

Northern Sunshine Coast Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting

Overview: Powell River Recreation Complex, May 12, 2015

In Attendance:

Committee: Jack Barr, Kim Barton-Bridges, Patrick Brabazon, Jane Cameron, Mryna Leishman, Warren Kiland, Sandy McCormick, Karen Skadsheim, Doug Skinner, Ken White

BC Ferries: Corrine Storey- VP Customer Services, David Hendry- Strategic Planning Director, Captain Al de Koninck - Marine Superintendent, Jeff- Terminal Operations Superintendent, 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: Chair selection

Definition: Kim Barton-Bridges was confirmed as committee Chair for this term.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

B. Issue: Terms of Reference review

Definition: This being the first meeting of a new, four-year FAC term, the TOR was discussed. BC Ferries noted that each FAC has different ways to communicate with community members and understand issues related to ferry service. Experience has shown that no one method of gaining/sharing information fits every area...and BC Ferries hopes FAC members can understand best some of the most effective ways of communicating in their own communities.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

C. Issue: 'BCF 101' review

Definition: BC Ferries has developed a document (nicknamed 'BCF 101') to provide high-level information about key aspects of coastal ferry service, including sections on: BC Ferries, the Coastal Ferry Services Contract, the BC Ferry Commission, fares and FACs. The main intent of BCF 101 is to bring all FAC members to a common baseline of understanding, to better facilitate issue discussions during meetings.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

D. Issue: ICF update

Definition: BC Ferries' shipyard contractor, Remontowa, is nearing a final design for the Intermediate Class Ferries (ICF) being built to replace the Queen of Burnaby, as well as for use in the Southern Gulf Islands. When a visual representation of the final design is available, the FAC will be sent a copy.

They also clarified some aspects of the deck arrangements: having two vehicle decks will provide load flexibility, the 'lower deck' will be the main deck, and both decks will be above the water line. Finally, the vessel due to replace the Queen of Burnaby on the Comox-Powell River route is expected to begin service in late 2016.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

E. Issue: Route 7 summer schedule

Definition: Comments have come to both the FAC and BC Ferries from Texada Transfer regarding their preference to seeing early morning sailings from Saltery Bay, as was done in 2014, but not in years prior. However as part of the resetting of sailing schedules during the 2014 Service Level Adjustment process, a schedule that saw those early (approx 5:20 am) sailings scheduled at the expense of a 3 hour plus gap between

morning and afternoon crew shifts was implemented, and BC Ferries and the FAC agreed to return the Route 7 schedule back to how it had been prior to 2014.

Definition: At this point, David provided a summary of the cost savings analysis thus far. David Hendry explained that, because BC Ferries issues bonds, they are subject to securities regulations and currently in a post-fiscal year blackout period for disclosure of financial information; with results available in June. BC Ferries' Board of Directors has requested an analysis of the impact of the service level adjustments made in 2014, including an assessment of whether net savings were realized through these, and the company is working on reports that will fulfill this request. Preliminary analysis indicates that the net savings targeted are being realized at a system-wide level, but there are variations across routes affected.

Additionally, utilization has increased on impacted routes and it appears the estimated traffic/revenue loss from the SLA is less than predicted. BC Ferries will not commit to whether the savings analysis will be made available on a route by route basis and it needs to be recognized that there are other variables impacting this analysis and it is difficult to isolate changes specific to the service level adjustments. The important point is that the net savings are applied system wide and benefit all routes in a cross subsidized fare system.

As for Major routes, BC Ferries conducted extensive analysis on a variety of options for reducing service to achieve the \$4.9 million in net savings, but found that estimated revenue losses exceeded cost savings in all cases. It was pointed out that the Major routes have already had up to eight per cent service reductions between 2008 and 2014 as well.

These reductions came from service that was being provided above CFSC requirements prior to 2012 as well as the recent flexibility in the CFSC (400 round-trips) to further reduce service. As a result of this, it becomes harder to find Major route service reductions without impacting revenue which, in turn, would put further pressure on fares in a cross subsidized system.

The \$4.9 million of net savings still needs to be achieved by BC Ferries in Performance Term-4 to achieve the 1.9% annual price cap but BC Ferries will find these net savings through measures not related to service level reductions. It is important to also recognize that the BC Ferries Commissioner has further tasked BCF to continue the analysis related to longer term and larger measure initiatives related to the Major routes in order to identify large savings (\$100M) in our capital program.

BC Ferries reiterated that if any sailings were 'added to the Route 7 schedule' in order to keep early morning sailings without opening the midday gap, service would need to be pulled elsewhere in the schedule that would maintain a neutral cost situation. To this, the FAC suggested further schedule analysis.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: coordinate appropriate reps to participate in any possible future ‘schedule analysis committee’.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Consider setting up a scheduling sub-committee to analyse Route 7 change options	FAC	When able

F. Issue: Minutes turnaround time

Definition: Darin explained that he works on the summaries of all 13 FACs after the meetings are done and will aim to get the drafts to the FAC as timely as possible.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: share draft meeting summaries with FAC.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Get draft meeting summary to FAC	Darin	As soon as reasonable

G. Issue: North Island Princess replacement

Definition: BC Ferries had previously told the FAC the NIP was due for replacement and provided an update at this meeting. Options are still being exploring for the best replacement plan, so a refit planned for 2017 will also extend the life of the vessel until 2019.

Texada reps noted there is a strong interest in the community to see a future ‘triangle sailing option’, where the Route 17 ferry stops at Blubber Bay en route to Comox in the morning and from Comox in the evening. Also, customers would prefer to see no changes in the Route 18 schedule.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: participate in future analysis/discussion of the feasibility of ‘triangle runs’.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Discuss ‘triangle run’ concepts with FAC	BCF	As appropriate

H. Issue: ICF food services/wi-fi

Definition: The FAC suggests that food services similar to that found on the Queen of Burnaby, as well as free wi-fi, be included on the ICF when it assumes service on Route

17. BC Ferries reiterated that there was a clear message from the Powell River community during previous ICF consultation that, if ‘full food services’ would increase costs that would in turn be covered by fare increases, then a more basic level of food service was acceptable.

First, BC Ferries must first await crew complement direction from Transport Canada, and this will determine what level of catering may be provided. As for wi-fi, the ICFs are being wired for wi-fi capability and BC Ferries is working with internet providers to explore what may be possible in securing wi-fi, and at what cost.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

I. Issue: Westview berthing conflicts

Definition: BC Ferries explained that in order to avoid berthing conflicts, starting June 20, the 6:30 am Route 17 sailing and 8:30 am Route 18 sailings are being changed to 6:20 am and 8:35 am respectively.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

J. Issue: Route 17 discount

Definition: Discounts. Now that Northern Sunshine Coast residents are eligible to receive discounts on Routes 3 and 7, there is a community interest in learning how a similar Route 17 discount would affect current fares. David replied that based on expected discount usage, BC Ferries estimates an increase of approximately 0.8% increase (increase of \$.10 per passenger, \$.40 per underheight vehicle, \$.05 for commercial vehicle and \$.11 per child) across all fares in order to cover the lost revenue from a student/youth sports discount.

If implemented, this would increase the current discount rate from 50% to 100% for eligible passenger fares. Also, BC Ferries would hope to see School District 47 willing to administer these discounts, as possibly early as September 1.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: send any ‘fare increase’ data to the FAC and await decision on whether community may wish to proceed with Route 17 discount.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Send FAC summary table with ‘expected fare increases’ to FAC	David	When able

K. Issue: Route 18 after-hours response

Definition: BC Ferries explained that BC Ambulance first determines if they require ferry assistance during an after-hours emergency, and then their dispatch will phone BC Ferries’ Operations and Security Centre. This process was changed last summer, at the request of BC Ambulance, who were requesting a centralized call out procedure.

The OSC then recalls the on-duty crew for the appropriate vessel, who get the vessel operating as quickly as safely possible. It was noted that BC Ferries does not make any decision about when to react, rather a crew is activated after BC Ambulance makes the request to the OSC. A cost recovery charge is given to BC Ambulance after completion of the call out.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

L. Issue: 2015-16 Meeting Schedule

Definition: Ken suggested that the spring 2016 FAC meeting be held on Texada Island if possible. BC Ferries replied that they will try to make this happen, but it may depend on a number of other factors. As well, they offered that if the FAC wishes to gather at a meeting place for the fall WebEx meeting, BC Ferries would support coordination and cover reasonable costs.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: try to arrange 2016 meeting on Texada.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Consider Texada for spring 2016 meeting	Darin	As applicable

M. Issue: Size up the Savings

Definition: BC Ferries explained that a promotion that provides a discount for non-commercial over-length customers using Route 1 and 30 will be running again this

summer...similar to the one in 2014, but with Sunday mornings also included. The FAC noted they would send any further pricing promotion ideas to BC Ferries they may have.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

N. Issue: Operations Report

Definition: Capt de Koninck provided a summary of recent and near-future vessel and terminal developments related to Routes 7, 17 and 18 including traffic and on-time performance statistics. Specifically, he noted that traffic volumes appear to be flattening from year-to-year, instead of the steady decrease of recent years.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

O. Issue: Miscellaneous

Definition: After discussing the value in seeing Texada Transfer travelling as smoothly as possible on Route 7, the FAC may develop a specific recommendation to BC Ferries to consider some sort of commercial reservation at Saltery Bay.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		