

# Report

Date April 15, 2026  
Subject Crofton Ferry Terminal Upgrades

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File:

## **PURPOSE**

To provide Council with background information on British Columbia Ferry Services Inc. (BC Ferries) Crofton Ferry Terminal works scheduled from May 2026 to June 2027 and to seek Council approval to provide municipal land for crew parking, construction staging, and BC Hydro utility infrastructure.

## **BACKGROUND**

BC Ferries has been working with staff and residents from North Cowichan to develop a terminal redevelopment plan for the Crofton terminal facility for several years. BC Ferries held an open house at the Crofton Community Centre on November 25, 2025, and met with the community to share information on upcoming service changes and planned construction activities to support the service improvements.

The Crofton-Vesuvius route will receive two Island Class vessels and shift to a two-ship service in 2027. The Crofton terminal will receive a new lay-by berth, and repairs and upgrades will be made to the existing berth and trestle ("the project"). Introducing two Island Class vessels will increase capacity by 20% and improve sailing frequency, helping meet growing travel demand. Once complete, the two-ship service is expected to improve traffic flow in the surrounding neighbourhoods, reduce congestion at terminals, and enhance the overall travel experience.

The construction period is planned from May 2026 to June 2027. During this time, some of the work will be occurring at night between 8:00pm and 7:00am, Monday through Sunday. Construction activities will be scheduled to take place during the day, but as some of the work will have a significant impact on ferry operations, night shift work will be required. Activities that are expected to occur at night will have relatively short durations starting in May 2026, but night shift work will increase in frequency between September and December 2026.

BC Ferries has a few requests to North Cowichan, which are necessary to support the project and service changes. These requests are further detailed in the Discussion section below.

## **DISCUSSION**

BC Ferries has four requests for North Cowichan regarding the project and service changes.

### **Licence area for construction trailer and crane**

During construction, BC Ferries would like to locate a construction trailer and crane close to the construction area, just south of the ticket booth in the Crofton Boat Harbour parking lot (Attachment 1).

The placement of the construction office and crane in this location will have the least impact on the marina's operations, and, being temporary, will help BC Ferries and its contractor with construction due

to its proximity to the facility. The construction trailer is anticipated to be located on site from May 2026 until the end of July 2027, and the crane is anticipated to be on site from September 2026 to December 2026. BC Ferries has offered North Cowichan \$5,000 for use of the land over the 15-month period, which includes a grace period should the project run longer than anticipated.

This land is part of the Crofton Harbour Facility head lease that North Cowichan rents from the Federal Crown. As this request from BC Ferries constitutes a sub-licence by North Cowichan, approval is currently being sought from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, which oversees the lease, to confirm their approval.

### **Licence area for crew parking**

The transition from a one-ferry to a two-ferry service will require additional crew to support the Crofton-Vesuvius route. As discussed above, the crew will be home ported out of Crofton, which will require staff parking. BC Ferries has requested that North Cowichan grant a five-year licence agreement for 21 parking spaces for their crew in the gravel area near the skatepark on Chaplin Street (Attachment 2). Under the agreement, BC Ferries is responsible for maintaining the area and providing insurance. This site was selected because it provides an area close to the terminal and does not impact users of the boat ramp, the marina, or businesses on Chaplin and Joan Avenue. The location does not impact users' enjoyment of the skatepark.

### **Statutory Right of Way over North Cowichan lands to support BC Hydro infrastructure**

BC Ferries is requesting that North Cowichan grant a Statutory Right of Way (SRW) to BC Hydro for a Pad Mounted Transformer (PMT), junction box and underground services at Crofton Museum Park at the foot of Chaplin Street (Attachment 3). BC Ferries has offered to wrap the transformer so that it will be more aesthetically pleasing and be consistent with the approach taken on other high-profile transformer boxes in Crofton. Staff from Parks and Recreation and Engineering have reviewed this request and worked with BC Ferries and BC Hydro to minimize the impact. Staff support this request. BC Ferries has offered \$5,000 in compensation for the SRW.

### **Exemption from the Noise Bylaw for Works.**

A separate report included on tonight's Council agenda contains a written request from BC Ferries for Council to vary the Noise Bylaw 2857 to permit necessary marine work outside of regular hours.

### **Summary**

Staff are supportive of these requests and have undertaken the necessary public notification requirements prior to presenting these to Council for consideration.

### **OPTIONS**

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT Council supports the Crofton Ferry Terminal project and service changes through approval of:
  - (1) A 15-month licence agreement to British Columbia Ferry Services Inc. for a site trailer and construction crane beginning May 2026, subject to approval from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans;

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- (2) A five-year licence agreement to British Columbia Ferry Services Inc. for crew parking comprised of 21 parking spaces for \$10,000 per annum; and,
  - (3) A Statutory Right of Way to BC Hydro for a pad mounted transformer, junction box, and underground infrastructure for \$5,000.
2. THAT Council supports the Crofton Ferry Terminal project through approval of: (Council to select one or more of the options above...)
  3. THAT Council does not support the Crofton Ferry Terminal project and will not approve use of municipal land for construction or operations.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

Staff have identified the following implications if Council proceeds with the recommended option.

### *Collaboration*

Staff from across North Cowichan have worked with BC Ferries to help coordinate the redevelopment project and to minimize the impact on residents of Crofton and ferry users. This collaborative, team approach has focused on finding solutions that benefit both North Cowichan and BC Ferries. Staff will continue to work with BC Ferries and the Ministry of Transportation and Transit to resolve the staging traffic issue on Chaplin Street. In addition, staff are working with BC Ferries to develop an operational agreement for the public washrooms at the Crofton Museum Park.

### *Financial*

North Cowichan will receive \$5,000 for the site trailer and crane, \$10,000 per annum for crew parking, and a \$5,000 payment for the SRW to BC Hydro.

### *Community Impact*

The investment in the Crofton Ferry Terminal will enable BC Ferries to shift to a two-ferry operation. This operational change has been implemented on the Nanaimo-Gabriola and Campbell River-Quadra Island routes. The two-ship system increases sailing frequency, reducing queuing and staging on adjacent public roads, except during long weekends and other peak travel periods. BC Ferries anticipates that the traffic staging on Chaplin Street will be significantly reduced once the service is operational.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council supports the Crofton Ferry Terminal project and service changes through approval of:

- (1) A 15-month licence agreement to British Columbia Ferry Services Inc. for a site trailer and construction crane beginning May 2026, subject to approval from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans;
- (2) A five-year licence agreement to British Columbia Ferry Services Inc for crew parking comprised of 21 parking spaces for \$10,000 per annum; and,
- (3) A Statutory Right of Way to BC Hydro for a pad mounted transformer, junction box, and underground infrastructure for \$5,000.

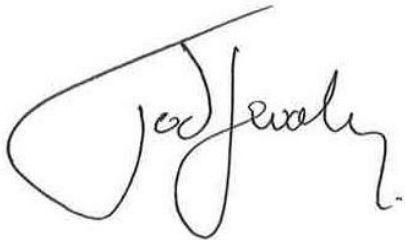
Report prepared by:



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Bill Corsan  
General Manager, Corporate Services and Community Relations

**Approved to be forwarded to Council:**



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Ted Swabey  
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

- (1) Construction Trailer and Crane location Licence Agreement
- (2) Crew Parking Licence Agreement
- (3) Statutory Right-of-Way Location and Standard Charge Terms