

Southern Gulf Islands Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting

Overview: Mary Winspear Centre - Sidney, November 15, 2016

In Attendance:

Committee: Michele Buchignani, Dave Dryer, Anna Dean, Brian Hollingshead, Jill Justice, Diana King, Robert Matson, David Maude, Roy Moore, Conny Nordin, Mike Sywulich, Harold Swierenga (Salt Spring Island FAC)

BC Ferries: Mark Collins - VP Strategic Planning and Community Engagement, David Hendry- Strategic Planning Director, Captain Lewis MacKay- Marine Superintendent, Monique Turgeon - Terminal Operations Superintendent, Darin Guenette-Public Affairs Manager, Tessa Humphries-Communications 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 sometime sometime late spring of 2017.

Issues Summary and Resolution Plan

A. Issue: Salish vessels update

Definition: Highlights of next steps for the Salish Class vessels:

- Orca in sea trials and doing well.
- Eagle and Raven construction progressing.
- Queen of Nanaimo and at least one of either Eagle or Raven are expected to be in service by May 5, which is when the ‘new Route 9 schedule begins’.
- However, if any change to this plan is expected, BC Ferries will strive to provide at least three months’ notice to communities.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

B. Issue: Printed schedules

Definition: Summary:

- Colour change, for each schedule run, is effective...please continue.
- When off-peak schedules came out, they were easily available, but are already difficult to find.

- Discussion followed around why vessels may not be ordering and/or displaying the schedules sufficiently.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: continue to work on better processes for having schedules available for customers when/where they are needed.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Reinforce with vessels the need to order/display schedules in sufficient quantities	Lewis	Three months

C. Issue: Commerical fare freeze

Definition: Summary:

- FAC had previously secured general community agreement to accept similar increase in passenger fare on Route 5/5a as previous years as a way to freeze commercial fares.
- BC Ferries has not been able to confirm if the same arrangement may be made for April 2017 yet.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: Confirm what ‘other fare adjustment’ would be required in order to freeze commercial fares and let FAC know.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Check with pricing for confirmations of commercial fare freeze details	David	Completed

D. Issue: Terminal signage

Definition: Summary:

- SGI communities would like to see the name of each island added to the terminal sign at the berth upon arrival, as some visitors may not be familiar with just the terminal name.
- On board announcements provide both terminal and island names, so FAC suggests signage should match.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: Review signage standards and consider adding island name.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Check if signage can include island name	Monique	Three months

E. Issue: Mayne Queen coffee

Definition: Summary:

- The coffee machine on the Mayne Queen has not been working recently, and seems to frequently breakdown.
- FAC suggests a sign be installed next to the machine to direct customers to reach out to the vendor if problems occur.
- BC Ferries crews do provide frequent and timely feedback to vendor.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: troubleshoot why coffee machine seems to break down frequently.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Check with coffee vendor	Lewis	Three months

F. Issue: Inter-island fare

Definition: Summary:

- A previous request from the FAC for BC Ferries to develop an ‘inter-island throughfare’, transferring between two routes at Swartz Bay, has been put on hold.
- Personnel and resources that may go to analysing this fare are required to focus on FFDEI projects.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

G. Issue: Route 9 passenger allotment

Definition: Summary:

- FAC suggested that the number of passenger reservations for sailings ‘from the islands’ be increased, as customers may believe sailings are completely full when reservations are not available.
- Alternately, FAC suggests that, since Route 9 is full reservable for vehicles, it should also be fully reservable for walk-on customers.
- Customers have also expressed a desire to make these reservations online.
- Discussion followed around ways to inform customers of multiple travel options for getting to/from the islands.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: analyse options for increasing passenger reservations.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Review possibilities to increase walk-on reservation allotments	Lewis/Monique	Three months

H. Issue: BC Ferries-transit discussions

Definition: Summary:

- BC Ferries is meeting with TransLink and BC Transit quarterly to discuss intermodal traffic and connections.
- FAC noted that buses often seem to depart Tsawwassen terminal just as sailings are arriving, and they suggest that TransLink be asked to use discretion to wait for arriving passengers when it makes sense.
- Suggestion is for Tsawwassen terminal staff contact TransLink if/when ferries arrive late, to see if TransLink could consider delaying bus departures.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: share feedback with transit organizations to seek flexibility options.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Determine if a communications process could be established for bus-ferry real-time info at Tsawwassen.	Monique	Three months

I. Issue: Queen of Nanaimo issues

Definition: Summary:

- The ‘steering wheel’: BC Ferries believes they may be able to keep the ‘old wooden wheel’ off the Queen of Nanaimo when it is sold, but are unsure what may be done with the wheel after that.
- Short-tempered deckhands: customers have noted more frequent experiences with curt/impatient deckhands and inconsistent loading practices.
- BC Ferries does aim for consistency in directing and loading vehicles, but it is good to know when customers provide such feedback.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: Provide deck crews feedback of customer experiences.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Share feedback with crews	Lewis	Complete

J. Issue: Foot passenger amenities

Definition: Summary:

- Foot passengers waiting for transit at Tsawwassen have no covered shelter option, which is very uncomfortable in poor weather.
- BC Ferries does have plans for both stations (to make lineups more efficient) and some type of shelter for people waiting for buses, but the shelter is part of a longer-term development plan.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: none required

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

K. Issue: Child/play areas on vessels

Definition: Summary:

- Since Queen of Nanaimo has very limited ‘play areas’ for children, the FAC asked if the Salish vessels will have something more sufficient.
- BC Ferries replied that the Salish vessels will indeed have a play/entertainment area for children, and expansive upper deck seating for customers.
- Related: some experiences noted of toilets/screens, etc being out of service for extended period on Queen of Cumberland.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

L. Issue: Overload stats

Definition: Summary:

- Currently overloads are not recorded as part of the detailed reports sent to FACs.
- If actual, specific overload data is retrievable, this would be appreciated.
- BC Ferries does not have any more specific overload data to send.
- Related: discussion followed around ensuring that Saturna customers receive priority loading on the 2:50 pm sailing from Swartz Bay over Mayne customers, who have another sailing within an hour.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: Continue to monitor loading orders for 2:50 pm sailing.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Remind terminal staff of Saturna loading priority	Monique	Two months

M. Issue: **Sturdies Bay parking**

Definition: Summary:

- Recently, MOTI has installed concrete barriers on the roadway just outside Sturdies Bay terminal, greatly restricting customer parking options.
- BC Ferries was also unaware of the barriers going up, and are looking at possible options for creating parking spots, perhaps by changing how vehicles are staged in the terminal/on the trestle.
- To clarify, BC Ferries cannot develop parking options on the roadways, as this is not land owned or controlled by them.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: Keep communication lines open with MOTI for ideas.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Work with MOTI to discuss parking shortage options at many minor terminals	Mark	ongoing

N. Issue: **Throughfare process**

Definition: Summary:

- FAC has received a lot of positive feedback on the current throughfare process pilot, and BC Ferries agreed things are generally working very well.
- BC Ferries will gather internal stakeholders to determine if this pilot can be made a permanent procedure.
- Analysis reveals that the process cannot be established ‘in the opposite direction’ (from the islands, via SWB, to TSA).
- Related: FAC suggests ‘all reservations should be refundable’ ...not just current sailings marked with an asterix, and to investigate ways to make it more obvious that there are multiple travel options to/from SGI.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: Continue to look at what would be needed to carry out throughfare procedures in the opposite direction, and if/when current process can become permanent.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Discuss both ‘making process permanent’ and ‘ideas for reverse direction’ with internal stakeholders	Monique	Three months

N. Issue: **Operations Report**

Definition: Summary:

- Traffic: Route 5 – 4% increase for vehicles and passengers; Route 9 – increase of 8% (veh) and 6% (pass) year-to-date.
- Only five times since beginning the foot passenger reservation process in 2015 has the allocation limit been reached.
- On-time performance: similar to past, quite strong in off-peak with some dip in peak season.
- December 14: Cumberland out of service for maximum one day, and Bowen Queen to relieve.
- Jan 4-Feb 8: Skeena Queen refit; Cumberland to provide some morning service on Route 4, so Bowen Queen will be on Route 5 for some sailings.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

O. Issue: Vehicle discount promotion

Definition: BC Ferries is coordinating a 50% fare discount on passenger vehicles, across all route, at select sailing times, between November 14 and December 18. Details can be found on bcferries.com.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

P. Issue: Minor 44 Class project

Definition: BC Ferries is standing up a ‘Minor 44 Class’ project. Highlights include:

- New class of vessels to be the new, smallest class in the fleet
- Two ships built first, with up to five more to follow
- First two vessels to be deployed on Route 18 and 25, allowing retirement of North Island Princess and the Howe Sound Queen, by approximately 2020. Noted earlier: Quinitza to replace HSQ on Route 6.
- Vessels to be 44 AEQ and 300 people capacity
- Near Coastal 2 classification; deployable on large variety of routes
- Engagement sessions planned in applicable communities; seeking input on amenities

BC Ferries input/follow-up: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

Q. Issue: AEQ restatement

Definition: BC Ferries has recently standardized the calculation of the measurement of area on a deck used to approximate the average space of a vehicle – the AEQ (automobile equivalent). One AEQ is now 2.6 m X 6.1 m of deck space.

This restatement will affect utilization figures, and this fact will be stated in the next report provide to the Ferry Commissioner. New AEQ's:

Queen of Nanaimo: 164 Queen of Cumberland: 112 Mayne Queen: 58

BC Ferries input/follow-up: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

R. Issue: FFDEI update

Definition: BC Ferries in continuing work in the Fare Flexibility and Digital Experience Initiative project, with significant updates in point-of-sale, website and ticketing technologies over the next two years. This will in turn allow for dynamic pricing to be offered on the Major routes, followed by the other reservable routes, starting in 2018. The overall goal of this work is to increase discretionary traffic travel by offering discount opportunities in lower utilized sailing times, to interact more efficiently with the customer and to bring in new traffic to the system.

BC Ferries input/follow-up: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		