

Meeting Details:

Committee:	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Date:	December 12, 2006
Location:	Boardroom, 1112 Fort Street, Victoria, BC
Time:	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Attendees:

BC Coalition of People with Disabilities:	BC Ferries:
Pat Danforth, Employment Coordinator Disability Resource Centre, Victoria Valerie Thoem, Director BC Coalition of People with Disabilities Linda Bartram, Past President, Victoria Chapter Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians Julie Caudle, Alliance for Blind Canadians Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians Ernie Stigant, MS Society Hugh Mitchell, Hard of Hearing Association Jane Sheaff, Seniors Helping Seniors Marykay Kennedy, CNIB	Pat Morris, Manager, Operational Planning Bruce Paterson, Fleet Technical Director Gregg Clackson, Terminal Director, Swartz Bay Roberta Chartier, Manager Customer Care Barbara Britton-Wilson, Director, Catering Services Jeff Davidson, Director, Retail Services Gary Leitch, Manager, Stakeholder Relations and Consultation
Regrets: Dawn Day, CNIB Vivian Garcia, BC Paraplegic Association	

- 1. Introductions:** As this was the first meeting of the committee since its expansion, all members, new and founding, were asked to introduce themselves.
- 2. Review of Committee History and Terms of Reference:** Gary Leitch provided a brief history of the formation of the committee in August 2005 and the development of its terms of reference from the terms of reference developed by Marine Atlantic and provided by Pat Danforth.

One of the first activities of the committee was the development of a preliminary list of accessibility issues. This list was developed during a site visit to the foot passenger area of Swartz Bay terminal and the vessel Spirit of British Columbia in September 2005. While this list is by no means exhaustive, it does provide a useful starting point for BC Ferries to begin addressing accessibility issues.

3. Review of 2006 Activities: For the benefit of new members, and to update founding members, 2006 activities were reviewed and updated.

- **Swartz Bay Terminal Update:** No change in status since last meeting. Due to changes in the construction scheduling, remedial actions identified during the site visit have been delayed. It is now anticipated that changes to the foot passenger reception area (in the de-lamination area), and parking compound will be completed next year.

Reservations and Telephony: Roberta Chartier reported on actions taken since the last meeting to address issues identified with the reservations system, IVR, and the telephones installed at BC Ferries facilities.

Roberta reported that the time available on the reservations system to make keypad entries via telephone has been doubled. Linda Bartram reported that she has used the improved system successfully.

Roberta asked committee members to review BC Ferries' website to assess whether it needs to be improved from the perspective of a) the location of the information and ease of access; and b) the usefulness of the information itself.

Roberta advised that shipboard phones are being upgraded to meet CRTC requirements. The remaining 169 BC Ferries payphone locations (standard "Millennium" payphones) are fully CRTC compliant.

- **Onboard Services & New Design:** Barb Britton-Wilson and Jeff Davidson reported on a number changes which have taken place or will soon be on new ships. These include:
 - Improved speaker distribution and public address system new ships
 - Increase font size and contrast on cafeteria signage
 - Hand rails in all passageways
 - New washroom signage, requesting respect for disabled customers, is working
 - Improved access to cashier and condiment counters on new ships
 - Various signage display systems being lowered, (e.g. at Departure Bay)
 - Increased width of workstations with lower power source.
- **New Vessel Construction and Vessel Upgrades:**

Bruce Paterson made a detailed presentation on the status of BC Ferries' new build program and the accessibility standards being applied to various projects. The presentation is attached to these minutes (Appendix A).

4. Training: Pat Morris reported that Barrier Free Design has been asked to develop a set of detailed proposals for training customer-service personnel, including shipboard, terminal and telephone-contact personnel. This is aimed at increasing the ability of the Company to deliver good customer service for those individuals that require additional levels of service. The Company's challenge is to deliver training successfully to a very large body of customer-service personnel within its time and cost limitations. Pat undertook that the committee would be consulted on the scope of the training initiative to ensure it is addressing the needs of the community.

- 5. Video Tel Project:** Pat Morris briefed the committee on the scope of this work for the benefit of new and continuing members. The project is aimed at creating a training module to assist the world-wide marine passenger industry (ferries, cruise ships, etc.) in training employees to better respond to the needs of the community. BC Ferries is a part of the industry consultative group and as part of that process BC Ferries has been referring various versions of the script and the workbook text through to the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Pat Danforth advised that a similar process has been underway through Marine Atlantic (which is another industry representative) and its accessibility advisory committee. The training material is expected to include a DVD with accompanying student workbook and training guide. At this stage, BC Ferries has made no commitment to purchase the package.
- 6. Investment Criteria:** The committee had a long discussion on criteria for investment in terminals and ships. Much of this discussion was very usefully focused on the role of personnel training in improving the travel experience for the disabled traveler. The issue of training will be reviewed as part of the work of Barrier Free Design. This work will be reviewed by the committee at an appropriate time.

The issue of investment criteria for physical assets will be dealt with in a position paper which BC Ferries will prepare for consideration by the committee.

Next Meeting: Spring 2007

7. Meeting adjourned:

12:05 p.m.

Gary Leitch, Secretary
December 20, 2006