

Northern Sunshine Coast Ferry Advisory Committee

September 2023 Meeting Agenda

Thursday, September 21, 2023
3:00 – 5:30 pm, Powell River Town Centre

Meeting Purpose

1. Share information by providing the Ferry Advisory Committee with:

- Updates on corporate and route-specific activities, plans and projects
- Answers and updates on route-specific questions and concerns

2. Hear feedback and initiate action by:

- Hearing from the Ferry Advisory Committee about potential solutions to areas of concern
- Generating trackable action items and next steps to address areas of concern raised by the Ferry Advisory Committee

3. Increase transparency and accountability by providing a public venue where:

- Community members can observe and hear the information and feedback exchanged between BC Ferries and the Ferry Advisory Committee
- Actions and solutions to concerns can be identified, recorded, tracked and reported

Topic	Time
Intros, welcome and territory acknowledgement	5 mins
Public Presentations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mike Bryan (did not attend) 2. Erin Innes 3. Cameron Bailey 4. Lee MacKenzie 5. Wayne Armitstead 6. Kim Huguet 7. James and Heather Armstrong 8. Graham Anderson (added at meeting) 	20 mins
Agenda Topics <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making it Right 2. Crewing 3. Medical Assured Loading (MAL) for TAP 4. Water taxi on Texada 5. Travel Data 6. Significant Service Request 7. Texada – Powell River 1:00-1:50 sailing 1:50 pm sailing in shoulder season 8. Connectivity 9. Berth congestion at Westview 10. Home port on Rte 17 11. Electrical fire procedure 12. Public engagements 13. BCF Visioning/ Strategic Planning 14. Follow-up from May meeting 15. Timing of FAC meetings 	2 hour
BC Ferries Update <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TOR Update 	
Final Questions & Close	5 minutes

Northern Sunshine Coast Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting Topic Log September, 2023

NOTE: notes summarizing the general discussion of meeting participants is included in the appropriate section of each agenda item in the table below.

Text in black was information sent to all meeting invitees prior to the meeting as part of the agenda. Text in blue are notes taken during the meeting as each item was discussed. Text in red captures a follow up action and parties responsible.

Meeting attendees:

BC Ferries:

- Brian Anderson (Virtual, Vice President, Strategy)
- Captain Claudiu Raduta (Marine Super Intendant)
- Carrie McIntosh (Director of Community Relations)
- Tamara Olson (Community Relations Manager)
- Steve Anderson (Fleet Scheduling Manager)
- Natalie McCall (Customer Experience Manager)
- Megan Caldwell (Regional Manager, Terminal Operations)

Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure: Brian Jonker (Executive Director, Marine Branch, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure)

FAC:

- Kim Barton-Bridges (FAC Chair)
- Jacquie Donaldson
- Paul Kamon
- Kelly Keil
- Warren Kiland
- Doug Nikirk
- Jim Palm
- Cindy Elliot
- Maureen Mason
- Telis Savvaidis
- Tim Larsen

Public: Erin Innes, Cameron Bailey, Lee MacKenzie, Wayne Armistead, Kim Huguet, James and Heather Armstrong, Graham Anderson

Other members of the public were in attendance, but names were not collected

Presentations – 5 Mins each	
Presentations from the public or organizations are an opportunity to present information to BC Ferries and the FAC for consideration. Each presenter is provided 5 minutes. To be included in future agendas, please contact your FAC Chair.	
Mike Bryan	Effect of current ferry system on residents of Powell River (Did not attend)
Erin Innes	Accessibility concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trapped at Earls Cove when last sailing of the day was cancelled

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sorry for the inconvenience” feels incredibly disrespectful. No recognition of the fact that this is not an inconvenience, it is a safety concern when people cannot get home after medical appointments, cannot get access to medication • Lack of communication from BCF about compensation for sleeping in car, impact to health – delay in response to reimbursement claims • Questions around employee compensation and industry standard
Cameron Bailey	<p>Reliability of service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of action from Board of Directors • Request to clarify hiring policies, crew availability is a concern and creating hardship • Reservation system is not effective, and expensive • Boats not adequate for Powell River (Salish Class), lower deck not convenient • Reliability of service and impact on accessing critical goods and services • “Sorry for the inconvenience” feels disrespectful
Lee MacKenzie	<p>Reliability, viability of service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee satisfaction appears to be low • Crew availability and resiliency is a concern • Missing sailings creating hardship for those accessing critical goods and services • Fleet resiliency • Accountability • The ferry is a highway not a cruise ship • What is the future plan? • “Sorry for the inconvenience” feels disrespectful • “We get what we tolerate.”
Wayne Armitstead	<p>Suggest a solution to make ridership more efficient</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have back up for every employee for resiliency • Problem with employees
Kim Huguet	<p>Reliability of service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last sailing of the day cancellation created significant impact and seems to be a result of a single staff shortage • Not enough effort to do the work that needs to be done to get and keep reliable staff • Reservation system seems to prioritize some people over others. Non-reserved traffic is placed on lower deck • First-come, first-serve should be observed so everyone has equal access
James and Heather Armstrong	<p>TAP form and reservations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has received reservation not-redeemed after travelling because reservation # was not captured • Has had to call and email to address these mistakes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seems to be a training issue with customer relations and terminal ops – as several times this has happened • Could TAP form be changed to include reservation #? • Inconsistency in the way forms are being handled at the terminal
Graham Anderson	<p>Gap in ferry schedule for Earls Cove and Comox travel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel in/out of quathet is challenging because it requires full day of travel due to these gaps • Four times the amount of service for SSI than what quathet has • Request for continuous ferry service throughout the day
Discussion Section	
Making it Right	<p>Policy for last ferry cancellations and reimbursement for expenses. FAC believe that those routes not requiring reservations, or with low reservation usage, should not be penalized because they do not have a reservation.</p> <p>Communication of reimbursement policy FAC share it is difficult to find the policy for reimbursement on the website.</p> <p>Recent cancellations on Rte 7 FAC request reimbursement policy for Route 7 which is non-reservable and non-ticketed. How will BCF “make it right” for customers at terminals such as these?</p> <p>Making it Right informational cards BCF shared in the previous meeting that Marketing & Customer Experience are in the process of creating a card that can be handed out at the terminal when there is a cancellation regarding how to access the “Making it Right” reimbursement program. What is the update on this card?</p> <p>Cancellations on Rte 7 Labour Day weekend FAC request more information on what was done for customers other than leaving the accessible washrooms open overnight at terminals. Could another vessel have been brought in to help move traffic?</p> <p>Update: Changes have been made to the website to provide more information to those accessing the information. Information can be found here: https://www.bcferries.com/contact-us/helping-you-during-a-service-disruption. A link to the page has also been added under FAQ on the community page.</p> <p>In addition a new procedure is being developed for Route 7 customers. Although right now it’s a case-by-case basis, there is a working group that has been struck to address the minor routes without reservations or</p>

	<p>tickets. FAC notes that action is required, not just promising with words. Appears to be a lot of PR effort, but not much action happening. The same items are discussed repeatedly.</p> <p>FAC shared concerns for narrative in media stating that BCF had a “successful” weekend over Labour Day when on the Northern Sunshine coast passengers were sleeping in their cars due to cancellations.</p> <p>BCF have completed a customer care card and are working to get it out at all terminals. We’re working to improve the alerts on the website so it is clear for staff where to find information.</p> <p>FAC noted their disappointment that Nicolas Jimenez did not attend as advised.</p>
<p>Crewing</p>	<p>Job fairs in Powell River FAC request update on the success of the job fairs at Westview, Saltery Bay and Earls Cove job fairs.</p> <p>Cancellations Powell River-Comox (Rte 17) has one of the worst record of cancellations for three month period Apr-June. FAC want to know why, if employees are being placed on other routes, and what leadership is doing to address this issue.</p> <p>FAC stress the need for a reliable system. Residents are missing medical appointments, flights and important celebrations. FAC request that enough crew are hired to ensure there is redundancy in the case crew get sick, are in accidents or another unexpected occurrence.</p> <p>Utilization of current crew FAC continue to hear that employees are not called when BCF is short staffed and request more information on the protocol for contacting crew members for a shift.</p> <p>BCF Recruitment update: Several months ago, BC Ferries launched its largest recruitment campaign ever. From February through June we held 18 career fairs in over eight communities up and down the coast. In that time, we hired over 800 staff for the coming peak summer season. In an effort to both attract and retain employees, BC Ferries introduced incentives and guaranteed hours for new employees, enhanced allowances for employees with certain technical qualifications and those who work overnight hours, increased its training budget to support employees who train to reach higher qualifications and boosted its cadet training program.</p> <p>BC Ferries is supporting over 100 new licensed officers to complete training and certification requirements. The hiring of licensed officers continues. In addition, Transport Canada has added new countries to their reciprocal agreement process and as such, our recruitment team has been able to hire Canadian based</p>

	<p>seafarers who have licenses from a number of countries, including Ukraine, Norway, Australia, France, the UK and the Philippines.</p> <p>Housing is a concern for crewing in many rural island communities. There a number of things BCF is doing including trying to find and place crew into housing; entering into tenancy agreements to support short-term workers who may otherwise not be able to do this; going through wage re-opening agreement discussions with the Union to address wage gaps. If local individuals have knowledge of available accommodation, BCF is interested in knowing about this.</p> <p>BCF have staffed up to be able to fill gaps more quickly when they happen. BCF is running over-staffed on Route 7 to provide resiliency. Staff are being trained up to carry proper certifications to be able to work on the vessel – this takes time and is underway. Staff training and development is underway across the system, and BCF is carrying super-numary crew during really busy times.</p> <p>Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) and BCF are working together to address the challenges that exist, through Performance Term 6 and revision of the Coastal Ferry Services contract.</p>
<p>Medical Assured Loading (MAL) for TAP</p>	<p>Update on TAP and MAL programs FAC would like to know how the programs are working for customers. Is customer care receiving phone calls for reservations? Are reservations being secured for these customers?</p> <p>BCF Info: Customer Care has been receiving phone calls from customers looking for assistance in booking when reservations are not available and/or limited. Our teams work with them to get them on the next available sailing.</p> <p>Is there max number of TAP reservations per sailing? There is no limit to the amount of TAP reservations per sailing. If there are no reservations available, customers can call customer care and they will do their best to get you on a sailing.</p> <p>Action: BCF to confirm if there is a limit on TAP reservations. Update: There is no limit or cut off to the number of TAP reservation.</p> <p>What is the reasoning behind which travel gets covered by TAP, e.g. not orthodontist, and who should the FAC speak to better understand this program?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCF and Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) have been in discussions with Ministry of Health to see if there is opportunity to move care to where people are. • TAPS forms help BCF assess how many people travelling for medical reasons across the system, and where they are going. This information will be used within the discussions with Ministry of Health about how to address these challenges and needs of the health system.

	<p>FAC notes that the model appears broken and not to be keeping up with changes and needs of remote community.</p> <p>Provincial government has provided substantial funding to assist with keeping fares low and meeting demonstrated need. Performance Term 6 is also designed to meet needs. A future visioning exercise will soon be underway to look at the long-term plans and how BCF will meet the changing needs of communities into the future. There will be a public engagement effort associated with this exercise.</p>
<p>Water taxi on Texada</p>	<p>Water taxi docking location FAC shared at the last meeting that the 11 km distance of the water taxi docking station on Texada from Blubber Bay creates accessibility challenges for those who need to access vehicles left at the terminal. What will BCF do to address this issue?</p> <p>BCF Info: Currently, BCF is creating a fleet wide program on providing water taxi services and this includes options for Texada. The program includes reviewing parking availability, drop-off locations, and that quality of service to travellers. We look forward to updating the community once in place.</p>
<p>Travel Data</p>	<p>FAC would like access to BCF travel data Specially, “who is travelling” and “which sailings are overloading”. FAC request this information to help their decision making.</p> <p>BCF Info: Sunshine Coast Tourism are conducting exit surveys at transportation nodes (float plane terminals, airports and ferry terminals) to gain an understanding of visitor characteristics, trip purpose, trip planning, origin and demographics.</p> <p>They conducted a similar research project in 2017 which included exit surveys at ferry terminals. This will take place mid-July to mid-August. We hope to share the results we receive with the FAC in the Fall.</p> <p>Community members note that it is the responsibility of the Province to address the growth that is happening and how to address the growth with additional service, since BCF is under contract with the Government.</p>
<p>Significant Service Request</p>	<p>Timeline of Significant Service Request FAC request an update on the Significant Service Request (SSR) that was made in May 2023. There has been no correspondence regarding the request.</p> <p>FAC notes they are frustrated with the lack of official response on the SSR. FAC note that their requests have been denied and that requests for information are being sent through FOI but result in no usable information being gained. FAC are frustrated because there was no official response, and no official rationale for the</p>

	<p>inaction. Goalposts should not be moved in the middle of a request. It was BCF who directed FAC to submit our request via the SSR route, yet they did not respond to it in a timely/official manner.</p> <p>There is confusion with the SSR statements as the FOI was concerning the Texada-Comox pilot project and not the SSR re afternoon sailing between PR and Texada year 'round.</p> <p>The SSR would result in an additional cost of \$150K/year and for this reason has not been supported.</p> <p>The way service enhancements are made is changing. The SSR process is going away, and instead BCF is working with the Province on performance measures that will allow the parties to evaluate where service enhancements are required in a consistent way across the BCF system. This review would trigger a closer look at enhancements: what is required, how much it costs, and who pays for it. The performance measures and evaluation process will be in place when PT6 is in place, by April 1 next year. Performance measures will then drive the collection of more data.</p> <p>Additional sailings that were considered discretionary sailings in the previous Coastal Ferry Services Contract have now been included into the revised contract as core service.</p>
<p>Texada – Powell River 1:00-1:50 sailing</p> <p>1:50 pm sailing in shoulder season</p>	<p>Expected overloads due to hunting season On the first day after the 1:50 pm sailing finished for the summer season, 24 Texada students from Brooks High School dropped off at 1:20pm for the 3:45pm ferry. Ok, for the Grade 11-12 but not the Grade 8 students. On second day after Texada-PR 1:00-1:50pm ferry stopped and at 2:30pm we have 22 cars already inline for the 3:45pm ferry. Deer hunting season is open on Texada Island with the highest bag limit in BC. It is open till almost Christmas. FAC request information on number of overloads expected from hunting season.</p> <p>Impact for students due to loss of 1:50 pm sailing On September 5, 24 students from Brooks High School were dropped off at 1:20 pm from the 3:45 pm ferry. On September 6, by 2:30 pm 22 cars are already in line for the 3:45 sailing. Further, deer hunting season has just opened on Texada Island with the highest bag limit in BC. It will be open until Christmas. FAC request number of expected overloads on this route from September – December.</p>
<p>Connectivity</p>	<p>Route 17 – 18 (Comox – Powell River – Texada) At the last FAC meeting, a request was made that the 7:10 pm sailing from Little River to Westview make a stop at Blubber Bay 5-7 days per week. What is the update on this request?</p> <p>ACTION: BCF will provide an answer on this by end of October.</p> <p>Route 3 – 7 (Southern Sunshine Coast – Northern Sunshine Coast) Passenger transfer between ferry and transit at Saltery Bay.</p>

	<p>FAC appreciate that procedures have improved to hold Rte 7 for the last sailing of the day to accommodate delays on Rte 3. FAC request that all sailings on Rte 7 align with Rte 3 as most travellers on Rte 7 are connecting with Rte 3.</p> <p>Current issues on Rte 3 which affect those travelling to/from Powell River. Issues on Route 3 impact travel for PR residents. Delays on Route 3 do impact travellers moving through to Route 7. This needs to be seen as a connecting route.</p> <p>Berth congestion at Westview, significantly delays Texada traffic. If schedule is not achievable can it be adjusted?</p> <p>Terminal ops is looking at how to process Texada traffic more efficiently through ticketing area. Right now the challenge is that when pre-ticketing area is full, there is no good place to go and no clear direction from staff about where to wait. This continues to be a challenge any time the Texada sailings are delayed.</p> <p>ACTION: C. Raduta will work with Fleet scheduling and look at schedule out of Westview to see if some adjustments can be made.</p>
<p>Berth congestion at Westview</p>	<p>Impacting on time performance FAC report that the Island Discovery has to wait daily for the Salish to leave the dock at Westview. They request to change the schedule so that the ships have the potential to leave on time.</p>
<p>Home port on Rte 17</p>	<p>Relocate to Powell River FAC repeat their desire to have the vessel docked overnight at West View terminal, rather than Little River, given most travellers are from the Powell River/qathet region.</p> <p>FAC also believes it would eliminate congestion on the route. FAC requests a closer look and feels this is important, long-term consideration.</p> <p>Changing homeport is a significant effort that requires relocating over 150 crew and their families. This would also impact resiliency as people would be motivated to change jobs rather than move. It may also be more difficult to attract/retain crew in a more remote community.</p> <p>Currently Powell River does not have a lay-by berth that ships could be tied up at, so there are also infrastructure implications.</p>
<p>Electrical fire procedure</p>	<p>E-bike and electric vehicle battery fires FAC would like to know what is the standard operating procedure should there be a fire onboard a vessel/terminal caused by an electric car or bicycle.</p>

	<p>BCF Info: Our current policy allows vehicles that are insured and road safe to travel with BC Ferries, which includes electric, and hybrid vehicles. BC Ferries has an electric vehicle firefighting policy that is in place throughout the fleet and was established using best practices within the Marine Industry. It's designed to constantly evolve based on the latest information and we continue to monitor new technologies and are always looking at safety improvements. An increased risk of fire during charging of electric vehicles has been widely documented and as a result, charging electric vehicles on board BC Ferries vessels is prohibited. At this time, we do not limit the number of vehicles on the ferry. As our teams to continue to work on future plans for those travelling and for our vessels, this is certainly part of the discussions and considerations.</p>
<p>Public engagements</p>	<p>Format of public engagement FAC suggest changing the current open-house format of the public engagement sessions. The community members do not like the use of the sticky-notes and would like to have BCF staff who are able to answer questions in the moment. Request for executive members to present.</p> <p>Advertisements FAC are disappointed to see a half-page colour ad for fare savers that are inaccessible to residents, however the FAC meeting and community engagement is only one-quarter size. FAC would like to see a larger ad.</p> <p>BCF Info: The Community Relations team is currently reviewing the drop-in engagements utilized this spring and fall. We appreciate this feedback from the FAC and have an opportunity for further input at the engagement following the FAC meeting.</p>
<p>BCF Visioning/ Strategic Planning</p>	<p>Community engagement plans BC Ferry Authority initiated a joint board (with Ferry Services Board) strategic planning process to look at the potential impact of future trends, help refine some goals and guide the prioritization of investments and strategies. This process will involve all stakeholders including residents of BC and customers. FAC would like to know what the community can expect.</p> <p>Visioning is an opportunity to step back and look at the role of ferries in the way people move and live, and to look out into the future to plan for how ferries will support growth, changing travel patterns and modalities, demographics, environmental sustainability etc. This work will build on the efforts of the engagement efforts in 2017/18.</p>
<p>Follow-up from May meeting</p>	<p>Request for meeting notes FAC would like to see the action items captured from the 3 month follow up meeting in May</p> <p>BCF Info: Included in the Action Tracking – attached as appendix.</p>

Timing of FAC meetings	When is the best time for FAC members to meet?
<p>Bus Lanes at Blubber Bay & Saltery Bay</p>	<p>Blubber Bay During busy times, people park on the road, and are blocking the highway. Everyone could be charged for blocking the highway. The school bus must go against traffic to get to terminal, and so must others picking-up and dropping off. The RCMP, School Board, and FAC have written letters on this safety concern. A new lane is needed for this terminal.</p> <p>Terminal ops has requested that Blubber Bay terminal upgrades be brought forward in the capital plan so it can be completed more quickly. MOTI will need to be engaged on this as the upgrades need to occur on MOTI land. MOTI Marine Branch has been in touch with the Highways Department and will be working with them to explore short-term solutions to address the safety concerns.</p> <p>Saltery Bay A similar concern exists at Saltery Bay, traffic backs up to single lane road, and bus must travel down wrong side of the road to get people to their sailing.</p> <p>This topic can be included in the Blubber Bay conversations with MOTI.</p>