

Ferry Advisory Committee (FAC) - Record of Meeting

Date:	November 20, 2020
Committee Name:	Denman-Hornby Islands
Routes:	21, 22

Attendees:

<p>For the FAC:</p> <p><i>Chair(s):</i> Frank Frketich</p> <p><i>Members</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noel Villard, Ron Edmonds, • Karen Ross, • John Andrew, David Critchley • Jack Forsyth, Rob McCreary • Gillian Forsyth, Alissa Pratt 	<p>For BCF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Anderson • Jeff West • Peter Simpson • Jared Langille • Capt Al de Koninck • Darin Guenette <p>From MOTI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirk Handrahan
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Points of Information/Agreement:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capital projects update. Original plans were to start work this fall at Gravelly Bay, but due to COVID impacts, this project has been postponed to October 2021...with a summer 2022 completion estimate. This is still subject to further budget approvals, but this work focuses on improving lineup/roadway situation and preparing the berth for an Island Class ferry deployment in the future. Due to this postponement, there are flaggers planned/budgeted for peak 2021 at this terminal. As for all other major capital projects, they had also been postponed after initial impact of COVID-19 was felt. Further analysis of each project's scope, budget and need is already underway. The significant impact of decreased revenue projections will mean each project needs a good, hard look and difficult decisions to reduce or cancel projects may be taken. 2. Educational workers assured loading update. Alissa noted that the assured loading from Buckley and Gravelly Bay terminals has been working very well for educational workers destined to Hornby each morning. She thanks BCF for their coordination, as no workers have been late getting to school. 3. Route 22 peak service. During the busy summer months, there are still notable overloads and vehicles backed up in both directions on Route 22 sailings. The FAC wonders if there are options around using a larger summer ferry, providing a direct service between Buckley and Hornby, using a shuttle bus across Denman to reduce the number of vehicles, or other similar initiatives.

Rob noted that the peak season service has been inadequate for some time, and this discussion has been ongoing and he is hoping BCF has ideas. Peter replied that BCF has indeed analysed all these ideas raised to understand viability. Brian added that much of the peak season volume is transitory (going to/from Hornby across Denman), so addressing this provides unique challenges. BCF will continue to work with this FAC on this analysis. He noted that although BCF would not fund land shuttles, we would work with any operator to help ensure connectivity.

David reiterated that there have not been any ideas/plans shown to help address this congestion, and suggests that it may be worth looking at some sort of reservation system to help provide better travel certainty. Brian agrees that reservations would provide a much improved service, and we are currently working on a pilot project for routes that are currently not reservable. From this, BCF needs to understand what is required to enable an effective and efficient reservation system at terminals with limited/no infrastructure and employees.

Rob suggested that the plan to provide a new Route 22 ferry be accelerated, and find a way to add a supplemental ferry on Route 21 to handle the traffic increase impact on that route. He also noted the importance of maintaining Route 21 traditional docks, as there needs to be a reliable backup for when the cable ferry is out of service. To this, Karen asked for BCF commitment to keep these berths serviceable long-term. Al replied that BCF assesses that using a tug to propel the cable ferry if required can provide the same service as if the ferry is self-propelled.

Brian noted that the current plan is to replace the Kahloke in 12 years, and with the significant priorities and strains of the capital plan, he realistically does not see a possibility of moving this plan earlier. Instead, he sees value in keeping a focus on addressing the volatility of peak season demand.

Frank added that, if there is somehow an extra, larger ferry availability, it may be ideal to deploy this larger ferry on Route 22 in the peak season (mid-May to Sept) and keep the Kahloke on the route the remainder of the year. Further discussion followed around ideas to better meet peak season demand (hiring more crew to extend Route 22 operating day, spread out sailings, etc). Frank summarized that this discussion has happened regularly, and we still don't have any ideas/suggestions that can address this issue. He'll work with the FAC for further discussion, and would like to engage BCF in meetings dedicated to this issue.

4. Route 21 vessel capacity increase. Particularly when Route 22 gets a larger vessel, the FAC asks if there will be a viable option to modify the BSC to provide greater capacity. Al noted that BCF is analysing options/ideas of how to extend the cable ferry, but that adding a supplemental ferry on Route 21 is not realistic due to finding and employing crewmembers.
5. Discretionary sailings on both routes. The FAC is concerned of the large number of sailings that are currently 'above Contract', and thus could be removed if financial/operational conditions dictate. Yet the community sees all sailings as required...so how can these sailings be brought back within the Contract.

Kirk noted that MOTI is well aware of this issue and is working with BCF on analysing this issue. Discussions and decisions need to follow when government resumes, but there is stability for the rest of PT-5. He's committed to having discussions looking at if these sailings can be put back into the Contract. Brian concurred that BCF is also committed to

work with the Province in this discussion as well, and he commits to keep the FAC informed as this discussion continues.

In a related note, Kirk noted that the Ministry Transportation vision has focus on reducing vehicle emissions, which includes understanding improving foot passenger movements.

6. Denman Island shuttle funding request. Karen asked if BCF could provide funding to help establish some sort of ground shuttle across Denman Island. Brian noted that BCF would not provide funding for any shuttle, but is ready to work with the communities to make this service connect with ferries. We have done this type of arrangement on other islands, and it works well. Kirk added that the Ministry would be amenable to consider any community-prepared proposal/concept, and whether the Province could be able to support with funding or other assistance. He said there is not currently a funding envelope designated to support these types of initiatives, but with creative discussions/ideas, further discussion is worth exploring.
7. Hornby Island webcam. Karen sought an update on previous requests to have publicly accessible webcam. Darin replied that BCF has established a project that aims to install upgraded CCTV cameras and webcams at more than 30 inter-islands terminals. It was underway, but paused due to COVID impacts and will resume sometime in the next fiscal year. Part of this project will include having these webcams accessible for public.
8. Traffic summary. Over the summer, Route 21 and 22 traffic levels were essentially in line with 2019. Thus, capacity utilization for 2020 was in line with last year. In the past 30-40 days, traffic is approximately 8% down from the same time last year.
9. Terminal wifi. The FAC asked if customers could access wifi that currently exists at small terminals. Jeff noted that wifi at non-Major terminals is not a focus now, as the challenges wifi have proven to present are more challenging than originally thought. Karen notes that internet dead zones are frustrating for customers, so wifi would be very valuable.
10. Face coverings. Jack noted he sees crews wearing masks, but not covering their noses. Also, he's seeing customers not wearing masks consistently, and thinks crew members could probably do a better job of reminding people in lounges. Al will discuss how crews can improve their wearing and reminding of customers. Noel suggests that it would be useful for crew members to have masks on hand to give to customers who forget. Jeff noted that the ticket booths do hold a limited supply of paper masks when customers seem to have forgotten to carry one.
11. Hornby visitor guides. Karen shared her appreciation for employees continuing to distribute this guide, as it's very helpful. Jeff will ensure employees know of this appreciation.
12. Route 21 7 pm sailing from Buckley Bay. Frank hears from community members that the two-hour gap between 6 and 8 pm is troublesome, and he wonders if there is any feasibility to fit in an extra round-trip sailing at this time. Peter noted that the crew are using that time for meal breaks and other activities, and foregoing this break is very expensive. Al added that, if there is a significant backup of traffic the crew can shuttle during that time...but making this scheduled would typically mean sailings would need to be removed elsewhere in the schedule. He'll explore ideas further with the crew.
13. Installation of the last steel cable. Darin summarized that a plan is in place to replace the centre drive cable with a flattened steel cable in January. This will be done overnight and may require cancelling sailings. Further plans include replacement of bullwheel system parts in March or April, and this will require alternate service for a period of days. Darin will keep FAC informed as dates of all these work times are set.

14. Closing remarks. Brian thanked the FAC for this virtual format and honest discussion. BCF understands that it seems some issues don't progress, but they're still keen on looking for ideas that can help. Karen will send questions to Darin about if/how internet ground equipment can be installed at BCF terminals (Coastal Connect project).

Action Items¹:

Item	Who	By When
1. Confirm if wifi is possible at minor terminals.	Brian	As soon as reasonable
2. Discuss proper mask wearing and reminding of customers.	AI	Immediately
3. Look at whether 7 pm sailings can be scheduled on Route 21.	AI	Nov/Dec