

Bowen Island Municipality Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting

Overview: Horseshoe Bay Terminal, November 3, 2015

In Attendance:

Committee: Susanna Braund, Jonathan Bell, David Honing, Kevin Jones, Melanie Mason, Alison Morse

BC Ferries: Mark Collins - VP Strategic Planning and Community Engagement, David Hendry- Strategic Planning Director, Captain Lewis MacKay- Marine Superintendent, Chris Morris- Terminal Operations Regional Manager, Brad MacLeay- Terminal 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 as a WebEx meeting during the fall of 2015.

Issues Summary and Resolution Plan

A. Issue: Communications

Definition 1: Customer direct communications. Customers would like an option to talk to directly to a Horseshoe Bay employee is a short-notice concern arises, but this is currently not available. Chris replied that when a Horseshoe Bay direct line used to be available, it proved to be disruptive and distracting...and that the Operations and Security Centre's 24/7 communications capabilities are more effective anyways.

The FAC suggested that the best way to send timely information to the community is to post a link to a BCF site/Service Notice/Tweet via a notice on the 'Phorum'. In the meantime, they will check if the Phorum could also post a 'BCF Twitter link' at the top of their home page.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Consider establishing an account with the Phorum, to be used to post links of timely service information.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Consider posting links on Phorum	Darin	ongoing

Definition 2: 'Possible Wait' indications. There are instances where vehicles are held from ticketing because of a 'possible wait/sales held' sign. People may then park their vehicles and walk-on, only to learn that more vehicles ended up being ticketed and

loaded. Chris clarified that ‘Possible Wait’ automatically posts when ticket sales hit 90 per cent of capacity for a given sailing, and that ‘Sales Held’ should only be displayed when vessel is confirmed full.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Confirm why ‘sales held’ may be displayed and further ticket sales would happen.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Check with ticketing supervisor why ‘sales held’ would show and sales would still happen.	Chris	End-January

Definition 3: Awareness around ‘large foot passenger loads’. There was a recent occasion when a large school group loaded the ferry at Snug Cove, and the vessel reached passenger license with vehicles left behind and empty deck space. The FAC suggested that vehicle customers on Bowen Island were unaware of why loading had stopped, and frustration ensued.

Lewis noted that BC Ferries attempts to forecast expected demand for a higher passenger license as much as possible, but sometimes a large group of people arrive unexpectedly. If groups are able to call ahead, BC Ferries can either ensure the ‘highest capacity’ license is applied or steer the group to a lower utilized sailing.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Consider if Masters can make announcements to customers waiting in Snug Cove to inform them why loading stops without a full deck.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Discuss with Masters if/how to announce vessel has hit license	Lewis	End-December

B. Issue: Operational issues

Definition 1: Upper deck loading. Some customers have expressed concerns around the potential for vehicle movement/damage when parked on vessel ramps, and whether wheel blocks should get used at all times. Lewis replied that customers who do not wish to be loaded on the ramps may request this, and that both crews and customers are getting used to using the ramps now, so the concerns are likely decreasing.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

Definition 2: Ticketing for connecting routes. Customers have expressed the desire to ensure they can make the Route 8 ferry while they are ticketing for a Route 2 sailing in Nanaimo, particularly when aiming to connect to the last available daily sailing to Bowen Island on Route 8.

BC Ferries noted that there are very few, if any, occasions when it would be possible to allow a Route 2-8 connection within the terminal at Horseshoe Bay, as conditions at the terminal must be appropriate (light traffic, etc.). At this time, BC Ferries is exploring options for making transfers at Swartz Bay smoother, so there may be lessons learned that can be applied to Horseshoe Bay. When customers are travelling on Route 2 and trying to connect with the last Route 8 sailing, BC Ferries suggests they inform the Chief Steward on board, who will in turn let the Master know. The Route 2 Master will then contact the Route 8 Master to ensure they are aware of connecting customers. The Route 8 Master will try to delay departure as much time as reasonable to allow this connection.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

Definition 3: Queen of Capilano loading. A community initiative, named ‘Snug Up’, has been started to help inform and encourage customers to park closely on the ferry, thus allowing maximum utilization. Any help deck crews can provide is being assertive with keeping vehicles closely packed would be appreciated.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

Definition 4: Flagger deployment. The Municipality has deployed road flaggers during peak demand weekends, and they are looking for BC Ferries’ consideration in helping pay for part of the cost...as this also helps loading efficient. As well, past traffic stats would help forecasting when to hire flaggers.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: provide traffic stats to FAC.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Send detailed traffic reports to FAC	Darin	COMPLETED

Definition 5: Inconsistent marshalling. Customers have shared experiences where, while in the vehicle holding lanes for Route 8 loading at Horseshoe Bay, others arrive and ‘tuck into the back’ of lanes that will load first.

BC Ferries had not heard of these concerns, but endeavours to place traffic cones at the rear of the last vehicle in each lane, so as to avoid congestion and queue jumping.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: check why ‘lane coning’ may not be done consistently.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Review lane loading efficiency and coning consistency.	Brad	End-January

C. Issue: Facilities

Definition 1: Snug Cove electronic sign. The FAC suggested the electronic sign be upgraded to provide more timely information to customers near Snug Cove. Chris replied that this sign is old technology and has been faulty for the last year. Spare parts are being sourced, and updates will be done as best possible. The FAC added they would be willing to provide input into ‘maximizing value’ of any resources BC Ferries may spend on finding new solutions for helping inform people.

In a related note, BC Ferries has been focussing on upgrading wi-fi reliability and coverage at the major terminals recently, trying to also consider if/how to provide this at some minor terminals where possible. The FAC said that there would be very strong interest in any access that could be provided at Snug Cove.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

Definition 2: Plexiglas shelter. As the ‘bus shelter’-like structure at Snug Cove is in poor state, BC Ferries sought ideas on removal, including options for how to use if the shelter were not replaced (new structures have been erected nearby that seem to provide adequate weather protection).

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date

n/a		
-----	--	--

Definition 3: Horseshoe Bay terminal redevelopment. Bowen Island Municipality is interested in being involved in and informed about plans for redeveloping or upgrading Horseshoe Bay Terminal.

BC Ferries noted that the planning process has been reset, and this will likely include a restart for the redevelopment of HSB, including internal and external consultation. Discussions with both BC Transit and TransLink have recently begun to analyse intermodal transportation options, and this terminal is a primary focal point.

Further discussion happened around overall long-term planning and strategy related to transportation.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
--------	-------------	------

D. Issue: Scheduling issues

Definition 1: Province/BC Ferries framework for sailing restoration. The FAC noted their desire to understand a clear process for advancing rationale to add sailings to Route 8 service, specifically the 9:30 am Sunday schedule.

BC Ferries outlined three ways to discuss service changes. First, if an increase to the minimum, contracted service levels are sought, the Province must be approached...as they determine service levels as a policy decision.

However, BC Ferries can be approached if either a ‘cost neutral or better’ rationale for adding sailings is formulated or if the community itself has an idea to directly invest in the costs of service increases. For the first case, BC Ferries will then work with the community to explore a ‘business case’ discussion, determining if there is a realistic expectation for new revenue sufficient to cover costs of adding service. Of note, there is plenty of capacity available within a day/week/year to consider ways to add service.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Remain open to further discussions on changes to service.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

Definition 2: Bowen survey on ferry schedules. The Municipality is working on a survey to solicit community ideas for improving the Route 8 schedule if possible. A handout of the draft survey was provided to BC Ferries.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Remain open to specific face-to-face schedule analysis meeting with BIM when applicable.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

E. Issue: Operations report

Definition: Captain MacKay provided a summary of notable occurrences in the past year and preview of undertakings pertaining to Route 8 in the near future. No significant maintenance plans for the vessel of terminals are expected in the near future.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

F. Issue: Vehicle fare promotion

Definition: Darin notified the FAC that BC Ferries would be offering a 50% discount on vehicle fares from November 16 to December 19, following the pattern used in the recent passenger fare promotion. The goal of the promotion is to shift traffic from busy sailings to lower demand sailings and to encourage ‘incremental (new) traffic’.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

G. Issue: Customer Satisfaction Survey

Definition: Mark pointed out that some concerns have been raised by Minor route FAC members that the information gathered through the Customer Satisfaction Tracking (CST) survey process may be used to make decisions that affects routes not included in the survey.

He also noted that most of the Minor routes are not part of the CST, and that they have direct avenues for suggestions, feedback, and consultation with BC Ferries management. Having said this, he sought FAC thoughts on the survey and whether they feel being surveyed in some way in the future is important.

The FAC suggested that it would indeed be valuable to include Route 8 customers in a survey process.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Include FAC input with other FACs and consider if any future survey process makes sense for Minor routes.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Analyze FAC input on future survey considerations	Mark	As applicable

H. Issue: Cable ferry update

Definition: Mark provided a summary of the status of the cable ferry due to enter service on the Denman Island-Buckley Bay route soon. At present, Vancouver Shipyards (SeaSpan) still owns the vessel and is conducting trials, and therefore BC Ferries is very limited in what they can communicate about the ferry. In general, there is much misinformation in the community; however the vessel is meeting all technical requirements so far, including:

- speed targets using one engine
- Load capacity (weight)
- Cables are not rusting/deteriorating/too heavy and performing as planned.
- Fuel consumption is as projected or lower.
- Vessel is meeting current schedule requirements.
- Overall project is on budget.

Once BC Ferries takes official ownership, more detailed information and plans (crewing levels, trial, in-service dates, etc.) will be communicated.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		