

Ferry Advisory Committee (FAC) - Record of Meeting

Date:	October 31, 2019
Committee Name:	Southern Gulf Islands
Routes:	5, 9

Attendees:

<p>For the FAC:</p> <p><i>Chair(s):</i> Mary Greenwood, David Maude</p> <p><i>Members</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dale Henning, Joanne Enns, Brad Holman • Roy Moore, Diana King • Robert Matson, Anna Dean • Michel Chiasson, Harold Swierenga (S.Spr) 	<p>For BCF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Anderson • Peter Simpson • Capt Blair Brown • Cam Hillis, Steve Anderson • Gregg Clackson • Darin Guenette
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Points of Information/Agreement:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dedicated lane for Route 1 reservations at Swartz Bay. Cam noted that they use flaggers to best manage severe congestion, and that one lane is used to hold both SGI traffic and Route 1 reservations until the roadway splits to four lanes. Discussion followed around ideas for trying to manage traffic along the highways. 2. SGI-only ticket booth...this is working well and the FAC appreciates it. 3. Saturna/Mayne 3:10 pm sailing cut-off process. Cam confirmed that the newly applied 15 minute cut-off for Saturna traffic to be assured on this sailing has been working and it can be considered a policy/practice going forward. To be clear, the tower marks the last vehicle in lineup at cut-off time, and all those vehicles will make the sailing. 4. Mayne Queen replacement plan. BC Ferries noted that the plan is still to replace the Mayne Queen with a fourth Salish vessel, and negotiations with the shipyard are nearing finalizing those plans. 5. Swartz Bay Terminal Development Plan. The work planned to make changes at the terminal will be carried out in phases, with a new warehouse/administration building as the first build. This will be located in what is currently the employee parking lot area. It was noted that there will not be a change to allow turnarounds within the terminal (between routes). 6. BCF contingency plans. This document was developed to help provide a clear plan for how BCF reacts to vessel breakdowns in peak season. It will be updated on a yearly basis. 7. Digital sign at Otter Bay. It was suggested that this sign is not viewable by either walk-on passengers or drivers, and Dale provided Cam a recommended site it would be more valuable. 8. Dalton Road signage. SGI has asked to see a sign indicating where customers should line up near Dalton Road, as conflict between two roadways is regularly happening. MOTI

needs to be involved in helping clarify the safest way to have vehicles lineup and turnaround.

9. Queen of Cumberland snack bar closing mid-sailing. This seems to limit to possibilities of passengers getting food/beverage, and BCF not getting revenue. Capt Brown noted that the food services are closing because the cashier who operates this service is taking a staff break and preparing to close up cash/accounts prior to arrival at Swartz Bay.
10. Route 9 commercial booking. There had originally been a limit of vehicle length for Route 9 reservations, but BCF had said this was removed. Dave Maude noted there is still difficulty with the allocation levels available for commercial vehicles.
11. Website accessibility info. When the new website is launched, FAC asks that it be clear what customers need to do to identify needs to be close to elevators, etc.
12. TAPs travel and medical assured loading. The difference between TAPs (pink slips) and MAL (physicians requesting a letter from BCF) was outlined. It was noted that the Pender clinic is developing a new process to better request MAL letters after a visit from BCF customer staff. BCF noted that the goal of MAL is to coordinate timely travel for customers in ill health, while trying not to encourage customer abuse of the process. A question was asked if there was a way to reduce fares for people supporting ill travel, but not travelling with the patient.
13. Reservation thrufare refunds. For Saturna customers, there are certain sailings noted as thrufares, where customers would be eligible for refund...but not all of the thrufares are eligible. Discussion followed around when/how customers may be using thrufare options and how this may or may not affect how BCF accommodates.
BCF noted that these eligible sailings have been in place for many years, and it's possible that as schedules have changed, there may not have been new sailings considered.
14. BCF website update. BCF noted that their website revamp is expected to be launched in early 2020, and that the fare flexibility initiative (dynamic pricing for major routes, depending on demand) will follow soon after. Both Current Conditions and parking lot info will indicate the percentage of space available on the new website, instead of space 'taken' as is now displayed. Discussion followed around the plan for BCF to develop a pilot for an inter-island route, and details will follow as this project progresses. FAC suggested that Route 5/5a would be a great candidate for this pilot. This included analysis of the challenges around the later ports getting less access to a multi-port sailings.
15. Printed schedules. As BCF had noted that they are still trying to move away from producing paper schedules. Knowing this, Mary had conducted a very basic survey to understand how people do/do not rely on printed schedules. After extensive feedback, there was still a notable expression of people relying on the printed schedules. They think this should be considered. BCF still is aiming to avoid printing these and thus is looking for other methods of getting people schedule info, as printed schedules are wrought with challenges (mistakes, schedule changes, distribution, etc). Dave stressed that people in Mayne community say these schedules are needed, and customers feel they deserve them. Other FAC members stressed that these schedules are critical to customers. Discussion followed around options for changes such as: island specific printings, removal of Route 1 schedules, etc. BCF noted that, if Route 5/5a peak schedules were adjusted, there would still be a need for different schedules during the year.
16. Route 5/5a capacity and peak season issues. BCF said they are working on reacting to demand as much as possible, working within the structure of the Coastal Ferry Services Contract (sets service levels and provides financing). Steve added that BCF is looking now

at adopting the off-peak schedule into the peak schedule (Mayne Queen/Cumberland swap in the morning sailings). There are extra costs involved and approvals thus need to be sought. If approvals are given, BCF would send schedule options to the FAC to allow discussion prior to implementation. To this, FAC suggested a 'scheduling meeting' be held to review what the new summer schedules would look like. Steve agreed, and as soon as the concept is approved and schedule options developed, BCF will reach out.

Related: the 'transit model' is an idea where vessels would travel in opposite directions, stopping at all ports. There is no plan to try and design and plan this service in the islands, but BCF is analysing this idea for longer-term consideration. Also, BCF noted that adding a dedicated vessel to Pender in the summer is highly unlikely, as the costs would be very significant. Discussion followed around reporting utilization and service fee amounts.

More discussion followed about using the Quadra Queen II to link Saturna and Mayne to help alleviate pressures, but there would be similar high costs involved. Also, BCF noted that there are no larger vessels available to swap with Mayne Queen in the peak season.

17. Schedule review for Mayne Queen replacement. BCF confirmed that they would evaluate any need for schedule changes once the next Salish would be set to replace the Mayne Queen, and would also then coordinate some sort of FAC/community engagement.
18. Saturna short-link concept. BCF is still analysing if/how/when to consider some sort of way to connect Saturna traffic to Mayne Island, as a way of improving service to all S.Gulf Islands. They are also looking at 'long-link options'.
19. Route 9/9a issues. Capacity is being used well and reliability is strong. As for the 11 pm Saturday Tsawwassen departure, this is required because fueling needs to happen that evening first.
20. Ferry/transit coordination. FAC noted that it would be beneficial for buses to be waiting for customers from SGI upon arrival at Swartz Bay. Brian noted that BCF is indeed working to identify opportunities to coordinate inter-modal transit more smoothly. The plan is to meet monthly with transit companies, and BCF will let FACs know how discussions progress.
21. TSA Route 9 passenger issues. BCF confirmed that the repairs have done to the waiting building, and that passengers are loaded after vehicles for efficiency.
22. PT5 and capital plans. Brian confirmed that the upcoming Performance Term (April 2020-March 2024) will allow a maximum average annual fare increase of 2.3%, which aims to allow BCF to fulfill all plans (operating, capital, etc). BCF will need to closely monitor all costs/revenues over this time, and if any factors change negatively, there may be need to explore changes to plans.
23. Miscellaneous.
 - i. Darin noted that the new website will allow customers to book as foot passengers and to get on the waitlist.
 - ii. Cam noted that BCF is meeting with G.Islands school board to work on coordination of student travel issues.
 - iii. Dave passed along an appreciation of the great efforts BCF made in a busy peak season, particularly in loading a large number of vehicles onto busy sailings.
 - iv. Dale noted that it may be beneficial to have more than two meetings each year. BCF said that perhaps 'Ops meetings' may be possible (Capt MacKay).
 - v. Roy noted that Pender residents are sending correspondence to MOTI to urge changes to allow more service. He suggested there are chronic conflict at Mayne Island (around 10:30/11) and there may be scheduling solutions.

vi. Saturna lamb BBQ 2020. BCF is seeking any suggestions from the FAC on how scheduling may be tweaked to help capacity to/from this event.

vii. Vessel loading. Discussion happened around how sometimes people may be wedged on decks so that they cannot realistically exit their vehicles. BCF suggested customers let crew members know.

Action Items¹:

Item	Who	By When
1. Check if Otter Bay sign can be moved to a more useful location.	Cam	End-Dec
2. Check if food services can stay open longer on Cumberland.	Capt Brown	ongoing
3. Check if commercial vehicle allocations are still restrictive.	Cam	ongoing
4. Check if 'accessibility info' passengers need to know will be on new website.	Darin	ongoing
5. Check if there is a way for BCF to consider fare discounts for people travelling to/from loved ones in medical treatment, when not travelling with them.	Peter	ongoing

¹ Significant Service Request (SSR) requiring detailed analysis and formal decisions from BCF should be submitted using the SSR process. Submission of a SSR should be noted as an Action Item.