

Ferry Advisory Committee (FAC) - Record of Meeting

Date:	August 24, 2020
Committee Name:	Southern Gulf Islands
Routes:	5, 9

Attendees:

<p>For the FAC:</p> <p><i>Chair(s):</i> Mary Greenwood</p> <p><i>Members</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charlene Dishaw, Dale Henning • Roy Moore, Toby Wadsworth • Robert Matson, Anna Dean • Michel Chiasson, Joanne Enns 	<p>For BCF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Anderson • Peter Simpson • Cam Hillis • Capt Hardeep Grewal • Darin Guenette
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Points of Information/Agreement:

1. Dalton Road signage. Cam noted that MOTI has committed to developing/installing signage, but we have no timeline for implementation.
2. Digital signage at Otter Bay. Cam noted that the expense and work involved to move this sign are too great, so this is not an option. Dale asked if a second monitor could be installed instead in the waiting room.
3. Throughfares. Saturna wishes to have a rebate of the reservation fee for the throughfare at the weekday and Sunday 1300 sailing (or 1200 in peak) ex TSA, which could then connect with the 1510 sailing. As this is a mid-day sailing opportunity to Saturna (especially on Sundays, as there are no sailings to SAT; the 1300 connects to the 1610 sailing to SAT). Cam clarified that TF vouchers can now be accepted on the ramp at SWB.
4. Swartz Bay access for SGI traffic. There have been recent experiences of the 'SGI/SSI' booth access being limited by Route 1 reservation traffic, and the FAC is suggesting flagging/traffic management be reviewed.
5. Queen of Cumberland issues. Outside of when mechanical issues happen, the FAC noted that there are still issues/problems with on-time performance, use of ramps, efficiency, etc. Hardeep noted that indeed, in very busy times, one or two ramps are deployed and the crew does all they can to maintain the schedule, but this can be difficult.
6. Cumberland swap. Peter noted that the analysis has been done to understand all impacts of swapping with Malaspina Sky, but the Cumberland is not a viable option on Route 7 for a few main reasons. Commercial/overheight traffic on the Sunshine Coast route would be limited by the CUMB and the ramps would need to be used in the peak season, which would break the connection with Route 3 sailings on the Sunshine Coast. Cumberland's routing can be changed in the SGI to help improve chances of keeping on time, but there are also disadvantages to this measure as well. It was noted that when the next Salish

vessel comes into service in a couple of years...replacing the Mayne Queen...there will be opportunities to manage the service/schedule as to minimize occasions when the CUMB would need to deploy the ramps. Using the CUMB during peak seasons to best meet traffic demands likely is the best option prior to the arrival of this Salish vessel. This includes continuing to analyse the schedules for efficiency during these years. Related discussion: the 'transit model' (two ships going back-and-forth between SWB and TSA, stopping at all islands) is still being considered for when this next Salish vessel enters service. Peter noted that earlier this spring, the service was reconfigured to resemble a similar model, and lessons were learned from this experience. Engagement/consultation with the FAC and communities would need to precede any change of service like this.

7. Printed schedules. The online ability to understand island connectivity is limited/non-existent, and there are customers who cannot/do not use the internet/computers...so they rely on the printed schedules. Peter noted that we cannot design a 'year-round' schedule, so this means we cannot just have one schedule...however, we are working on simplifying the schedule, thus only requiring two 'schedule periods'. Darin noted he has relayed these points to Marketing.
8. Off-season outlook. Brian noted that services are expected to return to 'general levels' after Labour Day across the entire network. Peter noted that in the SGI service, the second Salish serving Route 9/9a will be removed after Labour Day, as the staff required will not be available.
9. Salish construction/deployment. Peter noted that there is a supply disruption that appears to have delayed the construction schedule, but details of how this may affect final construction/in service are not yet known. BCF will update when more info is given. Plan is still to retire and sell the Mayne Queen when the new Salish enters service.
10. New website launch update. The new website is ready to launch in approximately one month, and will provide new functionality/access for customers, including Route 9 foot passenger reservations online. BCF will be able to provide live demonstrations of the new website for FACs. FAC suggested that if this 'demo link' could be shared for public in the communities, this would be very helpful. As for recent Call Centre challenges, the call volumes were very high and wait times were as high as 90 minutes or more. More staff are working and call wait times have come down to acceptable times in the past couple of weeks.
11. Relaxation of 'closed deck' restriction to remain in vehicles. BCF has been discussing with Transport Canada how long this current exemption to the TC regulation may remain in place. Brian noted that TC has indicated that this exemption will be removed at some point, thus customers will have to vacate closed decks as per pre-COVID operations. BCF is requesting this removal be delayed as long as reasonable, as there is still uncertainty as to whether there may be further pandemic effects at play that suggest it makes sense to allow people to remain in their vehicles.
12. Fare structure and future changes. BCF did not change/increase fares this past April 1 due to the pandemic. A reminder that BCF is permitted to increase fares by 2.3% on average each year in the current Performance Term, but there was a special allowance of up to an additional 1.5% by the Commissioner's office. We don't have a timeline of when or how much fares may be increased as this point. In a related matter, the recent funding announcement of federal/provincial funds may or may not have a bearing on plans to adjust fares. The Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure is considering the best way to apply this funding, and this may include some funding to cover planned fare increase this

year. Brian noted that if a fare increase is 'skipped', the value of revenue that it would have provided would need to be recaptured at some future point, but this is part of the consideration MOTI is undertaking.

13. Resident priority discussion/analysis. Mark Collins recently noted that priority access for residents would need community consensus/impetus to bring this to BCF. Mary wonders how this consensus could be gathered. Brian agreed, and noted BCF has just begun an engagement process on the lower Sunshine Coast, where part of the analysis will aim to understand needs/ideas of all the customer sectors. The key is to get a consensus across most user/customer groups, as there are definitely differing needs/ideas from these groups. He noted that there are a number of ways to look at this, with a general idea of customers ultimately looking for better travel certainty. Roy suggested that the Customer Satisfaction surveys might be a good opportunity to include questions around resident priority. Brian agreed but said the challenge can be to learn if all customers have the same idea/concept of what resident priority means.
14. Recent Saturna traffic left on Mayne Island. This issue is unacceptable to leave behind and Michel suggests that a dedicated conference call can be of value to discuss. Michel is asking for a clear explanation on what happened this instance (on BCF letterhead), a call (this Wednesday) and some sort of compensation for the affected customers.
15. Route 5/5a reservation analysis. BCF said they were looking at designing an inter-island route reservation pilot, and the FAC is seeking update on this plan. If this pilot operates on another route, will it be introduced on these SGI routes?
Brian noted that the website launch has proven to be key, due to the functionality for bookings across all routes. First, we need to understand how these new capabilities can be used to design specific reservations. Mary asked if deck space allocation would be included as part of a reservation process...and if so, how would this be done. Brian replied that the SGI routes is the most complex network, and all user needs/desires would need to be understood prior to figuring this out; consultation is key. Roy reminded all that the Washington State (San Juan Islands), multi-island booking model has proven to be successful, and this may be of use. Further discussion continued around how reservation models may be designed/operated and some of the logistical components involved (fares, staff, holding areas, etc). Roy expressed concern that trying to gain consensus from all communities would hamper good ideas/trials from happening. Brian agreed that if BCF is at least able to gain key agreement on general objectives from customers, rather than specific processes, this would help understand how to then proceed...including how to address concerns of different user groups. That is, if 'broad support' can be gained, BCF can proceed with concepts.
16. Medical Assured Loading. Some islands use MAL less than others, but the process does not seem to be working the same on all islands. Is it consistently understood? Is there a need for a process to be re-written? Brian clarified that a current MAL process as directed in a Ministerial Order (in effect to July 10, 2021) is in place; one needs a TAP form and a letter from a medical office that requests assured loading. This is what the customer requires to be granted assured loading on most routes. On fully reservable routes, BCF needs the customer deemed eligible for MAL to phone Customer Service, at which time MAL will be coordinated with a reservation. This is system wide. Discussion followed around TAPs travel (spreadsheet shared from BCF) and how MAL has previously been coordinated, including some customer/clinic misuse of the process).
17. Miscellaneous items.

- i. BCF had the policy whereby Saturna customers had priority loading on the 1510 from SWB, and he asked for this be re-posted.
- ii. Service level changes. Roy asked how communities seeking changes to contracted service. Brian replied that the Contract is between BCF and MOTI, and is a negotiated agreement. The Province receives and replies to various feedback/requests with respect to the Contract, thus if communities are asking for a change in service, they should go directly to the Province/MOTI.
- iii. Dale asked if the MQ loads customers at Saturna/Mayne Island prior to arriving at Pender Island each morning (reply: no). Hardeep confirmed that the 0740 Otter departure would arrive with no vehicles, but can overload, yes. This process remains the same in the fall/winter/spring schedule.

Action Items¹:

Item	Who	By When
1. Cam to ask IT if a monitor can be added to Otter Bay waiting room.	Cam	Sept
2. Check with Tarriff/Revenue on adding 1300-to-1500 TF process for Saturna customers.	Cam	In progress. Has prelim agreement.
3. Ensure SGI/SSI traffic is being provided smooth/efficient access to the appropriate ticket booth during heavy traffic approaching the terminal.	Cam	In progress.
4. Check into how/when 'website demo' can be available, and if this is something public can also see soon.	Darin	In progress; Sept demo coming
5. Coordinate a call to explain recent incident of Saturna customers left at Village Bay.	Darin	Complete
6. Look into getting 'Saturna priority on 1510 sailing' note on the website again.	Cam	In progress; request sent.

¹ Significant Service Request (SSR) requiring detailed analysis and formal decisions from BCF should be submitted using the SSR process. Submission of a SSR should be noted as an Action Item.