Emergency Management - BC

Emergency Management - BC

Business Continuity Planning

A plan (ideally one that had been tested before hand) for keeping the business going during an unplanned disruption or unforeseen event.

- Business continuity plan
- Business continuity plan
- Business continuity plan
- Business continuity plan
- Business continuity plan
- Business continuity plan
- Business continuity plan
- Business continuity plan
- Business continuity plan
- Business continuity plan

New Orleans

Fort MacMurray

Business Continuity Plan

Strategy solutions process

- Identify the core problem/issue and emergency management report
- Assess a few potential approaches to continuity planning
- Identify, test, and validate
- Develop reports

Strategy solution themes

Theme	Needs addressed	Examples
1) Critical infrastructure for essential services and supply chains are not disrupted. Life-sustaining services are needed and should consider needs for all, as well as by-law.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.)
2) Workplaces and businesses are prepared to continue to operate in the event of a disruption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.)

Strategy solution themes

Theme	Needs addressed	Examples
3) Planning and preparation to ensure resilience in the event of a disruption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.)
4) Short and long term recovery planning to ensure that the community is able to recover and rebuild after a disruption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.)

Strategy solution themes

Theme	Needs addressed	Examples
5) Workplaces and businesses are prepared to continue to operate in the event of a disruption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.)
6) Planning and preparation to ensure resilience in the event of a disruption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.)

Strategy solution themes

Theme	Needs addressed	Examples
7) Workplaces and businesses are prepared to continue to operate in the event of a disruption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.)
8) Planning and preparation to ensure resilience in the event of a disruption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupt (disrupt) services Loss of access to essential services (e.g. power, water, gas, etc.)

JAMBOARD!

Strategy solution themes

- What was added or refined?
- Questions to others?

Poll

Strategy solution themes

- How do you feel about these top 3 being emphasized?
- What would you replace one with and why?

Next Steps

- Draft report - Project leads
- Communications materials - summary/psd
- Final materials
- ?

WCS

Thank you!

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Notes

THEME	DETAILS	Notes from stickies: to consider in implementation planning.
<p>1. Critical infrastructure</p>	<p>Build critical infrastructure, such as alternative land routes, enhanced marine use and air infrastructure, to ensure essential services and supply chains are not disrupted.</p> <p>Possible Leads: Province, ACRD TAC</p>	<p>Land routes – Rail?</p> <p>Seek out clarity on insurance for vehicles using alternative routes – tourism, car rental companies</p> <p>Buffering supplies by having with arrival port, warehousing/distribution from the Alberni Valley to the Coast and elsewhere.</p> <p>Air</p> <p>Planning for additional air support in disruptive situations with PCA</p>
<p>2. Mechanisms and processes to improve communication</p>	<p>Add capacity to improve communications to public/visitors and stay relevant in a sea of social media reporting</p> <p>Possible Leads: Province (MOTI, WILD, TERT), EOCs, DMOs</p>	
<p>3. Planning and preparedness at multiple scales</p>	<p>Create/strengthen interagency governance, logistical and communications systems, build personal relationships between agency staff, provide training and contingency planning</p> <p>Possible Leads: Province, ACRD, Communities, DMOs</p>	<p>Ensure that the business community is represented on the EOC to help respond and recover more quickly</p> <p>Review the progress and value of the BC Hotel Association emergency booking portal</p> <p>Better understand and deploy Service Canada Work Sharing Agreement approaches where it makes sense.</p> <p>Make a live visual org chart of all the organizations and roles involved to support during and after disruptions</p> <p>Host a session to agency roles, overlapping activities and gaps in order to update mutually approved responsibilities.</p> <p>Community futures role in recovery is important</p> <p>United way wants to help but may have been underutilized.</p> <p>Emergency communications strategy grant – NYLA follow up.</p>

<p>4. Short and long-term recovery funding</p>	<p>Secure funding, including early identification of new/potential funding sources such as new tourism funds for responses, BC emergency financial assistance, delayed government remittances and insurance solutions</p> <p>Possible Leads: Province (TEMC), Federal DMOs, Chambers, EDOs, Community Futures)</p>	<p>Better understand and deploy Service Canada Work Sharing Agreement approaches where it makes sense.</p> <p>Community futures seems to have a role to play</p> <p>Development of a provincial disaster insurance program to fill the gaps related to the private market – e.g. ICBC</p> <p>Learn from the review of the Disaster Recovery Economic Assistance Initiative and apply to future situations. – many businesses did not/could not access it.</p>
<p>5. Business continuity planning assistance</p>	<p>Tailor mechanisms and approaches for delivering assistance so they are appropriate for a given sector and business capacity; continuity planning should coordinate and align with public sector continuity planning</p> <p>Possible Leads: Chambers, DMOs, EDOs, Province</p>	<p>Better understand and deploy Service Canada Work Sharing Agreement approaches where it makes sense.</p> <p>*3 chambers and CF working together to deliver continuity work.</p> <p>Carrot and stick – discount on insurance</p> <p>Essential workers living locally or who commute need to be housed during disruptions</p>
<p>6. Deeper business and community connections</p>	<p>Foster and deepen business and community connections throughout the region; create structures such as an emergency preparedness group</p> <p>Possible Leads: Chambers, DMOs, EDOs, Province</p>	<p>Supply chain study to understand exposure and opportunities for local options? X2</p> <p>Chambers facilitate collaboration – continue this.</p> <p>Inventory of resources locally.</p> <p>Funding:</p> <p>UBCM Community Emergency Preparedness Fund</p> <p>The Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) is a suite of funding streams intended to enhance the resilience of local governments, First Nations and communities in responding to emergencies and to reduce risks from future disasters due to natural hazards and climate-related risks.</p> <p>https://www.ubcm.ca/cepf_</p>
<p>7. Alternative business models</p>	<p>Develop alternative business models that reduce seasonality of local economies to help businesses be less vulnerable to seasonal hazards. Especially in tourism and agriculture.</p> <p>Possible Leads: ACRD Agriculture, Alberni Valley Agriculture Institute Tourism DMOs, 4VI</p>	<p>Support the west coast multiplex as infrastructure supporting offseason visitation – concerts, trades shows other.</p> <p>https://www.westcoastmultiplex.org/</p> <p>Understand and invest in agriculture that isn't dependent on fresh food exports and small windows of revenue generation. E.g. oyster machine Food hub</p>

Appendix C Engagement Tools

Chamber Survey Questions:

1. Business Name
 - a. Doing business - Alberni Valley
 - b. Doing business - Oceanside
 - c. Doing business - West Coast
 - d. Doing Business - Other
1. How many years has your business been in operation?
2. Has your business been impacted by the Hwy 4 closure due to the Cameron Bluffs Wildfire?
3. If your business has been affected, how much revenue do you anticipate losing during the two-week road closure period (June 6-24)? Please give an approximate dollar value.
4. If you anticipate a loss of revenue following the road opening, please indicate that approximate amount in dollar value
5. What are your business' immediate needs as a result of this situation?
6. What resources do you anticipate requiring in the coming weeks and months?
7. How many staff have you lost or laid off as a result of this situation? [Enter Number, Full-time/Part-time Status or N/A]
8. How many of your employees are not eligible for Employment Insurance (EI) [insert number or N/A]
9. Is your business still paying off a CEBA (Canadian Emergency Business Assistance) loan?
10. Were you able to claim Business Interruption Insurance in this situation?
11. Is there anything else we should know about the impact of the Wildfire/Road Closure on your business? Please use this space to elaborate on any question prior or things we missed.

Interview Guide:

ACRD Economic Outreach Interviews

Interview Objectives

1. Confirm the major issues and themes related to the incident and following the incident through the summer.
2. Understand how businesses and other organizations managed "to continue" through the initial closure and subsequent closures/impacts. What were the strategies they employed?
3. Understand the proliferation of business continuity planning programs within each community and the businesses in that community. (Describe what it is)
4. What supports are needed in the interest of furthering continuity planning in the region? What is missing?

Introduction (5 min):

Thank you. WCS Engagement + Planning, is working on behalf of the Ucluelet, Tofino and Port Alberni Chambers of Commerce, to explore issues related to the Highway 4 closure that occurred on June 6th, 2023. Your input will inform recommendations we make on behalf of West Coast Island communities to other levels of government regarding business disruption preparedness strategies for preventing future business disruptions.

Purpose: To review context and purpose of the interview and go over the confidentiality parameters.

- “Thank you for setting aside some time to talk with me today.”
- “The purpose of this interview is to better understand the experience and impact of last summer’s Highway 4 road closure on businesses and organizations in your area of the West Coast of Vancouver Island.
 - In particular, we’re curious about how businesses/organizations managed “to continue” through the initial Highway 4 road closure and subsequent closures/impacts that occurred last summer; specifically, the strategies and tactics that businesses used to stay open during the road closure and recover in the weeks and months that followed.
 - We also hope to gain a deeper understanding of what business continuity planning programs and other supports exist and/or are needed within your community or the broader region.
- Your input today will inform recommendations on behalf of the West Coast communities to other levels of government as regarding business disruption preparedness strategies that will aim to prevent future business disruptions.
- “We have a lot to go over and only have an hour to chat, so I’ll try to keep us on track, if you don’t mind.”
- “I am taking notes, but **our conversation is not being recorded** and no one outside the research team will see my notes.”
- **“There will be a list of organizations interviewed in the report we are preparing for the Chambers of Commerce and West Coast communities, but no interviewee will be quoted in the report.** Do you have any questions about the interview or broader project before we begin?”

The interviewee’s work (5 min):

Purpose: Warm up the interviewee. Don’t spend more than a minute or two on this.

- Can you provide an overview of your organization and its key operations?

Objective 1 - Confirm the major issues and themes related to the incident and following the incident through the summer (10 min)

- During last summer’s Highway 4 road closure what were the biggest challenges [ISSUES] businesses in your area faced?
 - During the closure – **June 6th to June 26th**
 - Once the highway was re-opened – around **June 27th to Aug 31 when it reopened to two way traffic**
 - Prompt: To what degree did you encounter / experience any of the following?
 - Delayed/interrupted deliveries
 - Loss of access to services
 - Loss of revenues/increased costs
 - Lack of funding support response
 - Difficulty for staff to get to work?

- During last summer’s Highway 4 road closure what would have helped businesses in your area overcome the challenges you just described or get back to business as usual? [NEEDS] OR: What would help your business be better prepared for future business disruptions?
 - Prompt: To what degree would the following have helped?
 - Infrastructure (e.g. another road)
 - Provincial disaster/emergency response priority for the region
 - Immediate relief strategies (mostly funding/insurance) for businesses/employees
 - Promotions/communications/marketing in months following
 - Collaborative strategies for sharing of existing supplies
 - Emergency/temporary air service for visitors/supplies
 - More/better cell phone service

Objective 2 - Understand how businesses and other organizations managed “to continue” through the initial closure and subsequent closures/impacts. What were the strategies they employed? (10 min)

- What measures did businesses in your area take to stay open last summer during the closure of Highway 4? OR What did they do to minimize disruption?
 - During the closure?
 - In the immediate aftermath?
 - Prompt:
 - To what extent were these actions proactive (planned ahead) or reactive (spur of the moment)?
- At the time of last summer’s road closure, did businesses have any of the following:
 - *A plan (ideally one that had been tested before hand) for keeping the business going during an unplanned disruption or unforeseen event? (A Business Continuity Plan) Y/N/IDK *(if yes, ask to see it at end of interview)
 - *A sense of/list/assessment of the critical functions and processes that keep businesses running smoothly? Y/N/IDK
 - *Measures in place to address disruptions in the supply chain? Y/N/IDK
 - *Trained employees who were aware of your business’s continuity procedures and/or how to respond in the event of a disruption? Y/N/IDK
 - *Insurance coverage for mitigating financial losses during disruptions? Y/N/IDK
 - *Strategies for financial resilience (adjusting costs, increasing revenues) in the face of unexpected events? Y/N/IDK
 - All question prompts:
 - Yes
 - Tell me more
 - What prompted you to have that in place?
 - What resources / materials /support, if any, were helpful in developing/having that?
 - No
 - Why not?
 - Is that something you’d be willing to develop with the right kind of support?
 - I don’t know
 - Is there someone else in your organization I can speak with who might know?

Objective 3 - Understand the proliferation of business continuity planning programs within each community and the businesses in that community. (Describe what it is) (10 min)

- Are there programs / services / resources (in your community/ available to you) that help businesses /organizations (like yours) plan for unforeseen events and be better prepared, for example some of the strategies we just spoke about? Y/N/IDK
 - Prompts:
 - Yes
 - Tell me more
 - What kind of support do they offer?
 - Have you used them?
 - Do you think what they offer is valuable / effective?
 - No / I don't know
 - Would you use them if they existed?
 - Do you know of helpful businesses continuity programs or supports available in other communities / regions?
- What's needed to ensure (existing and/or future) programs /services /resources for business continuity planning are relevant and accessible, and to encourage broad uptake / enrollment?
 - Prompt:
 - For instance: financial assistance, marketing, diverse communications and training materials etc.

Objective 4 - what supports are needed in the interest of furthering continuity planning in the region? What is missing? (10 min)

Aside from financial assistance...

- What would help businesses / organizations (like yours and others) in the region plan and be better prepared for unforeseen events, such as last summer's road closure, in the future?
- What additional supports are needed to help businesses / organizations (like yours and others) in the region avoid or mitigate business disruptions from unforeseen events in the future?
 - Prompt: What's missing/ to what degree would the following help?
 - Infrastructure (e.g. another road)
 - Provincial disaster/emergency response priority for the region
 - Promotions/communications/marketing in months following
 - Collaborative strategies for sharing of existing supplies
 - Emergency/temporary air service for visitors/supplies
 - More/better cell phone service

Wrapping Up (5 min)

Purpose: To pick up any higher-level thoughts the interviewee may have.

- Are there any other lessons learned from last summer's road closure that pertain to business continuity that you'd like to share with me?
- [If business indicated in earlier question that it has a business continuity plan] Would you be willing to share your business continuity plan with me? Do you know of other businesses we could reach out to with business continuity plans?

Closing (5 min)

Purpose: Close off in a way that allows for follow-up and that lets the interviewee know how much you appreciate their input.

- [if didn't finish] "Unfortunately, we didn't get to talk about all the things I was hoping we'd have time for. Would you mind if I called you back later this week or sometime next week to finish up? I think we could do that in about 15 minutes or so."
- [if finished] "Would you mind if I were to contact you by email to confirm specific points related to our discussion, if needed?"
- "Thank you very much."

Focus Group guide:

ACRD Outreach Focus Groups

Invitation:

You are invited to participate in a Hwy 4 closure focus group to help ground some of the initial insights uncovered through a preliminary review of the closure impacts on west coast businesses.

Your input will inform recommendations that the West Coast Chambers of Commerce make on behalf of West Coast Island communities to other levels of government regarding business disruption preparedness strategies for preventing future business disruptions.

The focus group session will include an opportunity to consider the impact themes unearthed in surveys completed immediately after the closure as well as some of the solution themes identified to date. We also hope to gain a deeper understanding of what resources and other supports exist and/or are needed to support the continuation of business activities during these types of disruptions.

We hope you can find some time to participate in this important initiative.

Focus group sessions for Tofino businesses will be offered at the following dates and times:

Online Session 1: [May 14th , 9:00 am – 10:30 am - click here to register](#)

Online Session 2: [May 22nd, 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm – click here to register](#)

If you are not available or feel that a colleague is more suited to the topics, please feel free to forward this invitation to them.

Warm regards,

LOCATION , Chamber of Commerce

Project background: The Ucluelet, Tofino and Port Alberni Chambers of Commerce, have hired WCS Engagement and Planning to explore the impacts of last years Highway 4 closure and to facilitate sessions to identify solutions that will help out during future disruptions. The project will support the West Coast Chambers of Commerce in making recommendations to other levels of government regarding business disruption preparedness strategies. The project is being completed with funding from Island Coastal Economic Trust.

Focus Group

Objectives:

- Communicate project essentials to participants
- Ground truth findings to date and brainstorm/test preliminary strategies

Context:

- This initiative:
 - To engage with businesses, stakeholders and rightsholders in the ACRD region to understand the impacts of the 2023 summer highway closure and to identify the key strategies for supporting affected businesses in the case of future challenges and creating long-term resilience.
 - Managed by the West Coast Chambers, funded by Island Community Economic Trust to minimize costs to Chambers and local governments and we are working toward a June draft report.
 - Work to date has included synthesizing survey themes from Chamber Survey, workshop with key organizations and rightsholders, interviews with chamber/economic development organizations, research on some practices in other areas – case studies.
 - Your input today will inform recommendations on behalf of the West Coast communities to other levels of government as regarding business disruption preparedness strategies that will aim to prevent future business disruptions.
- Project background: The Ucluelet, Tofino and Port Alberni Chambers of Commerce, have hired WCS Engagement and Planning to explore the impacts of last years Highway 4 closure and to facilitate sessions to identify solutions that will help out during future disruptions. The project will support the West Coast Chambers of Commerce in making recommendations to other levels of government regarding business disruption preparedness strategies. The project is being completed with funding from Island Coastal Economic Trust.

Timing	Topic/Question	Notes
0-5	Introduction to project and process	As above. We will share some findings to date and gauge your thoughts on them, nuances, anything missed.
5-10	Introduction to each other	Quick round of introductions
1:15		
10-15	Findings	
15-30	Do these themes summarize the key issues/ challenges resulting from the highway closures? Anything to add?	
30-40	Findings	

40-65	<p>Are these the priority needs to manage these issues? What is missing? Think about your community?</p> <p>Which ones impact the whole region and which impact some of the region and/or some businesses (rather than all)?</p>	
	Quick Break	
65-70	<p>Solutions</p> <p>Do these capture the Solutions effectively?</p> <p>Which are the most important?</p> <p>Anything to add?</p>	
70-85	Discussion	
85 mins	<p>Business continuity plans</p> <p>This is what we heard, what do you think about it? How could it be more effective?</p>	
90 mins	End	

Focus Group Presentation Slides

WCS
ACRD
HWY 4 Economic Impact Outreach
FOCUS GROUPS SPRING 2024

Welcome

Today's Objectives

- Communicate project essentials
- Ground truth findings to date and brainstorm/test preliminary strategies

Project Purpose/Outcomes

Purpose:
To engage with businesses, stakeholders and rightsholders in the ACRD region to understand the impacts of the 2023 summer highway closure and to identify the key strategies for supporting affected businesses in the case of future challenges and creating long term resilience to future highway closures and disruptions.

Process and timeline

Identify | Engage | Plan | Implement | Evaluate

Focus Group objectives

- To share and confirm the impacts of highway closure organized into themes/categories
- To share and confirm solution themes
- To capture priority strategies for resilience
- To explore business continuity planning and steps to use

Issues related to the closure

- Delayed/Interrupted deliveries – up and down stream
- Loss of access to services (health and other)
- Loss of materials, increased costs, 120 million loss in sales, 50% profit for US&C, 70% in program, includes delivery costs
- Lack of a funding support program (between etc)
- Lack of communication (financial, managerial – related challenges)
- Long term impacts by tourists / travel restrictions – visitors may be wary about visiting in the future
- Increased energy impacts to mental health, stress for business owners
- Increased and longer term impact on staffing
- Lack of water services in Fort Alberta the people to stay if road closed again

Needs as a result of the closure

- Safe alternative routes
- Operational and logistic considerations
- Storage to provide and emergency preparedness
- Financial support to help businesses during the summer
- Emergency response preparedness
- Access to support / resources to get the emergency response ready
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Solution strategy themes

1. Planning and assessment
2. Identify risks
3. Develop a business continuity plan (BCP) for preparation and resilience
4. Critical operations to ensure essential services and supply chains are not disrupted
5. Continued support to reduce the necessity of all business types
6. Develop and implement recovery (bounce back) plan
7. Develop and implement recovery (bounce back) plan
8. Develop and implement recovery (bounce back) plan
9. Develop and implement recovery (bounce back) plan

New Orleans

- History of natural disasters
- Launched NOLA Ready in 2012, emergency preparedness campaign
- Resilience of approach and continuity approach
- Businesses that fulfil their commitments to employees, customers, and stakeholders
- Risk assessment, continuity plan, recovery, emergency management and alternate operating procedures
- Outreach and training

Fort MacMurray

Fort MacMurray

Fort MacMurray

Business Continuity Plan

A plan (usually one that has been tested before hand) for keeping the business going during an unplanned disruption or emergency system.

- One of multiple of methods used to reduce disruption, but only for those
- Some larger businesses have methods done, some only have emergency plans, like the smaller businesses etc.
- Plan Issues / Plan

Next Steps

- Current reality report
- Workshop
- Draft report in June

WCS
Thank you!

WCS engagement
+ planning