

Kootenay Lake Ferry Service Improvements Project

Project Update - April 2022



Ministry of
Transportation
and Infrastructure

In the past few months, progress on the Kootenay Lake Ferry Services Improvements Project has continued in order to deliver a safer and more reliable ferry service for users. This Project Update provides progress information about terminal improvements and assembly of the new vessel.

Terminal Improvements

As the snow begins to melt and spring is in the air, the final stages of the improvement work at Balfour and Kootenay Bay terminals are underway. The works are on track to complete over the next couple of months.

At Balfour, work continues on the washrooms and attendant building. A short section of Hwy 3A/31 is being repaved this month, along with the new parking area near Busk Road.

On the Kootenay Bay side, the renovations to the washroom and installation of the new terminal attendant building are ongoing.

All improvement works at the terminals are scheduled to be completed by June 2022.



View of the Balfour Terminal parking lot with cars lined up for the ferry.



Repaving work is nearing completion on Hwy 3A/31.



The new parking lot at Busk Road is nearing completion.



The new Balfour Terminal washrooms, which will be finished in the coming weeks.

New Vessel Construction

A new electric-ready vessel is being assembled at the temporary shipyard in Nelson, B.C.

While the shipyard is closed to the public, the walking path around the site is a great place to view the construction works under way.

Curious onlookers will have noticed a flurry of new activities over the last few months—the most notable being the large crane which was erected over eight days at the end of February. With a 177ft boom and 132 tonnes counterweight, this crane can lift loads of up to 50 tons in a 125ft radius.

The shipyard continues to receive deliveries of steel and prefabricated blocks which make up the hull of the vessel. Finished blocks are lifted by the crane and assembled in the dry dock located on the shore of the shipyard.

Once the ship's hull has been assembled the ship will be floated and remain moored near the shore. At this point, the vessel will be outfitted with mechanical systems, electrical systems, control systems, interior components and finishes.

Over the next few months specialized equipment from all over the world—including the ship's engines, thrusters, and batteries—will begin to be delivered to the site for installation in the new ship.



The new crane arriving on site at the end of February.



The crane in action—lifting a hull block from the assembly site to the drydock.



The public footpath around the exterior perimeter of the site is a great place to watch the new vessel take shape.



A view of the partially assembled hull in the drydock on the lakeshore.



Artists rendering of the new electric-ready vessel.

Kootenay Lake Ferry Service

The ferry service continues to operate as usual during construction. Please obey all road signs, reduce speed, and follow the instructions of flaggers and terminal attendants.

In line with the Province's aim to electrify 100% of its inland ferry fleet by 2040, the new vessel will be built with all the systems, equipment, and components for electric propulsion alongside diesel engines. Once shore power is in place and the technology has been tested for reliable daily use, a full conversion will be made from diesel to electric propulsion.



Background

In 2016 and 2018, the Province consulted with ferry users, area residents, and businesses about proposed improvements to the service, safety, and infrastructure of the Kootenay Lake Ferry.

The Province made key changes to the final project plan after considering the input received, along with technical, environmental, and financial considerations. Some of these considerations were documented in the [2018 Consideration Memo](#).

In April 2019, the Province, with funding support from the Government of Canada, announced safety and efficiency improvements to the Kootenay Lake Ferry Service.

The project involves the procurement of a new right-sized electric-ready vessel, safety and amenity improvements to both the Balfour and Kootenay Bay terminals, and now-completed minor dredging in the west arm of Kootenay Lake.

Collectively, these improvements will provide ferry users with a safer and more reliable ferry service as well as contribute to the Province's goal of employing electric propulsion on all inland ferries by 2040.