

Feasibility study for Brünig mountain pass



The Brünig Pass road is an important transportation link between the cantons of Obwalden and Bern whose future development is uncertain. Working on behalf of the Swiss Federal Roads Office (FEDRO), EBP led a consortium of planning firms in an effort to determine the best solution from a variety of tunnel-based and road-based alternatives for the transportation link's future development.

Current situation

As of 2013, the Brünig Pass is entered in the Swiss Federal Highway Ordinance as a pending road-construction project whose status is that of a class 3 mixed-traffic, two-lane federal highway bearing the special designation "Brünig Tunnel/Pass Road." So far no specific project proposals (e.g. centering on tunnel construction or road expansion) have been submitted for the future development of the Brünig transportation link.

Assignment

In order to clarify which construction and operation measures would be best suited to securing the future viability of the Brünig Pass transportation links, the cantons of Bern and Obwalden submitted a request to FEDRO at the beginning of 2011 for permission to carry out a feasibility study of alternative development solutions for the segment of the N8 federal highway between Unterbach and Lungern Süd. FEDRO moved to support the request and commissioned a consortium of planning firms (PG Brünig) consisting of EBP and the Minusio-based Lombardi AG to carry out the feasibility study.

Client

Swiss Federal Roads Office (FEDRO)

Facts

Period 2013 - 2017

Project Country Switzerland

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Services

Using a comprehensive traffic analysis and an analysis of spatial and environmental data as a basis, the planning consortium worked out a number of viable solutions for the Brünig Pass. After this initial work, the consortium then examined the most promising of the alternatives in greater detail so as to determine their technical and environmental-legal feasibility. This was then followed by comparative cost-benefit analyses and expanded cost-effectiveness analyses.

Result

While the study showed that the tunnel versions would increase traffic safety, secure redundant transportation links and shorten travel times, the increased utility would ultimately fall short of justifying the associated economic loss. The issue of whether the tunnel versions might boost the local economy was also examined. Here, it turned out that any local economic effects would fail by far to compensate for the necessary investments in new tunnel infrastructure. In the end, all of the stakeholders (including FEDRO and the cantons of Bern and Obwalden) determined that the most pragmatic option would be to renovate the existing road pass at locations of greater accident frequency.