

North & Central Coast Ferry Advisory Committee April 2023 Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, April 25, 2022, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

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"> • Welcome • Approval of agenda 	5 mins
Information section <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BC Ferries Operational updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine superintendent • Terminals 	10 mins
Discussion section <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waitlist information on website 2. Route/Terminal Information on website 3. Route 26 cut-off times 4. Reservation booking process - barge 5. Schedule update for Route 11 6. TAPs Update 7. Advertising and Communication of FAC Meetings 8. Next FAC Meeting 	1.5 hours
Final questions and close	5 mins

Year at a glance – dates of interest noted at end of agenda

North & Central Coast Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting Topic Log

April 2023

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: Peter Simpson, Captain Derek Sweet, Carrie McIntosh, Tamara Olson, Tudor Popa, Natalie McCall, Peter Bolza, Carlos Verissimo, Steve Anderson, Arielle Houghton

Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure:

FAC: Elizabeth Aman-Hume, Evan Putterill, Fred Robertson, Jesse Embree, Michelle (Ooka) Pineault, Steve Emery, Barry Cunningham

Information Section	
Marine Superintendent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vessel refits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Northern Expedition 19-Mar-23 24-May-23; relief vessel Northern Adventure ○ Northern Sea Wolf 27-Feb-23 24-May-23 ○ Northern Adventure 2-Oct-23 31-Oct-23; relief vessel Not Required ○ Northern Adventure 12-Feb-24 12-Mar-24; relief vessel Not Required ○ Northern Expedition 24-Mar-24 22-May-24; relief vessel Northern Adventure • Shearwater berth remains unusable by NSW and service continues to be provided by Tug & Barge and Water Taxi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BCF, MoTI and Heiltsuk Nation continue to meet to discuss the options and next steps on the Shearwater Berth

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McLoughlin Bay and Shearwater supplementing service with tug and barge. There is no firm date for changes but we will update the FAC as soon as known. • BCF has been working hard to avoid cancelling services and issuing delay notices instead when possible. There have only been several cancellations this year. The new process appears to be working well.
Terminals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jordan Knutsen is the Director of Terminal Operations who also oversees the Northern Central Coast. • Peter Bolza (Port Hardy) and Carlos Verissimo (Prince Rupert) are Terminal Operations Managers working in this team. • McLoughlin Bay uplands work will be taking place, with no impact on service until further notice – still in planning stages and we will provide more updates to FAC and community • CN adding secondary line by terminal – don't expect any operational impact • BCF has had a successful hiring season. There have been ground breaking changes in our staffing approaches which will allow us to provide terminal services at a higher level of readiness for the coming season. With our expanded team in place we plan to deliver quality service and hope to exceed expectations. We have also secured contractors at Klemtu, Ocean Falls, and Bella Coola to ensure ongoing operational efficiency • Since the start of 2023, northern route terminal managers have visited all of Route 10 & 11 terminals looking for opportunities for improvement. <p>FAC member, S. Emery, shared the community's dissatisfaction with the current tug and barge service on Denny Island and requested more information from BC Ferries on when and what actions will be taken to improve the service. Furthermore, a lack of taxi service in Bella Coola means that travellers must wait 8 hours at the terminal before their vehicle arrives. Furthermore, the clerks often do not know how to process reservations for the water taxi and barge service creating further inconvenience for travellers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCF responded that while we are examining various options for replacement infrastructure, no decisions have been made. Building the structures which will take an additional 6 months. We have more collaborations to do with stakeholders which takes time. • ACTION: BCF to share meeting dates and more information as soon as available with FAC. • The FAC suggested building a dock on the other side of Denny Island so a larger ferry can service the community when Northern Sea Wolf is in refit. • FAC notes that there is planning and decision making going on but the community isn't being consulted. FAC requests more consultation with the CCRD and more community input. • BCF and local First Nations are having preliminary meetings and once those meetings have taken place then we will look at opportunities to bring the Ferry Advisory Committee and community members to provide input. • ACTION: BCF to follow up with FAC and CCRD for opportunities for input on the rebuild of the Denny Island berth.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FAC asked for more information on the condemnation of the dock. Why wasn't more testing done on an ongoing basis ensure the integrity of the steel? This has impacts on the communities and local tourism. • BCF regrets the current situation and has already integrated lessons learned from Shearwater dock with terminal engineering to ensure that any future structures are tested for these types of flaws.
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Follow up Items	
Commercial bookings	<p>How commercial bookings are being handled and how/when allocations are being made available to others - in progress. Investigating in early May</p> <p>Who is monitoring commercial bookings/cancellations/allocations as this does require a dedicated person – in progress</p> <p>Timing requirement for cancellations as part of the second look at allocations etc – in progress.</p> <p>Allocation for over height and under height vehicles are done when sailings are booked. Terminal supervisors work diligently to assess if and when the commercial trailers will arrive by calling ahead. If the commerce space will not be utilized then the reservation is cancelled and the space is released to other commercial vehicles followed by the under height and non-commercial. The timing for cancellations is 5 days or there is a cancellation fee. Typically the transportation companies are good at notifying us ahead of time. Only rarely do we get a no-show due to weather or accidents. In that case, the company will be charged a fee and the space will be reallocated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FAC asked for further clarification on the process for vessels with multiple stops. • The process is the same. We look at the space that is booked into each terminal. It is all about paying attention to the numbers, the terminals, and the standby list. The last thing we want to do is impact someone in the mid-coast if we are wrong. • Based on feedback received from the last FAC meeting we have been working hard to managing the waitlist. When vehicles come to the terminal they have a number based on their order on the reservation list, unless someone has a TAP form. A real effort has gone into ensuring we are loading in order of the waitlist. • The FAC shared an experience where there was a waitlist on Route 11 (Prince Rupert to Haida Gwaii) however when the sailing left there was empty vehicle deck space onboard. While locals are willing to arrive at the terminal without a reservation, those travelling from farther distance will not risk it. The concern is that revenue is lost due to poor management of the waitlist. • BCF works to ensure all sailings are fully booked. Unfortunately, some vehicles do not show up for their reservations or for their waitlisted positions.

	<p>ACTION: Z. King to provide a record of the average number of cars on waitlist on Northern Routes and the average number of cars from waitlist that ultimately board the ferry.</p> <p>The FAC asked for the cancellation policy for non-commercial vehicles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you make a booking online all the terms and condition are provided on the website. If cancelling within 30 from departure sailing, there is no penalty. If within 30 days there is a service fee (\$60 fee for Route 10 and \$30 for Route 11). Is that working, are people cancelling not just showing up? Yes, for the most part. As you must pre-pay for the fare, people are cognisant of cancelling to get their full money back. If people are cancelling the day before, they get called and people are called from the waitlist based on their position. <p>ACTION: BCF to summarize all the actions that have been taken by terminal and vessel on this topic and share with FAC in meeting notes and put on the community page.</p>
Cabin cleaning	<p>Cabin cleaning out of Bella Bella – BCF explored the options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BCF ferries put a request for a contractor but none were available. If a cleaner was contracted, BCF would be required to pay a minimum 4 hours of service which would make it no longer economically viable. Cabin space can be booked ahead of time any leg of Route 10. The cabin would remain vacant until it reached the stop where the passenger boards the vessel. Another option examined was to have extra catering staff to clean which was also cost prohibitive. Furthermore there were concerns that noise of the vacuum and cleaning would disturb adjacent cabins. Therefore due to cost, availability of resources, and not imposing on other paying customers, no cabin cleaning will take place out of individual ports.
Cancellation/delay policy	<p>Move back to postponement vs. cancellation for the North to mitigate impacts when cancellations occur –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instead of cancellations notices BCF is now postponing service.
Lighting	<p>Ability to dim lights for those not in cabins – this is something that is being considered for the next refit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We’ve been able to dim the lights in some vessels. Depending on the layout of the ship other areas must remain well lit for safety reasons. While some travellers want it darker, others want more light so they are able to read. We continue to work to meet the needs of all our customers by making some areas dimmer for those who want to rest and others light enough for those who do not.
Announcements	<p>Incorporating Indigenous knowledge/points of interest in announcements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BCF continues to update our Point of Interest announcements on northern vessels in collaboration with members of local First Nations. We will be validating anything we are adding with local Nations.

Discussion Section	
Waitlist information on website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAC have asked if the waitlist information can be more prominent on the website. When you click on the (i) button beside the "cabins sold out" message the pop up text reads: "Cabins are sold out or unavailable on this ferry." <p>Both of these would be great opportunities to indicate that there is an option to waitlist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideally there should be a "waitlist" button directly adjacent to the "all cabins are sold out" message rather than having a "continue" button way down at the bottom of the page <p>FAC requests that the waitlist information be more prominently displayed on website; not at the bottom of the screen. FAC request that an information is added over top of the "cabin sold/out unavailable" text on the screen, or that the option to be placed on waitlist is displayed more prominently and closer towards the "add cabin(s)" section of the page. Alternatively, add a check-box that says "I would like to be waitlisted".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACTION: Z. King to share this feedback with web team <p>Any suggestions received from the FAC is being sent by Z. King to the Director for opportunities next time we are looking at the booking flow webpages for updates.</p>
Route/Terminal Information on website	<p>Request to have only Route 26 information on route 26 page and Route 11 information only on route 11 page. Having both on both page is confusing.</p> <p>The information provided on the schedule page about the check-in times is for all terminals that apply. For Route 26 we have information about Route 11 because the terminal services both Prince Rupert and Alliford. This is standard across all our schedule pages and is there to ensure travellers who are planning for connecting trips or travelling through have the information as needed. As such this information cannot be removed from the Route 26 schedule page.</p> <p>There are plans to re-design and rebuild the website for the Northern routes booking, when we are closer to that stage of re-build we will ensure to involve the FAC for feedback.</p>
Route 26 cut-off times	<p>Sales cut-off time 3 minutes prior to sailing for cars and 5 minutes for walk-ons.</p> <p>We are updating the policy and website to reflect the updated cut of times requested by the FAC and to reflect what is happening at the terminals.</p> <p>For travel to Alliford Bay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel is based on order of arrival at the terminal Ticket sales and check-in close 3 minutes for vehicle and 5 minutes for foot passengers

	<p>On the Route 26 schedule page for Alliford to Skidegate, the check-in times are: Boarding is based on order of arrival at the terminal. Check-in closes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 minutes prior to the scheduled sailing for foot passengers. • 3 minutes prior to the scheduled sailing for vehicles.
<p>Reservation booking process - barge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers having issues being able to book space on the barge • The website states that reservations are sold out rather than asking customers to call the 1-888 number while Sea Wolf is in refit • Customers being told reservations are full, when there is still space available <p>We have recently hired a number of new staff and we are working through coaching our new hires on the process for reservation bookings for the NCC.</p> <p>The issue at times is space between Port Hardy and Bella Bella, but not between Bella Bella, Shearwater, Ocean Falls and Bella Coola.</p> <p>Barge and water taxi service reservation is currently incompatible with the online system. Therefore, customers are required to call the 1-888-223-3779 phone number in order to receive booking support. We acknowledge that BCF staff need additional and ongoing training to take reservations for the tug and barge system which is complicated even on the phone. We have trained four classes of casual employees who are receiving training alongside existing staff on this issue. Please continue to reach out to Z. King to report opportunities for staff development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FAC requested that the option to book between Denny Island and McLoughlin Bay online be removed from the website and replaced with the 1-888 number for bookings. The FAC acknowledges that BCF has updated the service notice banner on the booking page to ask customers to call, but their concern is that customers do not review this service notice and proceed to attempt to book online. The FAC provided several examples customers and contractors failed attempts to book online, only to call the FAC to learn they must call to make a reservation. <p>ACTION: Z. King to take this request back to the team to investigate options.</p>
<p>Schedule update for Route 11</p>	<p>Enhanced summer service to 6 trips per week starting mid-June to mid-September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCF is looking to continue these additional round trips for future years as well. In addition, there is additional extra service scheduled for a portion of the shoulder season, in September on Route 11. During this time there are an addition 4-5 round trips compared to previous years. • FAC thank BCF for implementing their feedback to provide additional service. Unfortunately, some travellers still do not know about the enhanced schedule until they go to book on the website. The FAC

	<p>requests that BCF do more promotion of this “good news story” to let people know that Wednesday sailing will return this year.</p> <p>ACTION: BCF to investigate where to promote the additional sailings on Route 11 and is open to receive feedback/input on where best to share this information.</p> <p>BCF shared a slight change in the schedule with the FAC. In summer 2022 the sailing departed on at 11:00 pm Tuesday night, while this summer it will depart Wednesday morning to align with crewing change. This may alternate year to year for crewing requirements.</p>
TAP Update	<p>BC Ferries is planning to launch an enhancement to the Ministry of Health TAP program</p> <p>To provide more travel certainty, passengers will able to book a free reservation online then redeem your booking at the terminal by presenting a completed TAP form to the ticket agent. This will be available on all bookable routes, where space is available.</p> <p>An enhancement to ministry of health Travel Assistance Program (TAP) is being announced today. BCF will now offer free reservations for those with the completed TAP and Medical Assured Loading (MAL) form. FAC Chairs have reviewed this new process as part of our engagement process and answers to FAQ can be found here: https://www.bcferries.com/book-sailings/medical-assured-loading</p> <p>The FAC questioned if the information has been distributed to local health centers. As part of BCF’s communications plan, information about the new MAL and TAP program has been sent to all health centers across the province. The BC ministry has shared it with their communications channels.</p> <p>ACTION: T. Olson will go back to our list to confirm that First Nations health authorities, specifically Skidegate, has been included in TAP/MAL communications.</p>
Advertising and Communication of FAC Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAC meetings are open to the public and we advertise to the community for those who would like to attend and observe. Feedback is being asked from the FAC for this. <p>Pre-pandemic, the North and Central Coast FAC primarily met in person in Vancouver. While this meeting may have technically been an open meeting, operationally this was unrealistic given the distant location. Those who wish to attend may have items added to the agenda with permission of the chair and with time permitting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAC members agreed that while public engagement is welcome, the FAC meeting itself is not the best format for people to ask questions. Rather, members suggested creating a “forum” or “road-show” where public can attend and hear from committee members and BCF staff. Ideally, this would take place at least once a year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCF expressed great interest in meeting face to face with community members along the coast, adding that resource constraints (time for travel, staffing, costs) create a significant constraint. • An FAC member suggested recording the meeting and sharing it online, similar to municipal councils meetings. In addition, FAC meetings could be actively shared by committee members to their respective communities to encourage feedback. The feedback from that engagement could be brought forward to future meetings. • BCF reminded the committee that the community page (https://www.bcferreriesprojects.ca/north-central-coast) is also a tool that can be used to collect feedback and engage the public. While BCF does not typically post meeting recording, we do post the meeting minutes which are available on the community pages, website and shared with the FAC. • FAC consensus is that public are welcome to the FAC meeting, and can present questions to the chair in writing in advance of the meeting. • FAC recommendations to advertise through local government and First Nations. In addition, BCF was invited to share ads with FAC to distribute to their networks. Acknowledging print media is scarcer along the northern coast, the FAC offered the following media outlets: Port Hardy's the North Island Gazette and The Eagle, The North View in Prince Rupert, the Haida Gwaii Observer and the Bella Coola Coast Mountain Courier. Posters at terminals, onboard vessels and at local gathering places were also discussed. <p>ACTION: CR team to investigate privacy implications of shared in recorded meetings online (including voices and images of attendees)</p>
<p>Next FAC Meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion around timing and locations of FAC meetings <p>While FAC members agreed on the preference to meet in person, they acknowledged the constraints to meeting in each FAC member region. While Vancouver continues to be the most convenient place (fewer connecting flights and travel time) the FAC suggested rotating in-person meetings in areas where FAC members are located. Typically there are two meetings per year and one meeting is virtual. Meetings will continue to remain hybrid, in the case a staff or committee member cannot attend in-person. FAC member, B. Cunningham requested that meetings do not take place on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, as those conflict with local council meetings.</p> <p>ACTION: CR team to start planning next in-person meeting so there is ample time for travel scheduling</p>
<p>Process on giving input on service levels</p>	<p>FAC would like to see a clear process for the flow of information between FAC, BCF and MOTI to ensure input from FAC is included in official submissions and ongoing communication. The FAC noted frustrations caused by being sent back and forth between the two institutions.</p> <p>ACTION: CR team to bring this feedback back to decision makers to request clear process for receiving input</p>

<p>Foot passenger ferry</p>	<p>The FAC inquired about impacts of the new Hullo foot passenger fast ferry on BCF including any route changes and services offered by BCF.</p> <p>The Hullo ferry is separate company from BCF and operates from separate docks. BCF sees this as complimentary and supplementary to existing ferry services. BCF is supportive of any new services that are more environmentally friendly. BCF is in long term conversations about diversifying our fleet and the services and the opportunities we can offer our customers.</p>
<p>Additional questions</p>	<p>The FAC asked if BCF has considered adding cabin space on the <i>Sea Wolf</i> for crew to stay onboard between the multiple routes and reduce the time between sailings caused by crew breaks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCF responded that this is not a plan at this time. <p>ACTION: Captain Sweet to bring idea for additional cabin space for crew quarters onboard vessel to departmental lead.</p> <p>FAC brought forward a scheduling issue when a water taxi left at 9:30 am and the barge left at 10:30 am. A request was made to ensure that passengers receive clear communication as to when to arrive to ensure there is no confusion vehicle drop-off and passenger drop-off times. Alternative, the water taxi could wait for the passenger to board if they have made a reservation.</p> <p>The FAC also brought forth the difficulty in position of the water taxi and barge service. The one kilometer distance between the water taxi pick-up location and the vehicle drop-off is difficult for the elderly and those with accessibility constraints, especially on days with poor weather.</p>
<p>Terms of Reference</p>	<p>BCF is currently under review of the FAC Terms of Reference (TOR) as recommended by BC Ferries Commissioner. The review includes the structure of teams, roles and communications with FAC. We are currently looking for feedback as we are in the early stages of planning. There is a feedback form available through Survey Monkey to collect that feedback. The next step is to review and integrate feedback into a new proposed TOR followed by another review with FAC members on the revisions. The survey was distributed to chairs to disseminate with their committees.</p> <p>ACTION: E. Putterill to send the survey out to all individual members.</p>

Year at a glance – dates of interest noted at end of agenda

Below is a look ahead over the next 12 months at dates that have been identified for schedule adjustments, vessel swaps and service enhancements.

INSIDE PASSAGE SUMMER SERVICE

- Typical summer service - June 1 – September 30

ROUTE 11 SUMMER SERVICE

- Enhanced summer service to 6 trips per week - mid-June to mid-September

ROUTE 28 SUMMER SERVICE – DIRECT PORT HARDY TO BELLA COOLA

- Typical summer service - June 19 to September 30
- Direct service between Bella Coola and Port Hardy for 5 days per week.

ROUTE 28A ANNUAL SERVICE – CONNECTOR BELLA COOLA TO BELLA BELLA

- Typical annual service – one round trip per week
- Shearwater berth unusable by NSW. Service provided by Tug & Barge and Water Taxi until further notice

NADV/NEXP SWAP SUMMER 2022

- Set for September 30, 2023

DELAYED DEPARTURES FROM PRINCE RUPERT FOR SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

- To facilitate the travel before school breaks the Prince Rupert departure is delayed until 1700 on Dec 22, 2023 and Mar 15, 2024.

THE ALL NATIVE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

- Revised Route 10/11 service February 8 - 20, 2024 will provide timely travel options to/from the basketball tournament.

CHRISTMAS CANCELLATIONS – SATURDAY DEC 25 & JAN 1

- Route 26 – first round trip

NADV/NEXP SWAP SPRING 2023

- Set for March 23, 2024

Dates above, are what are planned for; however, some dates may shift based on operational needs.