

Request under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*:

As a ferry user and concerned citizen, I am working on building an optimization model to provide to the Gabriola Ferry Advisory Committee in hopes that it may help improve scheduling and on time performance. I was wondering if you could provide me with the assumptions used to create the current Gabriola Island schedule.

Specifically, I am looking for assumptions on the amount of time allotted for walking off, unloading, loading, and walking on during regular, off hour and peak times for both to and from Gabriola. I am also seeking Assumptions regarding the estimated number of vehicles loaded per sailing and left behind.

If possible, I would also appreciate a copy of the scheduling model if it has been created in a sharable format such as excel.

BC Ferries Response:

BC Ferries does not have a scheduling model such as you have described. Instead, our schedules on many routes, including the one connecting Nanaimo Harbour with Gabriola Island, have evolved over decades and are based on factors such as the following:

- Vessel capacity as well as transit and in-port turnaround time;
- Frequency of service, time of day sailings and the length of day that the service is provided;
- Community input and feedback;
- Community peak travel times, inclusive of commuter and student travel patterns, as well as historic traffic volumes (e.g., variations for time of day and day of week, seasonal changes, holidays, etc.);
- Traditional scheduled sailing times for the route;
- Adjustments for crew rest periods and hours of work, refueling, sewage pump out, drills and other operational factors;
- On-time performance adjustments, targeting the 90th percentile of actual in-port times (i.e., the total transfer time without delineating time between vehicles versus passengers either loading or unloading); and
- Service level requirements under the Coastal Ferry Services Contract with the Province, inclusive of changes or adjustments to it.

In practice, this means that actual sailing times are analyzed to guide adjustments to scheduled sailing times for improved on-time performance. The current schedule for this route was developed by the Senior Master with consideration of issues such as above, in consultation with the local Ferry Advisory Committee.

While in-port time is taken into consideration when schedules are created and revised, we have not separately analysed the times taken for unloading, loading, and walking on/off the vessel. The minimum in-port turnaround times for this route will vary based on directional volumes and other factors such as time of day (e.g., peak versus non-peak times) and meal breaks. These times can be inferred by referring to our published sailing and crossing times.

We are aware that unfortunately on-time performance on the route has recently declined, which we believe is a result of operational factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., delays caused by separating foot-passengers by six feet when loading and unloading). We are reviewing our processes and procedures for this route in the interest of addressing these on-time performance declines.

As you may be aware, BC Ferries will be providing two-ship service on the Nanaimo Harbour – Gabriola Island route with the introduction of a pair of new Island class vessels in 2022. We anticipate that this will better enable us to scale capacity to the daily traffic pattern on the route and, as needed, to increase sailing frequency and customer choice of sailing time. As a result, we expect that on-time performance will improve with increased two-vessel capacity at peak times, supported by improved crossing times and traffic loading simultaneously on Island class vessels at both ends of the route.

We do not envisage any changes to the current route schedule prior to the introduction of the two new vessels. In the meantime, however, we will be collecting and analyzing data from the Island class vessels in service on other routes to aid in developing scheduling options for community review and public engagement (although that data may also be influenced by the COVID 19 pandemic). Subject to this work, we currently expect that sailings on the route will remain similar to their current times with additional frequency added by the second vessel at peak times.