

## Ferry Advisory Committee (FAC) - Record of Meeting

<b>Date</b>	December 6, 2021	
<b>Committee Name</b>	Gambier-Keats Islands	
<b>Routes</b>	13 (Langdale-Gambier-Keats)	
<b>Attendees</b>	FAC	BC Ferries
	<i>Chair(s):</i> Joe Wright <i>Members:</i> Peter Grierson, Bruce Kerr, Michelle Hughes, Susan McLaren, Tanya Saunders	Peter Simpson, Carrie McIntosh, Natalie McCall, Captain James Bradley, Doug Hanning, Scott Kesteloot, Darin Guenette, Brent Rudolfsen  <i>Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure:</i> Lynda Petruzzelli

BC Ferries updates		
<p><u>Update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vessel Operations: No major updates or changes planned for the route. Capt Bradley connects directly with Bruce Kerr when required to discuss schedule or service issues.</li> <li>Terminal Operations: at Langdale, there is ongoing work at Berth 1. This should last until Dec 10, but is not expected to affect Route 3 operations.</li> <li>FACs connecting with BC Ferries regarding Operational issues/problems. BC Ferries is aware that FAC members are interested in knowing the most efficient way to connect when day-to-day operational issues/questions arise. Cognizant of not overloading local operational managers, and wanting to ensure FACs know how to reach out, BCF asks FACs to use Darin as a first point-of-contact and he can reach out to BCF reps. In the event Darin is not available, they can reach out to Carrie as well.</li> </ul> <p><u>Feedback/Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul> <p><u>Resolution/Agreement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul>		
Action Items	Responsibility	Deadline
n/a		

<b>FAC Review</b>
-------------------

Update:

- BC Ferries has sought feedback from all FACs on how the FAC process works to ensure it's productive for all involved. Approximately 80 members from all 13 committees completed a survey this past summer, from which common themes arose for analysis.
- One of the common themes included a request to improve communications. BC Ferries is considering the potential to increase meeting cadence, including a virtual update session open to all. New route reports summarizing operational and performance information related to each route will be developed and circulated to FACs regularly.
- Another theme was around Service Notices (SN), specifically the challenges with timeliness and content. To address content, BC Ferries recently added a Customer Service agent into the Operations & Security Centre (OSC – where SN are issued, and are in 24/7 contact with terminals and vessels), who can be dedicated to focussing on altering tone to provide more useful information for customers.
- To address timeliness, some back-end processes have recently been changed, and SNs should now be received by subscribers much sooner after being posted on BC Ferries' website.
- Other key themes included reviewing the current Terms of Reference (TOR) common to all FACs, the structure of membership on committees, and other aspects of how FACs are established. This conversation with all FAC Chairs started this past summer and will continue in follow-up meetings. The overall goal is to develop options to review and improve the entire FAC process.
- Related to this point, discussions held during the annual BC Ferries-FAC Chairs meeting in August resulted in BC Ferries forming working groups to implement improvements to some of the bigger 'pain points' common to many FACs, such as website Current Conditions information and a lack of understanding around the reservation process.

Feedback/Comments:

- FAC noted that Service Notice information is generally well available, but they are not certain if the timeliness for receiving Service Notices has improved.

Resolution/Agreement:

- On the Current Conditions page of BC Ferries website, a Q&A section has been added explaining the most common questions heard around this information. Note: links to the Q&A section can also be found on the Arrivals and Departures pages as well.
- A new webpage explaining how allocation of deck space is performed on reservable routes has been added to the website, but FAC members suggested that it's not located in a place that is easy to find on the website.

Action Items	Responsibility	Deadline
Explore options with Web team for adding locations for customers to access the allocation information page. Suggestion was to include a link to this page from the 'Book Sailings' menu.	Darin	Completed

<b>Commissioner FAC review</b>		
<p><u>Update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The BC Ferry Commissioner’s office has started a review of how the FAC process functions, looking at multiple aspects. They are in early stages, and their consultant has started meeting with BCF employees. They’ll be carrying out interviews with both BCF reps and FAC Chairs to explore areas for improvement and will finish by preparing a report, which is expected to be complete by Spring 2022. More to come.</li> </ul> <p><u>Feedback/Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul> <p><u>Resolution/Agreement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul>		
Action Items	Responsibility	Deadline
n/a		

<b>Website/wifi updates</b>		
<p><u>Update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since the new website was launched last fall, BCF has been receiving customer feedback and making regular upgrades to improve usability. All feedback is welcome to feed into these upgrades.</li> <li>Wifi. Ealier this year, BCF announced we would be installing wifi infrastructure at 14 terminals, to allow customer access to the internet while waiting at these terminals. Exact timelines for when these upgrades happen is expected to be finalized late-January.</li> </ul> <p><u>Feedback/Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul> <p><u>Resolution/Agreement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul>		
Action Items	Responsibility	Deadline
n/a		

<b>COVID impacts</b>		
<p><u>Update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BC Ferries noted that many capital projects were deferred due to the pandemic, but no material projects planned for Routes 7, 17 and 18 have been impacted to date.</li> </ul>		

- The introduction of mandatory vaccination requirements for ship-based crew imposed by Transport Canada, combined with existing COVID challenges and staff shortages means the ferry system may see some isolated disruptions due to intermittent crew shortages.

Feedback/Comments:

- Michelle said people are seeking access to indoor areas of the vessel, particularly during the colder/wet fall and winter months. She was seeking clarity on how many people can access the cabin.
- Bruce replied that Kona Winds is operating under Transport Canada guidelines and direction to work at finding a balance for keeping people distanced but covered as much as possible. If there are family groups travelling during large loads of passengers, they work at making accommodations for fitting these groups in the rear portion of the covered area. Otherwise, they aim to keep people spaced in outdoor areas.
- Bruce added that their operations are focussed on keeping crew as isolated/distanced from passengers, as they don't want to risk them possibly getting ill, and thus having to cancel sailings. There is no actual 10-minute crossing rule that would allow Kona to keep passenger in the indoor areas of the boat.
- Further discussion happened around how Stormaway crews are able to measure risks in certain conditions (weather, whether family/groups are on board, etc), and then try to place passengers in certain parts of the boat such that connections to Route 3 would be enhanced. Discussion followed around managing risks of having people inside the cabin of the boat and challenges with passenger discomfort.
- Route 13 overloads. Noting that this schedule has been developed to try and have as many dedicated trips to each island, FAC members believe there are all still occasions of overloads. Bruce noted that Kona Winds is sailing notably more trips than when they began this service, and has found they are able to be as flexible as possible to meet demand with sailings. He added there have been five or six occasions of overloads this past summer.
- Route 3 lineups. The FAC shared that there were occasions with many people waiting for Route 3 sailings when the Stormaway arrived, and then Route 13 people try to start merging with the line.

Resolution/Agreement:

- Brendan acknowledged the situation of lineup congestion and will add it to discussion with other Langdale terminal operations team members to understand if there are ways to help facilitate these occasions and prevent customers getting frustrated with others.

Action Items	Responsibility	Deadline
Discuss ways to enhance efficiency of Route 13 customers joining Route 3 foot passengers lined up at Langdale.	Brendan	December/January

**Route 3 Saver fare**

Update:

- BC Ferries has seen an increase of approximately 30% increase in these late evening sailings that offer a saver fare. It was noted that this helps open up space on higher demand sailings earlier in the day, as some of these customers move to later sailings.

Feedback/Comments:

- None.

Resolution/Agreement:

- None.

Action Items	Responsibility	Deadline
n/a		

**Customer Experience Team**

Update:

- Customer Experience is a new division in Marketing (divided into Minor and Northern routes focus and Major routes) aimed at identifying customer experiences and ‘pain points’...with a goal of addressing these and seeking improvements. The goal is to understand the entire customer journey, starting from the booking/planning process through to post-travel stage. Natalie is responsible for exploring these experiences on the Minor/North routes.
- The team are tied into several projects and bring a customer focus to these internal discussions.
- The Community Investment program is included in this portfolio, which is aimed at supporting community events/initiatives.

Feedback/Comments:

- It was noted that passengers looking to purchase the ticket booklets, as the only option is to go into the terminal office. More on this item later in the agenda.

Resolution/Agreement:

- None.

Action Items	Responsibility	Deadline
n/a		

**Community Relations team**

Update:

- Carrie explained that she leads a growing Community Relations team, with a goal of a more proactive and team-focused approach to community engagement and discussions. To focus will be to better understand the communities BC Ferries serves, and to be present in the communities for reasons other than just when something goes wrong.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A recent addition has been a CR Coordinator (Tamara Olson), who may be in contact with FACs as plans develop. Finally, Indigenous Relations is a component of the work the team does.</li> </ul> <p><u>Feedback/Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul> <p><u>Resolution/Agreement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul>		
Action Items	Responsibility	Deadline
n/a		

FAC items
<p><u>Update 1 Route 3 second ship/hourly service update and Langdale upgrade:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAC sought update on when a second ship may be added full-time for Route 3, and thus provide hourly service. BC Ferries noted first that the peak season, two-ship service for 2022 is planned as in previous years, but there are currently no timelines/plans for when a second ship may be added year-round.</li> <li>Joe relayed that Route 13 passengers connecting to Route 3 are saying they interested in hearing about when the overhead walkway that had been previously planned may be implemented, as the path to getting to this walkway is expected to add time and distance to the connection process.</li> <li>Of note, Berth 2 and the transfer deck are getting a life extension within the next three years, and Berth 1 will be replaced within the next seven years.</li> </ul> <p><u>Feedback/Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul> <p><u>Resolution/Agreement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul> <p><u>Update 2 Route 3 delays and missed Route 13 connections:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAC suggested that the occasions of Route 3 running behind have increased, and this has a notable effect on people trying to connect further to Route 13 sailings. This is particularly challenging for Keats people, who don't have sailing opportunities after 3:30 pm.</li> </ul> <p><u>Feedback/Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion followed around the occasions when the Stormaway may be held for a few minutes to help make this connection, but ultimately improved the timeliness of Route 3 sailings is the key.</li> <li>Scott added that there are currently capital projects at Horseshoe Bay that mean only two of the three berths are operational, and this can cause Route 3 delays.</li> </ul>

Resolution/Agreement:

- None.

Update 3 Route 3 reservation challenges:

- People note it's very challenging to obtain a reservation within 3 or 4 weeks of desired sailing dates. The FAC wants to keep this feedback known to BC Ferries.

Feedback/Comments:

- None.

Resolution/Agreement:

- None.

Update 4 Route 13 increasing demand:

- FAC noted there seems to be ever-increasing traffic increases on the Stormaway sailings, and people are aware of capacity challenges.

Feedback/Comments:

- Traffic stats were requested from Bruce to FAC members.
- Discussion followed around the traffic information published on the BC Ferry Commissioner website, in the quarterly reports section.

Resolution/Agreement:

- Bruce to send stats to the FAC as requested.

Update 5 Route 3 schedule changes:

- FAC shared that the Route 3 schedule changes that are made with little notice to new seasonal periods can be challenging to react and make Route 13 changes with enough notice for customers.

Feedback/Comments:

- Discussion followed around the how to share any schedule information to the FAC as far ahead in advance.

Resolution/Agreement:

- none

Update 6 Challenges buying Route 13 tickets:

- The two places for people to purchase tickets are at the terminal and on the Route 3 vessel.

- However, if connections are tight or Langdale staff are not available for selling tickets, this is challenging for Route 13 customers. It was suggested that, if there were other options to purchase booklets (either keep Langdale office open around 8:30 am coffee break, or if the ship could sell tickets), this would be a big help.

Feedback/Comments:

- Bruce noted there are some logistical challenges for considering to sell tickets on the ship.
- Discussion followed around the possibility of other options for more frequent travellers.
- Brent added that the Langdale office needs to closer at specific times, as the staff available are performing various tasks.

Resolution/Agreement:

- Natalie acknowledges this idea of other options for ticket sales.
- Brent noted this time around the 8:40 Stormaway arrival, and will explore having staff available if possible. He added that the person who would sell tickets at 8:40 is needed in the lot at that same time.

Update 7 FAC membership:

- FAC noted that Susan and Tanya are resigning from the FAC, and they are helping find new volunteers to fill these spots. Joe thanked them for both their long participation on the committee and help in finding replacements.

Feedback/Comments:

- FAC members offered to help find replacements on the committee.
- Darin offered BC Ferries support to fill spots on the FAC if required.

Resolution/Agreement:

- none

Update 8 Eastbourne weather challenges:

- Peter Grierson said there are challenges when stops at Eastbourne due to inclement weather, as this is negative effect on people needing to travel.
- Tanya added she has spoken to locals who are willing to install webcams near Eastbourne, as this would help people see the local conditions.

Feedback/Comments:

- Discussion followed around challenges of understanding accurate weather forecasts and minimizing risks to losing unnecessary trips for customers. Bruce said the forecasts may not always be easy to rely on, as the actual conditions can change in short notice and be a risk to making a safe landing. Stormaway crews are doing their best to be consistent in how they are making this decision for when to cancel these trips.



- Tanya relayed that people get particularly frustrated when trips are cancelled far in advance because the forecast looks unsafe...and yet the conditions may change closer to the time, and thus the trip could have been made.
- It was agreed that no one wants the boat to travel in unsafe conditions, but the hope is to understand if there is a way to cancel as close to the planned sailing time as possible, just in case the weather would change and allow the stop to Eastbourne.
- Bruce noted that webcams can be helpful, but cautioned that they only show conditions at a given time and place, and actual weather may change quickly.

Resolution/Agreement:

- none

Update 9 Route 13 fares:

- Joe shared that many islanders continue to express frustration that Route 13 fares are too high, particularly compared to time on the boat. He wants this recurring opinion to be noted for the record.

Feedback/Comments:

- None.

Resolution/Agreement:

- None.

Update 10 Stormaway helping deliver food supplies:

- Joe acknowledged the great service Stormaway has provided in bringing food supplies to the islands during this pandemic; it's made a big difference and it much appreciated.

Feedback/Comments:

- None.

Resolution/Agreement:

- None.

Update 11 New Brighton dock and ownership:

- Michelle wanted to ensure BC Ferries is aware of progress of the Squamish First Nation divesting ownership of this dock.
- The Sunshine Coast Regional District seems to be the most likely candidate for future ownership, and discussions are ongoing.

Feedback/Comments:

- Capt Bradley is aware of the ongoing conversation and issues with the ownership of the New Brighton dock.

<u>Resolution/Agreement:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• None.</li></ul>		
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Explore further customer options to purchase ticket booklets.	Natalie	December/January
Work with Langdale Operations team to keep office open for ticket sales around 8:40 am whenever possible.	Brendan	December