

North & Central Coast Ferry Advisory Committee

May 2022 Meeting Agenda

Monday, May 2, 2022, 11:30 am – 2:30 pm
The Westin Wall Centre, Richmond

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
Intros 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 5. 2021 Customer Satisfaction Tracking survey summary (attachment) 	10 mins
Discussion section <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow up from Northern Expedition 2021 engine problem. 2. Reservation process. 3. Sailing cancellations. 4. Comfort/convenience issues. 5. Cafeteria 6. Terminals 7. Shearwater weather. 8. Service level restorations. 9. Kwuna refit plan. 10. Crewing challenges 	2.5 hours
Final questions and close	10 mins

Attached: Meeting topic log & 2021 CST results

North & Central Coast 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, Carrie McIntosh, Peter Simpson, Capt Derek Sweet, Jordan Knutsen, Karen Johnston, Karen Tindall, Kayleigh Thorpe, Darin Guenette, Tamara Olson

Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure: Kirk Handrahan

FAC: Barry Cunningham, Scott Farwell, Mark Schlichting, Fred Robertson, Reg Moody, Lisa Pineault, Evan Putterill, Sam Harrison

Information Section	
Marine Superintendent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capt Derek Sweet (derek.sweet@bcferries.com) is the Marine Superintendent for the region, including Routes 10, 11, 26 and 28. • Vessel refits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ N.Expedition; ongoing until May 25. ○ N.Sea Wolf; ongoing until May 18. ○ Kwuna; late-Sep/early-Oct 4 to late-Nov/early-Dec, with tug/barge as relief service. ○ N.Adventure; Jan 4-Mar 4, 2023, with N.Exp as relief vessel on Routes 10 and 11. • New mattresses will be provided in the cabins on the Northern Expedition during refit, and the ship will be deep cleaned. Refit is focused on maintenance and is on schedule.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Sea Wolf refit will not result in any major customer-facing changes, just a refresh and deep cleaning. Refit is focused on maintenance and is on schedule. • Discussion around refit plans, including any deferred work for the Northern Sea Wolf and the potential to have television sets/movies on the Northern Expedition. The Northern Sea Wolf will have deferred architectural work (e.g. covered bridge wing), but no mechanical items are being deferred as these are prioritized. There are no plans for televisions/movies on the Northern Expedition immediately but the feedback has been captured. • Kwuna refit could be moved 10 days earlier which reduces weather window risks and provides buffer so that it can be back in service for December travel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If not doing the full schedule, perhaps there could be additional sailings to support remaining tourism and hunting season travellers because tug and barge has less capacity than Kwuna. ○ FAC would like to have same number of sailings each day. Capacity utilization is not always the best marker to drive service from in the North. ○ BCF could look at additional sailings if needed, extending days, scheduling frequent sailings throughout the day to avoid gaps etc. ○ Will barge will be available for ambulance calls? BCF will check to see what has been done before since this is something that has been actively considered previously. FAC requests that BCF be able to assure folks that they will have ambulance call-out service for barge during refit. <p>ACTION ITEMS: Derek Sweet will check previous contracts and the terms of ambulance call-out service and will incorporate it into the contract for the refit time with tug and barge.</p>
Terminals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Megan Caldwell (megan.caldwell@bcferries.com) is the Regional Terminal Operations Manager based in Comox, and is responsible for managing issues related to these routes. Peter Bolza (Port Hardy) and Carlos Verissimo (Prince Rupert) are Terminal Operations Managers working in this team. • Many thanks for the communities' patience with the service recovery activities last week. We recognize this was a stressful time for all. • We continue to recruit actively for our Northern Routes for terminals. • What is loading process at Bear Cove? It seems to take it longer than it should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There has been a change in process, taking walk-on passengers after cabins are cleaned instead of while cabins are being cleaned. Because this can be disruptive

	<p>to cleaning processes and slow the process down, we have been trying to hold people until everything is complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BCF is going to try something different, so that everyone can be loaded before cleaning is complete, which seems to be the biggest barrier to leaving on time right now. ○ FAC members have also noticed that store loading by davit can block traffic and delay departures. ○ Ticketing also appears to be holding up the efficient onboarding and departure times. ○ Loading of the Northern Adventure requires folks to back on to the ship, which takes time and adds level of complexity to loading process. Load plans are sailing-by-sailing because each load is different (multi-port destinations, size and mix of vehicles etc.).
<p>Update on FAC review and enhancements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commissioner has completed her formal review of the FAC process and is expected to release a report in May. ● Meanwhile, BC Ferries is working with FAC Chairs to identify areas of improvement to the FAC process, with the most recent meeting on April 20. ● 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, FAC terms, application process, etc ○ 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. Q3 reports 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 Northern routes.

<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 include pulling information found on separate webpages all together on the CC page. • Frequent website upgrades are made as part of regular revisions. These revisions batch changes together in a priority sequence. • The launch of a mobile is set for fall 2022, with beta testing scheduled for summer. • FAC has heard some feedback that Northern Routes are difficult to find at the bottom of the screen. • Mobile app will know people's preferences which will make it easier for people to see their preferred routes and schedules • FAC requested that they be provided with an updated contact list for relevant BCF staff. <p>ACTION ITEMS: Darin will send a full contact list to the FAC, including the Community Relations team, all NCC FAC members, Ops contacts, and Customer Experience. COMPLETED.</p>
<p>Discussion Section</p>	
<p>Northern Expedition engine failure in 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAC follow-up on: understanding the cause and BCF preventative actions to prevent recurrence. • They are completing some engine analysis on this refit to see if there are other opportunities to decrease wear and improve reliability where we know weaknesses exist. • We are looking at the areas where weaknesses exist and continuing to monitor so that we are on top of wear and tear before they become issues. • The ops teams are looking to run the ships a little easier to reduce wear, increasing time en route. This would be mean 5-20 mins difference in arrival time. • FAC members noted the impact on the community of the service disruption that occurred last summer and the desire to do everything possible to mitigate the potential for this to happen again. • Sharing service with Route 10 is very disruptive and it would be best to have a different alternative service plan in the future. <p>North coast service is different than other areas being completely dependent on the ferry for goods and services and the severe impact of disruption on the community and economy.</p>
<p>Reservation booking process and systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait-listing; vehicle wait-listing, cabin waitlists, reservation system waitlist integration. • Deck space allocation by vehicle types (UH, OH, Comm, etc). • Commercial vehicle/drop trailer/hostling integration does not work unless 1 passenger is selected. • Travel card not accepted for online reservations or to pay for wait-listed cabins on board.

- Cancellation fees; \$60 (Rte 10, 28), \$30 (Rte 11), \$200 Comm/bus...if within 30 days of travel – versus \$25 within 7 days on other routes is seen as unfair.
- Bella Bella extended layover should be considered as one reservation, not two...and subject to only one cancellation fee.
- BCF info:
 - We aim to ensure customers are not on the waitlist wherever possible, and when space becomes available, Zoe's team reaches out to confirm booking. Note that for TAPs customers, we work to move them to higher priority on the waitlist, and if reason for travel is medical urgency (chemo treatment, etc), Key Accounts works to confirm a booking for them as much as possible.
 - Allocation by vehicle type. We aim to find right balance by route and time-of-year, and are open to hearing if FAC feel this needs adjusting.
 - Unfortunately, wait-listing online is not available.
 - Yes, hostling requires special handling and is therefore not available on line. Please call 1-888-223-3779 to make these specialized arrangements.
 - Travel card for booking. If a company is set up with a Master Business Account- yes you can book on line and pay with a Travel Card or a Commercial Travel Card.
 - Cancellation fees. The cancellation fee is based on value of fares, so it is higher for longer routes with higher fares. NOTE: previous discussions with FAC resulted in a request to raise the commercial fee to \$200, as an incentive to reduce spurious bookings.

Waitlist

- Getting the wait list online is part of the website backlog items for change. ETA for this to happen is before summer.
- We are also trying to simplify the booking process for the North to match with the mobile app booking process. We are trying to do both simultaneously.
- We are tracking anyone who is trying to book and is unable to so that we can take this into consideration in our planning.

Deck space allocations

- Seems to be ongoing issue of large number of waitlisted cars being able to make it on the ferry, which makes it difficult to plan, and is likely preventing ppl from travelling when they would make it on. It continues to be a significant concern for communities.
- Long wait lists and people who are far down on the list (20+) getting on
- Some of the last minute available space could be a combo of people cancelling and the customer care team not having time to contact people ahead of time, no shows, and available buffer space being used.

- If there are consistent numbers of wait listed people getting on the sailing, perhaps the buffer doesn't need to be there, or BCF should consider over-booking?
- Is there a way to hold commercial vehicles accountable for using the space they book, and needing to cancel ahead of time so that others can be assured of their travel?
- At what point is commercial space made available for wait listed or regular booking?
- BCF regularly monitors how space is being used and how allocations are being utilized by carriers so that they can adjust allocations accordingly. Another review is due for June.

Hostling bookings online

- We will allow hostling to be booked online. Customer care team will call the customer who has booked hostling to confirm details and booking. This is in the works now.

Travel card booking

- Travel card bookings are available for commercial accounts.
- Customer care team can help people get things set up so this can be done.

Cancellation fees

- 30 days is a long time in advance to require cancellation without penalty, and the spot is likely easy to resell. Is it possible to reduce the cancellation policy?
- BCFs cancellation policy was established some time ago with community consultation. But it likely makes sense to revisit the policy.
- FAC has heard of people being charged two cancellation fees for a trip with two-legs. There should be only one cancellation fee as it is all the same trip.
- For multi-port loads, it seems it is difficult for people to book (e.g. from Klemtu and Bella and Bella). People can't reserve, but there is actually lots of room on the vessel. Appears there is a gap between what the system shows and what is actually happening on the ground. BCF will hold a meeting between customer care, tariff and revenue, and ops to see what can be done.
- People just want to know the space is available and be able to book it. They want to know what is actually available and be able to access it.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Karen Tindall and Jordan Knutsen will look at how commercial bookings are being handled and how/when allocations are being made available to others - in progress.
- Karen and Jordan to explore whose job it is to monitor commercial bookings/cancellations/allocations as this does require a dedicated person – in progress.
- Karen will look at the timing requirement for cancellations as part of the second look at allocations etc – in progress.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCF to hold meeting re: multi-port loading reservation process and information flow. • BCF ops to explore cabin cleaning out of Bella Bella. • BCF to provide an update on cancellations and allocations once customer care team and ops have an opportunity to review and recommend changes.
Sailing Cancellations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion sought on cancellations versus postponement. Standard procedures for adverse weather and making decision on whether to cancel or delay sailings. • Compensation for cancelled sailings. <p>MEETING NOTES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vessels used to load up and hide behind Banks Island and wait the weather out. Now it seems the policy is to cancel in advance of weather even if it does not materialize. • In the past, policy was to postpone and when sailings were delayed to point of being a combined sailing, the first people booked were given priority. • The policy changed without consultation and now sailings are cancelled and people are forced to rebook with no priority given on next sailing. It does not sound like people are getting assistance with rebooking or being called when cancellations occur. • It seems there are more cancellations happening now than ever before. • Cancellations have significant impact on health care, food access etc. • There was a procedural change with each route adopting a standard weather matrix, which may not be working for the North. • Perhaps we should revisit the cancellation policy in place due to the impact on the North, and move towards a delay policy instead. • FAC members would like to see it move back towards policy where first impacted people are prioritized. • Response time to service recovery during longer disruptions appeared to be delayed during the latest service disruption. BCF did start recovery plans immediately but it took some time for charter flights to get crew and for organization of flights. Tug and barge was unavailable. • FAC suggested that local float planes be part of the service recovery plans, not just the larger planes. • Notice of charter flights was provided by service notice, but the notices were delayed to the community making it difficult for people to know what was happening or to access those services. • Cargo-only sailing was very well received by the community. • Would be good to see the charter flights be the go-to plan faster. <p>ACTION ITEMS:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karen Tindall and Derek Sweet, and others from BCF will discuss the cancellation/delay policy to see if we can move back to postponement vs. cancellation for the North to mitigate impacts when cancellations occur. • BCF will check to see what process was followed for updating service notices as the recent service recovery plans were finalized. The updates may not have been sent to the distribution list and were perhaps posted to website without proactive notice. • BCF to connect with Evan Putterill to get list of local charter operators he deals with regularly. COMPLETED. Darin has connected with Evan and has shared charter information with internal teams.
<p>Route 10/11 comfort and convenience issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting and temperature levels. Lighting of the lounges in the evening has limitations, for example, some lights can be turned off while others are deemed emergency lighting and must remain on. On the N. Adventure we intentionally keep the lights on near the children's play area, unfortunately this is also an area where passengers like to sleep given the bench seating. • Wifi access. Technology for this option has proven very challenging, even on our southern vessels, it was discontinued. Alternately, we are focusing on implementing free wifi access at our terminals where possible. • Sleeping pods/lie-flat seats; N.Exp and Adv designed with too many seats and too few sleeping options for capacities...with cabins often booked year-round. BC Ferries is not exploring options for these types of seats at this time. • Cabins; are 100% of the cabins being cleaned and rented each evening sailing? • Possibility to board walk-on passengers earlier, so they can wait on board for cabins to open instead of at terminals? BC Ferries had used this common practice in the past but it became problematic as customers waiting for cabins became impatient. They would enter the cabin area when rooms were being cleaned, and this created a hazard – resulting in the current practice. We are open to ideas for reconsidering this with more effective passenger control. • People would appreciate the ability to dim the lighting and provide comfort for those wanting to rest at night. It's important for folks who are not able to book a cabin so they can rest. • Wifi onboard is not an option at this time. FAC suggests BCF consider offering some onboard entertainment system for folks. • In a future refit the FAC would recommend looking at adding some lie-flats or pods that can increase sleeping space onboard. Anything that could be implemented sooner would be beneficial. Seems there are more seats than needed and not enough cabins. • On Northern Expedition, the option of two or four bedroom cabins would be well received.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are on the waitlist for cabins also seem to be getting called at length. Is there a hold-back on cabins? If so, can BCF make changes to allow people certainty on cabin bookings. • BCF holding 10 cabins for training purposes. Once training is complete, those will be released. We do hold some cabins back for medical and emergency travel. These cabins are managed by operations based on what's needed for each sailing. • Opportunity to use announcements to build relationship with central and north coast communities. <p>ACTION ITEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derek will check with Senior Chief Engineers and Senior Masters to see what the possibilities are. Some ships the lighting is easier to control in sections than in others. • Natalie is working on incorporating indigenous knowledge/points of interest in announcements. She is welcome to follow up with KITASOO and Scott Farwell's NBC Indigenous Tourism contacts – in progress.
Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not being opened for early morning arrivals, and FAC suggests this is a safety issue with long drives after early arrivals in isolated locations. Food needs to be prepared for staff anyway, so can cafeteria be open for customers for every AM arrival? BC Ferries notes that Skidegate is the only port of call where this is relevant. However, to ensure adequate crew rest periods, we do not have sufficient Catering crew to open for service. We have tried some reduced options selling product out of the Stewards office and even offered complimentary coffee. Very few customers showed any interest so we suspended these offerings. • Food choices were going to be revised prior to COVID similar to major routes with healthier, less "cafeteria" options...this never happened. BC Ferries outlines that the Northern route menu very closely mirrors that of the Southern vessels. COVID challenges have caused us to reduce the options somewhat but we are hopeful things will return to normal. For now we are focusing on the items that have historically been in the biggest demand by our customers. • Very limited beer/wine choices which are often hidden from passengers. BC Ferries offers three types of beer plus a red and white wine. The intent is to offer enough choices, highlighting BC products while managing our inventory. When the N.Expedition first came into service and the buffet was open, we had a significant selection of drinks including draft beer and cocktails. Based on customer demand we scaled back to what we have today. • Difficult for passengers to see they can't get a cup of coffee or a good meal, but see the crew eating/drinking.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there are options for self-serve to open options for people that would be appreciated. • Winter time may be the time to trial more food options for folks to see what the uptake is. • It is unlikely that the buffet will open on Route 10. This area will be repurposed and BCF is looking at options for this space (e.g. some of the suggestions the group provided during this meeting) <p>ACTION ITEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natalie is working on getting early morning coffee on the sailings and more options for food on these sailings. UPDATE: Route 11 crew are arranging for coffee to be available for early (6 am) arrivals at Skidegate; more discussion on providing as much for customers as feasible continues.
Terminals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shearwater needs a new or reconfigured terminal since the NSW cannot land in the strong SE winds that we commonly experience in winter. (Ideally we get a terminal big enough for Expedition/Adventure landings - like Klemtu- to eliminate need for alternative service during NSW refits and service interruptions). Changes planned? • BC Ferries has current plan for marine structure improvement in the April 2029-March 2030 period. • Mac Bay/Bella Bella needs landside facility improvements to allow for efficient vehicle management and loading (currently procedure is very "ad hoc"). Also is a return of access for boats to drop off/pickup of foot passengers planned? • Can Port Hardy review and revamp loading procedures to streamline process and eliminate the need to be there 2 hours in advance. Would also like to see EV charging stations installed in P. Hardy and P. Rupert terminal parking lots. • Skidegate: safety concerns with proposed renovation • Security and liability issues appear to be at play when considering the ability to drop foot passengers at the terminal by boat. It would be beneficial to be able to offer this capacity again. • BC Hydro is rolling out their rapid charging network up and down the coast. BCF could reach out to BC Hydro to see if they could get rapid EV charging stations close to the terminals. • Skidegate terminal redevelopment discussion tabled for future discussion. FAC would like to have a discussion re: logistical concerns with plans. <p>ACTION ITEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCF will revisit this and see if there is ability to reinstate this access. Peter Simpson will explore what the original reason for removing access, and start the conversation about

	<p>the ability to reinstate it. COMPLETED: Due to hazards and safety concerns on the pontoon/catwalk/ramp, we do not permit access for private boats. When alternate service (N. Sea Wolf in refit) is in place, we permit the water taxi to dock under controlled conditions, and then always with two BC Ferries staff to attend and safely escort our paying customers. Public access is available at the fish plant floating docks next to our terminal.</p>
Shearwater weather and loading options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When weather is poor, can BCF call Denny Island passengers with the option of loading the NSW on the 'first Shearwater stop' to avoid the possibility of being left if second stop is missed due to the worsening weather?
Service level restorations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 10 shoulder season and Route 11 to 6 round-trips in peak season; feasible? • Yes, it is feasible to add sailings on both routes, but this warrants further discussion. • BCF and MOTI are in discussions re: Performance Term Six and service levels for this next contract, and these service levels for 10 and 11 will be part of that discussion. • There will not be anything for this year, but moving ahead for future and for PT6 timeframe this is being explored. • May be worth the FAC having discussions with MLA to ensure she is aware of community desires.
Kwuna refit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of alternate service schedule
Crewing shortage risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAC sought discussion on risks that crewing shortages could see service drop below core levels. • It is a tough year for crewing across our system • Challenge in North is resiliency for short-term absences. • Recruiting senior deck and engineering crew has been challenging • For engineering resources, there is a high need for these positions because they are required for maintenance time as well as operational hours. • COVID and the waves of illness that move through communities is also creating challenges for crewing and resulting in short-term disruptions • The crew is thin for the summer, the likelihood that more shortages will occur is high, though it is impossible to predict where or when those shortages will happen. • BCF has been managing crew resources as carefully as possible to ensure resiliency and that we preserve the crew we do have. Many crew are stepping up through over time and additional shifts to keep things running and we are being cognizant that we don't burn them out. • BCF is heavily invested in recruiting and hiring now with many activities underway including hiring fairs, active recruitment, bringing back retirees, cross-training, internal development etc.

