

Kootenay Lake Ferry Service Improvements

Round 2 Public Consultation
February 19 – March 30, 2018

Consideration Memo

June 2018



Introduction

The Province held two rounds of public consultation on the Kootenay Lake Ferry Service to seek public feedback on proposed plans to address several ongoing challenges with the service. The first round of public consultation (“Round 1”), held from June 15 – October 6, 2016, focused on whether the west shore terminal should be retained and improved at Balfour, or relocated to Queens Bay. Due to significant concerns that were raised about moving to Queens Bay and overwhelming support—**76%** of participants—to retain the existing Balfour Ferry Terminal, the Province held a second round of public consultation (“Round 2”), held from February 19 – March 30, 2018, to hear from the public on its proposed plans to address the ongoing service challenges, while retaining the terminal in Balfour.

The Province’s consideration of input from Round 2 Public Consultation (2018)

The Province received a range of feedback in Round 2, the results of which are summarized in the Consultation Summary Report. Recognizing the diversity of comments received, the Province’s role is to ultimately review and consider all feedback received while addressing competing demands. This Consideration Memo demonstrates the Province’s consideration of some of the key themes raised in this round of consultation.

Issue or interest	Province consideration of input
1. Terminal location	
<p>a. Requests that the ferry terminal be moved to Queens Bay or an alternate location, based on the technical studies conducted, safety concerns, cost and environmental impacts of continuing at Balfour.</p> <p>b. Concern about the Round 1 consultation (2016) process and the resulting decision-making process to retain the Balfour Ferry Terminal, specifically that the views of east shore residents were not adequately sought in Round 1.</p>	<p>The Province has considered competing factors and found that though the capital cost of constructing a new terminal in Queens Bay could be less than the cost of the work needed to retain the terminal in Balfour, it is offset by the larger environmental and social/community impacts of a new terminal in Queens Bay. Therefore, the Province plans to address ongoing service challenges by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building a new right-sized vessel for use during the off-peak season, • improving both the Balfour and Kootenay Bay Ferry Terminals, and • minor dredging of three shallow areas in the channel to improve navigation through the West Arm. <p>The following factors were considered in the decision to remain at the Balfour Ferry Terminal:</p> <p>Environmental – Building a new terminal at Queens Bay would result in more significant environmental disruption than dredging at Balfour.</p>

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	<p>Social/community – Compared to retaining the terminal in Balfour, a move to Queens Bay would introduce new impacts to ferry users, businesses and communities due to changes in travel patterns, and changes in the usage of lakefront. Overall, the majority of community feedback indicated strong concern and opposition regarding potentially moving the terminal to Queens Bay.</p> <p>Technical – Retaining the Balfour Ferry Terminal requires improvements to existing terminal infrastructure, the addition of a new right-sized vessel, and minor dredging in the West Arm. Moving to Queens Bay would have required dredging at Queens Bay, construction of entirely new terminal infrastructure, and retiring MV Balfour without provision of a replacement for MV Osprey during unplanned maintenance events.</p> <p>The Province recognized the concerns expressed in Round 1 (2016) by some participants regarding the lack of Open Houses on the east shore. In consideration of these concerns, a Small Group Meeting and an Open House were held on the east shore during Round 2 (2018) consultation.</p> <p>The feedback form utilized in Round 1 (2016) included extensive public participation from the east and west shore. There were 1,766 forms submitted in Round 1 (2016). Of those:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% were from Queens Bay • 14% were from Balfour • 20% were from Nelson • 21% identified as living in other east side communities such as Kootenay Bay, Crawford Bay, Riondel, Gray Creek, Boswell, Sanca, Sirdar, Kuskanook, Wynndel, Yahk, Creston and Cranbrook • 26% identified as living in other west side communities like Longbeach, Harrop, Procter, Ainsworth, North Shore, Kaslo, Sunshine Bay, Slocan Valley, Trail and Castlegar • the remaining 9% identified as living in other areas

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2. Ferry service	
a. Requests for improved ferry service, including increased capacity, more frequent sailings, more convenient departure times, extended ferry service later into the evening, and consideration of making Kootenay Bay the home port.	The Province recognizes suggestions to improve the Kootenay Lake Ferry Service and will continue to assess ways to improve going forward. The Province plans to introduce a new, larger replacement vessel for MV Balfour that, alongside the MV Osprey, will reduce overloads during peak seasons.
3. Terminal design and safety	
a. Concern about pedestrian safety and comfort. Suggestions that sidewalks, a pick-up zone and shelters be built to connect the highway and surrounding businesses with the terminal. b. Concern about the location of the off-site parking area, the number and location of on-site parking spaces, and the number of electric vehicle charging stations. c. Requests for better signage and intersections around the terminal, and improved highway safety measures and accessibility to the terminal. d. Requests for greenspace to be preserved as much as possible and that more shade in the form of trees and shelter be provided. e. Requests for improved washroom facilities, such as modern designs, hot water, more stalls, gender neutral and accessible washrooms, and improved cleaning service.	As further refinements to the concept drawings presented in the Round 2 Discussion Guide, some of the changes the Province intends to incorporate into the Balfour terminal design based on community input and feedback include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to lighting and sidewalks connecting the terminal entry, the transit stop, and the off-site parking area • Improvements to public access from the terminal greenspace to the waterfront • In addition to a new transit shelter near the entry to the terminal, an additional sheltered waiting area adjacent to the boarding area for walk-on users • A new terminal attendant station at the entry to the terminal to ensure that drivers get timely direction as they enter the terminal • Expansion infrastructure to ensure that additional electric vehicle charging stations can be added when needed • Expanded greenspace, including additional shade As designs for the new Balfour washrooms are advanced, the Province will carefully consider and incorporate feedback received on lighting, accessibility, safety and amenities where feasible.

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<p>f. Requests for improved amenities at the Kootenay Bay Ferry Terminal, such as parking, foot passenger shelter, and traffic signage.</p>	<p>In addition, the Province intends to incorporate the following improvements to Kootenay Bay Ferry Terminal in consideration of community feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric vehicle charging stations • Improvements to the existing washroom facility including accessibility and aesthetics upgrades • Improvements to the terminal parking, including accessible parking • A sheltered waiting area adjacent to the boarding area for walk-on users • A new terminal attendant station at the entry to the terminal to ensure that drivers get timely direction as they enter the terminal • Greenspace improvements around the existing picnic tables • Lighting at the sheltered waiting area and north west corner of the terminal • Improved signage for the runaway lane to avoid conflicts with ferry traffic • Flashing warning lights on the highway approach before the Riondell turn-off to warn drivers of potential congestion ahead
<p>4. Anscomb wheelhouse</p>	
<p>a. Comments that the Anscomb wheelhouse has historical value and requests that it be preserved at the Balfour Ferry Terminal.</p> <p>b. Requests that the Balfour and District Business and Historical Association provide input on the relocation of the Anscomb wheelhouse and suggestions related to the relocation of the Anscomb wheelhouse.</p>	<p>The Province has consulted with the Balfour and District Business and Historical Association to identify a new location for the Anscomb wheelhouse. A potential location adjacent to the Busk Road realignment is being considered as it would provide expanded greenspace, shade, and picnic tables at the Balfour Ferry Terminal. The Province will continue to consult with the Balfour and District Business and Historical Association as planning and design of the terminal improvements advance.</p>

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5. New Ferry	
a. Requests for a larger-capacity vessel and support for green options such as an electric ferry.	The Province will continue to explore electric options for the new vessel. Regardless of how the new vessel will be powered, it will have fewer emissions than the existing 63-year-old MV Balfour. The new vessel will be designed to accommodate a conversion to electric at a later date when low or zero-emission technology has been tested to meet local conditions and specifications.
6. Dredging, construction and environmental impacts	
a. Concerns regarding potential environmental impacts from dredging, how the sediments would be disposed of, and the need to conduct an Environmental Assessment process. b. Concerns regarding potential construction impacts on tourism and nearby businesses during peak seasons.	The Province would work to minimize the environmental impacts from the planned minor dredging and will meet all permit requirements. Click here to view the environmental and archaeological report. It is anticipated that dredging will begin in fall 2018, subject to permit approvals. The Province will work to minimize impacts to ferry users during the construction of improvements to the Balfour Ferry Terminal and during dredging in the West Arm. Businesses and ferry users will be properly notified in advance of any potential service changes.
7. Upper Balfour Road	
a. Requests that the proposed Upper Balfour Road closure be reevaluated to give residents access to the Post Office and other businesses. b. Suggestions that the road be reconnected in a way that is safer instead.	In consideration of community feedback received, the Province will reroute Upper Balfour Road safely rather than close it.