

## Southern Gulf Islands Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting

**Overview: Mary Winspear Centre - Sidney, May 30, 2016**

**In Attendance:**

Committee: Dave Dryer, Michele Buchignani, Mary Greenwood, Eva Hage, Brian Hollingshead, Diana King, Robert Matson, David Maude, Conny Nordin, Harold Swierenga (Salt Spring Island FAC)

BC Ferries: Mark Collins - VP Strategic Planning and Community Engagement, David Hendry- Strategic Planning Director, Captain Lewis MacKay- Marine Superintendent, Boris Andulajevic - Terminal Operations Manager, Darin Guenette-Public Affairs Manager

**Meeting Highlights:**

The objective of the meeting was to: discuss previous issues and explore options for addressing issues brought to the FAC from the community.

The next meeting is planned sometime during November 1-18, 2016.

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Issues Summary and Resolution Plan

**A. Issue: Co-Chair selection**

**Definition:** David Maude has agreed to serve as a co-Chair on the committee for the remainder of this term.

**BC Ferries input/follow-up:** agreed to the co-Chair arrangement, and will update records for committee membership.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
Updated contact/membership list	Darin	COMPLETED

**B. Issue: SGI scheduling project update**

**Definition:** David Hendry provided a summary of this project, underway for more than a year to develop new schedules for Routes 5, 5a, 9 that will be implemented when the Salish Class vessels enter service in 2017. Highlights/next steps:

- final draft schedules are now complete,
- a ‘customer friendly’ format for presenting the schedules is being developed and will be completed by end-June, and provided to the FACs,
- these new formats will be published on the ‘Scheduling project page’ of the BC Ferries website in early July,

- the regular (drop-down) schedules pages on BC Ferries' website will be updated by mid-October, and
- all new schedules will be implemented in April/May of 2017.

The FAC noted the importance of indicating when throughfares were expected on the schedule pages of the website, as customers need to know they are changing vessels. Island reps provided an early perspective on the overall process and how the schedules may be seen by community members; most agreed they are a reasonable compromise in service expectations, except Pender...where little would be seen as improvement.

**BC Ferries input/follow-up:** Mark reminded everyone that the overall goal was to improve the efficiency of the network of routes in the area, and that BC Ferries learned that there are opportunities to improve/refine their consultation/engagement process.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
Provide copies of new schedule formats and updates on website publishing to FAC.	BCF	June 30

**C. Issue: Throughfare issues**

**Definition:** A new pilot is set to begin June 6, whereby customers arriving at Tsawwassen and purchasing a throughfare (Route 1 to either Route 4 or 5/5a) will be:

- given a mirror-hanging card with TF on side and a turnaround map on the other,
- marshalled into the priority lane at the terminal (depending on load waiting and reservation status),
- loaded on the vessel in spaces that should be unloaded very early at Swartz Bay,
- unloaded as early as possible at Swartz Bay, and
- expedited through the ticket booth at Swartz Bay where possible.

The general intent is to provide an increased chance of making as efficient turnaround at Swartz Bay as possible, while also adding direct communications on throughfare traffic between both terminals and the vessel. Discussion followed on how to communicate throughfare options to customers and the need to provide consistency with this pilot process across all sailings.

Other related issues included: increasing efficiency of the Route 5 to Route 1 throughfare process at SWB, establishing inter-island fares for travel between Routes 4,5,5a, and fare redemption at Swartz Bay for customers needing to make reservations onto Route 1. BC Ferries will provide and update if any changes are planned to address these issues.

**BC Ferries input/follow-up:** Monitor the throughfare pilot and provide relevant feedback to FAC. Also, consider how to make the throughfare process more known. This includes ensuring call centre staff and the website provide this info where possible.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
Provide any changes/updates on pilot to FAC	Darin	As required.

**D. Issue: Swartz Bay ‘space available’ loading**

**Definition:** Currently, there are some Swartz Bay sailings that Mayne Island customers have access to if space is available after customers from other islands have been first served, and the FAC sought clarification on whether this practice is official policy.

**BC Ferries input/follow-up:** Noted that for this practice to be a firm policy, it needs to be included in the terminal SOP manual.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
Present a formal request from FAC to Corrine that would see space available loading become policy.	Lewis	After working on details with Brian

**E. Issue: Stranded vehicles at transfers**

**Definition:** In the past, customers proceeding to/from Saturna Island have been ‘left behind’ at the Village Bay terminal when transferring between vessels, and FAC members would like to see the chances of this happening eliminated as much as possible.

**BC Ferries input/follow-up:** Boris confirmed that the communication process between ships and terminal staff has now been refined to allow adequate space on the receiving ship for these transfers. Lewis added that the ‘internal schedules’ used daily by crews will now include notes around the importance of these transfers...thus making this a daily, practical procedure crews will actually follow.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
Update daily schedules and crew notes	BCF	COMPLETE

**F. Issue: Queen of Cumberland ‘false capacity’ reporting**

**Definition:** Swartz Bay terminal staff and/or the point-of-sale system seem to be using an artificially low capacity level (85 vehicles) for the Queen of Cumberland, thus indicating ‘possible wait/overload’ when there is still plenty of room.

**BC Ferries input/follow-up:** analyse mechanism for triggering ‘possible wait’ notes and implement more realistic capacity level for both terminal staff and POS system.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
Change Cumberland's capacity in point-of-sale	BCF	COMPLETE

**G. Issue: Salish Class vessels update**

**Definition:** The Salish Orca (first of new class being built) is due to arrive in Canada by approximately the end of 2016, or early 2017, at to be in service in the spring. Extensive employee training on the natural gas fueling systems is going well. The other two vessels (Eagle and Raven) are due to arrive in Canada during the spring as well, and all will be in service for the summer of 2017.

Mark noted that technical glitches may be expected with any new vessels, and this should not be seen inadequate design/engineering; crews and maintenance employees will learn quickly the new systems and technology.

**BC Ferries input/follow-up:** none required.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

**H. Issue: Saturna short-link concept**

**Definition:** The FAC understands that, in order to properly analyse the feasibility of a future short-link between Saturna and Mayne Islands, they would need to learn what the expected approximate costs may be.

**BC Ferries input/follow-up:** Mark replied that any new service/route is capital intensive, and therefore will be initially expensive. He suggested that, if the communities felt they wanted BC Ferries and/or the Province to truly look into establishing this service, then a formal explanation of 'expectations/needs' from the short-link first be outlined.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

**I. Issue: Printed schedule distribution**

**Definition:** Customers continue to experience difficulties in finding/obtaining printed schedules on vessels and/or at terminals in the region. The FAC suggests better availability/access is needed, BC Ferries racks should include schedules and perhaps the

colour of font should change each printing. They stressed that continuing ample, long-term access to printed schedules is essential to islanders, not optional.

**BC Ferries input/follow-up:** Further discussion with vessels, terminals and the Marketing department need to happen to find ways to improve access for customers.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
Consider single colour printing, alternating between seasons.	Darin	COMPLETE

**J. Issue: Village Bay signage**

**Definition:** New overhead signage at the Village Bay terminal only indicates the terminal name, and the FAC suggests that ‘Mayne Island’ be added as well.

**BC Ferries input/follow-up:** Confirm the minor vessel signage standard and consider including island name.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
Consider adding island name to terminal signage.	Darin	Check with relevant sections soonest.

**K. Issue: Cumberland MLU follow up**

**Definition:** BC Ferries noted that the work performed during the recent Queen of Cumberland mid-life upgrade was more complex than originally estimated...but all was managed fine in the end. The sharing of Skeena Queen and Bowen Queen between Routes 4 and 5 during this period was necessary to best meet demand of both routes, but BC Ferries has determined that the Skeena Queen should no longer be relieved solely by the Bowen Queen in the future.

**BC Ferries input/follow-up:** none required.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

**L. Issue: Route 9 foot passenger reservations**

**Definition:** The FAC wondered if foot passengers with a reservation for Route 9 could be provided a dedicated check-in process at Tsawwassen. They also suggested two things: that the same number of reservations available in both directions of travel, and

that it is made clear that there is still ‘show-and-go’ space available (in both directions of travel) once reservations full, which is different to vehicle reservations on Route 9 .

**BC Ferries input/follow-up:** Boris noted that there is currently not a way for physical separation of different types of foot passengers at the ticket booth.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
Pass along suggestion to consider a physical separation for footsie reservations at TSA	Boris	When able

**M. Issue: Operations Report**

**Definition:** BC Ferries outlined that traffic has been notably increasing across all routes for the past year, and there are no refit plans for any vessels in the near future.

**BC Ferries input/follow-up:** none required.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

**N. Issue: New business/miscellaneous**

**Definition:** Michele noted that the best TransLink connections at Tsawwassen seem to be to meet with Route 1 sailings and not Route 9; she asked if BC Ferries could discuss improving these connections with TransLink. BC Ferries noted that they are indeed meeting with BC Transit and TransLink to work on inter-modal connectivity.

Conny expressed concerns about the infrastructure at Studies Bay terminal, particularly for the future of transfers on Galiano Island, and she asked if BC Ferries has plans for improvements. BC Ferries reps replied that they are aware of issues with the terminal compound and nearby roadways, and how transfers may bring challenges. There are no short-term infrastructure changes planned, however line painting will be done within the terminal that should provide an increase of spots.

Finally, the FAC suggested that it would be beneficial to produce some sort of rack card to better explain the upcoming ‘throughfare pilot’.

**BC Ferries input/follow-up:** FAC will be provided with summary of meetings with TransLink, as well as any learnings from analysis about transferring at Sturdies Bay will be passed along to FAC. A rack card will be looked at after pilot has run for some time.