

Gabriola Island Ferry Advisory Committee

May 2022 Meeting Agenda

Monday, May 9, 2022, 2 pm – 4:30 pm
AGI Hall, Gabriola Island

Meeting Purpose

- 1. Share information by providing the Ferry Advisory Committee with:**
 - Updates on corporate and route-specific activities, plans and projects
 - Answers and updates on route-specific questions and concerns

- 2. Hear feedback and initiate action by:**
 - Hearing from the Ferry Advisory Committee about potential solutions to areas of concern
 - Generating trackable action items and next steps to address areas of concern raised by the Ferry Advisory Committee

- 3. Increase transparency and accountability by providing a public venue where:**
 - Community members can observe and hear the information and feedback exchanged between BC Ferries and the Ferry Advisory Committee
 - Actions and solutions to concerns can be identified, recorded, tracked and reported

Topic	Time
Land acknowledge, introductions and welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: introduce new BC Ferries representatives and re-acquaint all attendees. • Approval of agenda 	10 mins
Information section <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BC Ferries Operational updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine superintendent • Terminals 2. FAC review and enhancements 3. New Customer Experience team 4. Website update 	10 mins
Discussion section <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluation of two-ship service (FAC & BCF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues with the ships • New schedule issues • New policy for Nanaimo traffic management? • Motorcycles at Descanso Bay 2. Issues with notices to the public (FAC). 3. Taylor Bay Road traffic issues (BCF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of survey? • Plan for flaggers this peak season? 4. Update on terminal development projects at Nanaimo Harbour and Descanso Bay? (BCF) 5. FAC member terms (all) 6. Island Class model for Gabriola Museum (FAC) 7. Comments/questions from public attendees. 	2 hours

Final questions and close	10
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BC Ferries acknowledges that we are meeting today on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation.

Attached: Meeting topic log

Gabriola Island Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting Topic Log May 2022

NOTE: notes summarizing the general discussion of meeting participants is included in the appropriate section of each agenda item in the table below.

Text in black was information sent to all meeting invitees prior to the meeting as part of the agenda. Text in blue are notes taken during the meeting as each item was discussed. Text in red captures a follow up action and parties responsible.

Meeting attendees:

BC Ferries: Brian Anderson, Captain Cameron Gillespie, Darin Guenette, Karen Johnston, John MacDonald, Natalie McCall, Carrie McIntosh, Tamara Olson

Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure: Lynda Petruzzelli

FAC: Peter Briscoe, Scott Colbourne, Vanessa Craig, Steve Earle, Heather O'Sullivan, Paul O'Sullivan

Information Section	
Marine Superintendent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capt James Bradley (james.bradley@bcferries.com) is currently the Marine Superintendent for the Gabriola Island-Nanaimo Harbour route. • Almost one month with two-ship service in place, and on the whole, the service is operating well. Crews are learning quickly and note that customers have adjusted well to this new service. • On-time performance with two-ships operating; ship based on Gabriola (full operating day) has been very high OTP, and the challenges had happened earlier with the Nanaimo based ship (shorter operating day). Crews on both ships are helping customers get used to minimizing time spent on loading the last vehicles, and may sail with some empty deck space in order to keep on schedule.
Terminals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John MacDonald is the Regional Terminal Operations Manager based at Departure Bay, and is responsible for managing issues related to this route.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing mobile point-of-sale soon, and this will help improve speed of ticketing at Nanaimo Harbour. One person will be in line up ahead of booth adding to payment and issuance of boarding passes. • Traffic lights for right turn making it difficult to get into the terminal. <p>ACTION: J. McDonald to follow up on light adjustment for right turns. COMPLETED: Terminal Manager in regular communications with City of Nanaimo, and adjustment to light timings was made mid/late-May. This seems to have improved the flow, but there is no solution possible to allow unhindered traffic flow into the terminal as before.</p>
<p>Update on FAC review and enhancements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner has started her formal review of the FAC process, Chairs and members of the BC Ferries team are being interviewed and involved in this process now • At the same time, BC Ferries is working to identify areas of improvement to the FAC process through the FAC member survey distributed last August, and ongoing meetings with FAC Chairs. • BCF continues to work with FAC Chairs on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased communication and more opportunities to meet with the FAC membership ○ Enhancements to recruitment and onboarding processes ○ Review and refresh of Terms of Reference ○ Providing more, and more meaningful information to FACs, e.g. route data and performance stats, upcoming projects and plans ○ Earlier involvement of FAC in planning and projects • Enhanced reporting on actions taken as a result of FAC feedback • BC Ferries has developed new route reports, with various information on operations and other issues related to the FAC routes. These will be sent to the FAC shortly, and all feedback is welcomed.
<p>Introducing the new Customer Experience team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC Ferries has introduced a new Customer Experience team as part of our Marketing Department. • This team is focused on identifying and solving common customer pain points across our system. • They monitor customer feedback mechanisms, e.g. customer care feedback tracking, feedback from Ferry Advisory Committee members etc. to identify common pain points and then work to bring the right departments together to find and implement solutions • Natalie McCall is the Customer Experience Manager for Route 19.
<p>BC Ferries website and app development: current conditions page, app launch date</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent changes have been made to the Current Conditions site, where Departure/Arrival, webcams and ferry-tracking features all brought under the CC menu. Next steps are work

	<p>progressing on making as more of the information found on these separate pages all together on the CC page.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent website upgrades are made as revisions. • App launch is set in summer of 2022, with focus group research and design changes still underway. • FAC asked if BCF can consider installing a webcam at Nanaimo Harbour. John will look into the feasibility of installing a webcam.
Discussion Section	
<p>Issues with the new Island Class ships (BCF)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAC has a list of points to raise here for discussion. They are mostly 'small things' like loading the upper deck and larger vehicles. • Ship crews are assessing 'early learnings' as well. • Generally, islanders are happy with the new ships. The most common concern is the narrow loading approach at Descanso Bay. BCF: the Terminal Maintenance team is working on a change (timeline unknown) to allow easier access from the Descanso ramp, and whether a structure could be shortened to make the approach seem wider. • Customers with mobility challenges have expressed concerns with being loaded on the upper decks, and the FAC asked if a process could be considered to allow them to remain on the main deck. • Capt Gillespie replied that allowing any customers who may be hesitant to be loaded on the upper deck could hamper the space on the main deck for larger vehicles that need to use that deck. The sailing is relatively short and BC Ferries needs to rely on a displayed disabled placard as the criterion for keeping people on the main deck. • The crew members do not have time to stop and talk with people who are hesitant about being loaded up the gallery deck, and the vehicles on the gallery deck are unloaded early as a way to reward people for becoming accustomed to using the ramped decks. • Scott suggested that if BC Ferries has any means to manage the traffic in the lineups, this can keep the loading process more efficient. • There are also challenges with low-clearance vehicles during low/high tides, and the crews are aware of which vehicles may risk rubbing during certain tidal conditions. FAC suggests that any communications (website or otherwise) to let customers know when certain vehicles will be unable to safely load during specific tides would be helpful. • Capt Gillespie will forward guidelines/specifications for limiting loading of certain vehicles in specific tidal conditions, and send to FAC via Darin. COMPLETED; shared with FAC.
<p>Issues with the new schedules</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAC has a list of points to raise here for discussion, focusing on end of two-ship service around 5:30 pm.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The addition of a 7:05 am sailing and ensuring a sufficient license for school runs have been beneficial. However, the heavy demand/backup after 5:30 pm (when operating moves to one-ship service) is resulting in long waits/overloads. • BCF is already operating the second ship as long as the shift will allow, and they do not have the crew available to consider sailing the second ship two shifts daily. • FAC suggests shifting the second ship one round-trip later on weekends and during peak season (non-school days). They hope that having two ships operating all day is the end solution in as near future timeline as possible. • Discussion followed on efforts/thoughts to consider moving fewer vehicles and connecting people between modes of transport. • Steve Anderson will work with Operations team to analyse shifting the second ship later during weekends/summers. UPDATE: Operations team have been observing traffic patterns on weekend and considering if/when to move the operating day for the second vessel to later times.
<p>New policy on Nanaimo traffic management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main focus is changes to vehicle staging in the terminal, leaving vehicles outside the booth more frequently. FAC is looking for BC Ferries explanation on this, please. • There are several things causing booth delays, however most are minor and as we are learning with the higher frequencies of sailings, we are making changes and finding efficiencies as we go. We will continue to see different traffic holding patterns over the next year. • The biggest delay with cars on the road is the fact we are training new people in the car booth. We have expanded our employee numbers by seven and are working through crew shortages. • After we stop sales for each sailing (every 35 min), we close the barrier and go through with our clearance process. This can be 3-5 mins if we close sales and are waiting for traffic to get onto the trestle so we can close the barrier for the trestle. • The new ferries does not take the whole lot so we have been selling tickets to cover about 80% capacity of the lot. We save room for ambulances, over heights, commercial, mail truck, etc. The lot may not look completely full as sometimes Lanes 1-3 only have a few vehicles in them, but we have a full ferry inside. As soon as Lanes 4 and 5 are boarded on the ferry, we back fill right away. • After the noon arrival, crew take a lunch break. So after the lot is filled, we hold cars on the street as it is 75 minutes between sailings. • And finally, the lot is emptied after almost every sailing so it looks like we aren't filling it up but with the added sailings, we simply keep re-filling the lot. • FAC has heard that only 'one ferry load' of vehicles is allowed into lot at Nanaimo, even though there is ample space within the terminal for more vehicles. John replied that this

	<p>staging concept was being practiced early in two-ship operation and employees were learning, but this is not being used now. He asked for some patience as new processes continue to be refined, and the mobile POS noted above will make staging even more efficient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heather suggested that customers are expressing lack of communications while waiting in the terminal, and maximizing use of the PA system may help. • Announcements. FAC has heard of inconsistent timing of announcements; they may be done too early, too loud or too long. Capt Gillespie replied that the volume can be controlled, and they are measuring/assessing opportunity to find 'the right volume' (need to be heard on board...but not in the neighbourhood). He added that announcements are only to be made outside 'East point' from Descanso Bay. • As for length of announcements, this is a set process and BC Ferries keeps them as short as possible while aligning with regulatory requirements.
<p>Motorcycles at Descanso Bay terminal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAC is requesting clear policy to be set and communicated on motorcycles staging near the front of the line, but not to use the space dedicated for medical travel. • We have been discussing this with the vessel teams and believe we will be able to work something out for motorcycles. • Steve Earle is providing a suggestion to paint a new motorcycle staging area behind the medical assured area. John replied that he is working a solution very similar to this with the Operations team. • ACTION: John will report back to FAC through Darin.
<p>Issues with notices to the public (FAC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAC and BC Ferries looking to discuss whether to issue Service Notices during the part of the day with two-ships operating and when the ships are off schedule; with ships delayed and departures so close together, customers will never have to wait long for the next sailing. • Ships can easily get on schedule again, as the actual vessels may end up operating on the other ship's schedule, which is immaterial to the customer. • Lots of effort to issue Service Notices and keep them timely. • FAC shared that people stopped getting notices without re-subscribing, and the reasons behind notices seems to have become less clear. SMS is an idea people are suggesting may work. • BC Ferries is looking at how/when/if to issue Service Notices, as both vessels are sailing so close together in sailing times. • Scott noted that there is value in Service Notices if this is close to Dangerous Cargo sailings. Particularly useful is when a boat 'leaves early' and there is a notable gap until the next sailing; let people know a sailing may be leaving earlier than scheduled.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAC suggests that, when ships are running late (and effectively losing a sailing to get back in sync), if the 'vessel space available' (like for Major routes) can be made accessible for customers, this could be helpful. As a rule, the more communications with customers, the better. • BC Ferries acknowledged that customers need 'information context' when they arrive at a terminal, and any communications that can help fill this void would be helpful. More resources/people are being put towards providing Service Notices/information during the full operating day. • Carrie and Karen to work with communications teams to understand how to provide more useful information/context for customers.
Traffic issues on Taylor Bay Road (FAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAC would like to discuss results from previous surveys on this situation. • What is BC Ferries plan to deploy flaggers on Taylor Bay Road this year? • We are not planning to have flaggers on Taylor Bay Road this year. We are waiting to see how the new two ship systems keeps the traffic moving. Remember flaggers are not there to enforce the law. • FAC shared survey results on what people thought about flaggers deployed on Taylor Bay road. • BC Ferries do not have flaggers scheduled, but monitor traffic trends with a goal of looking to request flaggers as needed. John cautioned that the flagger contractors are experiencing employee shortages like many businesses.
Nanaimo Harbour and Descanso Bay terminal development updates (BCF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAC seeking update on latest plan to make improvements at both terminals. • Nanaimo Harbour and Gabriola Island terminals have undergone minor upgrades to support the introduction of the Island Class vessels. Terminal redevelopment plans are currently on hold pending additional First Nations consultation and engagement. • BC Ferries is working through these required engagement stages prior to proceeding with Islands Trust permitting. • Discussion followed around the previous FAC concerns with the names of the vessels on this route.
FAC member terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion sought on FAC terms, with current term set to end December 31. • At this time, there is nothing definite about changes to the number of terms a FAC member can/should serve, but discussions will continue through the summer and fall.
Island Class model for Gabriola Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC Ferries is looking at how many we have, and expect to donate one to the museum directly if we do not have plans for all of them. We'll let the FAC know when this happens.
Open/public discussion/comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC Ferries explained why the ships berth the ways they do at Descanso Bay.

- BC Ferries clarified they must refill their SCUBA bottles only at their Fleet Maintenance Unit in Richmond. FAC suggests this change could be communicated to parties on the island that they used to work with in this equipment change.
- Steve Earle suggests that heating elements on the sundeck are environmentally irresponsible.
- Don E.: compliments BC Ferries on the reduction of ferry noise with the new ships. He enquired if the previously set 4 knot limit inside Descanso Bay, as he has noticed a difference between how the two ships operate. Capt Gillespie noted that there is a 'speed check' that must be carried out by the ships.
- He also suggests that if any measures can be made to minimize the 'steel-to-steel' noise on the ramp at Descanso Bay, this would help minimize noise even further.
- Megan C.: announcements are occasionally being made early after leaving Descanso, and suggests that they be made approximately 1 minute past Eastholm Point. **Capt Gillespie will communicate this announcement timing to crews. COMPLETED.**
- Other: concerns around the lack of capacity after 5:30 pm means longer waits and later evening for people coming to the island. BC Ferries reiterated earlier points about the lack of qualified crew available, and moving to a full-day service with a second ship is not possible at this time. FAC replied that the point made earlier about communicating 'lineup lengths and possible overloads' would become even more valuable with one ship operating in the evenings.