

# First step down the road to mine

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Finally.

After months and months of waiting, the province has announced it will go ahead with the environmental assessment process for the proposed Prosperity mine.

That's great news, and it's encouraging to finally have a sense of progress.

There's still a ways to go, and a number of hurdles to clear. The announcement doesn't mean the mine will go ahead, just that the process has started up again.

The project still needs to be approved, and Taseko Mines still needs to make a decision whether to go ahead, based on a whole number of stars that need to be aligned, including commodity prices, public support, investment capital, and others.

But the announcement does mean the province (and the federal government) will be taking a serious look at the benefits and impacts of the proposed mine, and that everyone will get a chance to have their say, as part of the process is to gauge public support and to listen to comments and concerns.

With luck, the EA process will be complete by next May 1, which is when Taseko needs to make its go-or-no decision on the mine.

And hopefully, the stars do align for this project, which represents an incredible opportunity for Williams Lake and the region: capital investment of \$800 million, more than \$4 billion in spending, and more than 500 direct and 1,200 indirect jobs over 22 years.

The region's major politicians have all said they support the mine. Many in the city do as well. They all recognize that Prosperity could diversify our economy in a major way and be a great benefit to the region.

Hopefully, the provincial and federal regulators will see that too.

They've taken the first step down the road, and let's hope it ends in Prosperity.