

An Update from BC Ferries

Dear Nanaimo Harbour and Gabriola Island Ferry Travellers,

It has been some time since my last update, and I wanted to keep you up-to-date on what is happening with the Gabriola Island Terminal Development Plan. Our team continues to move forward with this project and we have an engagement opportunity on Tuesday, February 19 we'd like you to know about. Keep reading for more details.

What's happened so far

Last May, we held a session on Gabriola Island with the community to identify key issues and concerns, and present some draft concept designs for the Gabriola Island Terminal Development Plan (TDP). We informed the community the project will involve constructing a new berth to replace the current berth and modifying/expanding the uplands area, which includes the waiting room and car parking area.

During this session, we gathered feedback on the ideas of more dedicated vehicle queuing lanes and improved customer amenities, including a new passenger waiting room, pick-up/drop-off area, and expanded short-term parking area, which will improve traffic flow. After gathering your feedback, we presented a revised concept design to the community in September. We took into account the feedback we heard and have refined the plan where operationally possible.

Since then, we have been refining a draft TDP that includes the functional requirements for the terminal, the refined concept design, and identifies a phased approach to implementing changes at the terminal. The TDP also identifies actions and studies that need to be undertaken as we move through the detailed design and construction phases of terminal redevelopment in the future.

Some important findings

Through all this work, we identified a key issue. The zoning of the Descanso Bay ferry terminal is currently split under the Islands Trust Gabriola Zoning Bylaw. The water lot is zoned Water Commercial 3 – Marine Transportation (WC3). The ferry terminal is listed as a permitted use in this zone. However, the leased upland portion where the waiting room/holding lanes and parking lot are located is currently zoned Large Rural Residential (LRR). In this area, a ferry terminal is not a permitted use. We therefore need to submit a zoning bylaw amendment for this area before the project can move forward and any changes are implemented.

Another important issue is the Gabriola Island Official Community Plan (OCP) also designates the terminal as two different uses. The water lot is designated as Marine and the upland portion is designated as Resource and Small Rural Residential. Given this, we also must submit an application to amend the OCP. We've been working closely with Islands Trust and the Gabriola Island Ferry Advisory Committee on the information and technical studies we need to support these applications.

We are gearing up for our next engagement

To move forward with this project, we need to apply for the two amendments detailed above to be adopted by the Islands Trust. We must comply with municipal bylaws before we can start developing the terminal.

We are holding an information session at the Gabriola Island Arts Council Hall from 3 to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, February 19.

When	Where
3 to 6 p.m. Tuesday, February 19	Gabriola Island Arts Council Hall 476 South Road, Gabriola Island

We want to provide you with information about the rezoning and OCP amendment applications we are submitting. We also want to hear your feedback on proposed conceptual designs for the new waiting room and washroom building. This will help us, in addition to the feedback we have already received from you on the holding compound and vehicle queuing area.

If you are unable to make the session, please visit our Gabriola Island page at bcferries.com/about/terminal-development-planning. We will post all of the information there on February 19.

What's next

We will hold another information session once the rezoning application is submitted to gather the community's feedback on what is proposed in the amendment applications. We expect the application and adoption process to take between 18 and 24 months.

If you have any questions about the process we have undertaken so far, or what lies ahead, please don't hesitate to contact me directly at brian.green@bcferries.com.

Thanks for reading,

Brian Green

Manager, Terminal Development
BC Ferries



Brian and his 11 month old twins Felix (left) and Harriet (right).