

Ferry Advisory Committee (FAC) - Record of Meeting

Date:	February 1, 2021
Committee Name:	Northern Sunshine Coast
Routes:	7, 17, 18

Attendees:

<p>For the FAC:</p> <p><i>Chair(s):</i> Kim Barton-Bridges</p> <p><i>Members</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doug Skinner, Doug Nikirk • Patrick Brabazon, Warren Kiland • Paul Kamon, Jacquie Donaldson 	<p>For BCF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeff West, Mike Davis • Capt Al de Koninck • Peter Simpson • Carrie McIntosh, Darin Guenette • Brian Anderson
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Points of Information/Agreement:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marine Superintendent update. Al noted that the Operations teams are refining processes and procedures involved with Island Discovery serving as a relatively new ship. Also, there's an interim Senior Master on Route 18. 2. Texada-Comox direct link pilot. Brian noted that BC Ferries has absorbed the lessons learned and noted reservations are key for re-starting the pilot. Exploring the potential use of the Island Discovery may also be worthwhile. Currently, the impact of COVID on BCF operations limits the ability to consider resuming this pilot in the near term. Warren noted that the biggest concern for Texadans was the limit of 10 vehicles without the ability to reserve. That is, customers were anxious and had to arrive very early at the terminal in order to get a spot on the Salish. If Discovery can be used, then reservations would not be required. It was agreed that wholesome discussion will be valuable to re-evaluate all aspects' of the pilot. 3. Route 3 working group update. Carrie summarized that BCF had issued an update on working group efforts to explore short-term ideas to improve the services on the Sunshine Coast. BCF teams are now looking at how/when to implement solutions. An update on will be provided to the FAC prior to implementation. 4. Website update. Darin noted that since the new website launched last fall, the team has received a great deal of feedback, and the advantage of how this new site was designed means iterative updates are possible. To this, an update is planned in the near future, and Darin will let FACs know details when available. One notable change will be how schedule pages are displayed, with a return to seasonal-format presentation. 5. Fare flexibility update. Brian noted that building the availability of flexibility price points is a major focus, with the Major routes showing the most potential for customer benefit. BCF is not looking at making reservation allocation changes to the other routes (including
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Route 3 and 17) at this time, but would be interested in communicating ideas with FACs if/when analysis may make sense. A key objective is to allow more people to travel while reducing wait times/occasions at terminals. Launch is anticipated near the end of the month and FACs will be informed prior. Discussion followed around pros/cons of considering if/how to dedicate preferred loading for residents.

6. Timeliness of Service Notices. Brian noted that BCF is still aware, and frustrated, with instances where customers receive Service Notices 'hours later' that the event. This happens during times when weather events affect multiple routes, and thus millions of emails queue up for customers. This causes a backlog, and some emails are not sent for many hours. BCF is looking at how this process can be more efficient and effective, including opportunities to issue fewer 'mass account' emails.
7. Planned maintenance. No ship refits are planned, but some Transport Canada drills may be executed and require some cancelled sailings. No notable terminal projects are planned in the near future as well.
8. Island Discovery mechanical issues. AI noted that there have been expected a few isolated mechanical difficulties experienced on either the Aurora or Discovery. These situations are anticipated to become less frequent in the near future.
9. Federal government funding update. The funds (\$308 M) received from the government allowed BC Ferries to weather the revenue losses experienced from COVID effects. This funding supported BCF to 'track as forecast' for the first two years of the current Performance Term. How and when traffic returns as the pandemic continues will also affect planning even further. Brian noted that, for example, the electrification plans under development by BC Ferries require new funding sources. This is why BCF is reaching out to the federal government separately. Peter confirmed that BCF has planned for 'full service' (12 round-trips) on Route 3 for this peak season, with crewing/ship operations coordinated if full, peak-season demand is realized.
10. Misc. Darin let the FAC know that BCF is deploying the Island Aurora on the Gabriola route this upcoming weekend as part of a two-ship trial, in preparation for when that route sees two Island Class vessels next year.
 Brian suggested that the FAC consider reaching out if they want to discuss any ideas/issues, as remote technology makes it easier to organize simple phone calls/virtual meetings more frequently.

Action Items:

Item	Who	By When
None		