



Bald Head Association

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March 11, 2024

Ms. A. Shonta Dunston

Chief Clerk

North Carolina Utilities Commission

430 N. Salisbury Street

Raleigh, N.C.

Re: Docket No.: A-41, Sub 23

Dear Ms. Dunston:

We submit this letter in response to Bald Head Island Transportation's (BHIT) request to modify the schedule of the Bald Head Island Ferry.

The Bald Head Association (BHA) is the largest property owners' organization on the Village of Bald Head Island. The Bald Head Association's members comprise approximately 2,000 property owners. BHA membership includes full-time residents, part-time residents and property owners who rent their homes to vacationers. Its members and BHA employees depend on the daily ferry service for transportation to their homes for themselves, for their home rental customers and for the employee service providers needed to provide basic services to the island. The reconfiguration of service proposed by Bald Head Island Transportation creates a number of concerns and challenges for the residents, employees, and visitors to the island.

BHA membership also includes more than 650 unimproved lots with owners awaiting the opportunity to build; ferry access problems will retard further development and construction activity and slow the future build-out of the island.

Following BHIT's request for schedule reductions, BHA surveyed our property owners. Nearly 200 Bald Head property owners responded. Below, we provide a summary of the consensus issues that our property owners identified in response to BHA's proposal. We also attach the survey responses that BHA received.

COMMENTS REGARDING CAPACITY CONCERNS

Bald Head Island Transportation seeks to expand scheduled ferry transit time to 45 minutes. Simultaneously, BHIT proposes to reduce the number of daily ferry runs, thus concentrating the volume of passengers per ferry. During the busy summer season, BHIT seeks to eliminate 24 passenger ferry runs during the highest demand period of Thursday – Sunday. That equates to the removal of 3600 passenger seats from the schedule. Monday – Wednesday will see a similar reduction in passenger seating on the average of 450 passenger seats daily. BHIT has presented no evidence as to how its proposed schedule demand will meet ridership demand. BHIT also omits any mention of how the reduced schedule will accommodate projected future growth.

BHIT has not addressed peakload volume. BHIT has not provided any data regarding peakload demands, nor has BHIT disclosed daily per-trip ridership. BHIT simply asserts that it will meet demand because the number of seats throughout an average day is sufficient over the entire day, taken as a whole. BHIT should provide actual hourly ridership data during peak usage months (such as July) so NCUC and system users can assess the impact upon hourly peakload demand.

What is clear is that an adjustment to a schedule will alter future ridership patterns. System users will need to alter their schedules to adjust to decreased service, which in turn is likely to add to congestion during typical business hours. Because BHIT has not provided daily ridership data, its assertion that existing capacity will suffice is unsupported.

With the growth of housing and commercial interests, the numbers of on island contractors and employees are increasing. With no planned increase in contractor ferry seats, the passenger ferries must absorb the overflow. This will add to the stand-by lines and increase bumped riders.

Concentrating rider volume on fewer ferries will exacerbate the current shortage of trams to service all full fare passengers. A tram transfer is included in the ticket price but not necessarily guaranteed.

Currently, the ferry system experiences boats out-of-service for critical maintenance issues. The aging of the overall fleet will be further taxed by fully loading boats on a more consistent basis.

Concentrating rider volume on fewer ferries reduces the system's capability to absorb the effects of any type of emergency or service disruption. When a ferry goes out of service on a

full summer travel day, the volume of displaced passengers cannot be absorbed on the next run, resulting in up to 150 people waiting to join the stand by line.

COMMENTS REGARDING SERVICE CONCERNS

Reliable, timely access to the mainland is a requirement for residents who routinely go off Island for medical appointments, occupational commitments, access to education, out of town travel, and other necessities. During the week, a missed ferry will result in a 1.5 hour delay and likely a missed appointment. Any ridership 'bump' will result in the same.

Under BHIT's proposal, the last ferry from Deep Point to the island that includes tram service to a residence will be 9:00 p.m. This is a two-hour reduction over the current service level. High volume turnover occurs Thursday to Sunday requiring service for individuals arriving later in the evening due to long-distance travel. Residents and visitors need a means to access their homes.

The proposed last ferry leaving the island will be 11:00 p.m., instead of the current 12:30 a.m. run during summer weekends. Many island events and private functions such as weddings are hosted on the island into the late evening hours, necessitating that businesses stay open and fully staffed. Likewise, residents who attend events off Island need a means to return home the same evening.

Rental volume peaks during the summer season and renters are required to vacate rentals by 10:00 a.m. This creates an excess of travelers with no indoor space to wait or store luggage if a later ferry is required. BHIT's proposal will impede the ability to move renters off the island quickly.

Residents depend on a limited pool of outside businesses who are willing to travel from the mainland to provide services such as specialty home maintenance, health care providers, mobile vet services, and educators. The customer often pays for their ferry trip and travel time. The difficulty of finding outside vendors willing to work on BHI will only increase if their ability to do business on the island becomes further complicated.

Island employees are required to utilize the passenger ferry when the contractor ferry is full. Under the proposed schedule, there will be one less ferry available between the hours of 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. Many of these individuals have family and childcare needs. Additional time and hassle spent traveling to and from work will have a negative impact on employee retention.

BALD HEAD ISLAND TRANSPORTATION CONCERNS

A change as significant as the proposed ferry schedule warrants substantial public notice and consultation with the users of the system. There has been no attempt to engage the intended audience in either an educational session or an issues dialogue on the proposal.

This proposal is not just a timing extension - it is a service reconfiguration. There has been no attempt to provide analytical evidence to support the statement of adequate capacity under the reduced schedule. Nor has BHIT disclosed the impact to per-trip ridership.

BHIT's proposed implementation date occurs at the start of the peak tourist season. BHIT refuses to schedule any ferry or tram reservations after April 30.

BHIT has designated this change as being the best approach to improving on-time performance and service reliability. Others would suggest that since passengers and luggage are at the center of BHIT's claimed transport problem, BHIT should consider process solutions that better manage those components, such as:

- We have baggage policies that are not practically enforced. What would it take?
- The baggage handling conveyor system at Deep Point is not in service, nor has it been used for several years. Could it better process the load?
- By increasing tram service, could passengers be delivered to the ferry on a more timely basis?

BHIT has offered no other suggestion to address the situation, other than to reduce service.

Ridership is growing, not shrinking. This is a moment for investment in a schedule and equipment that can adequately manage current and future ridership. The very idea of lowering capacity through decreased trips, especially during the summer is going to produce significant hardship, especially as there is no affordable alternative.

CONCLUSION

In light of the overwhelming objections expressed by the property owners who comprise the Bald Head Association, BHA requests that the NCUC delay ruling on the schedule change request by BHIT until those concerns have been openly and fully addressed and resolved.



Board of Directors

Bald Head Association

By: Christine Osborne, President



BHI Transportation 45-minute Ferry/Tram Departure Schedule Change

Member Survey Results

March 2, 2024

Contact: Carrie Moffett (carrie@baldheadassociation.com) or Christine Osborne (christine.osborne8@gmail.com)

BHA's Board of Directors recently solicited feedback on proposed changes to the passenger ferry/tram departure schedule from property owner members via an online survey. The proposed departure schedule change is outlined in the application BHI Transportation submitted to the North Carolina Utilities Commission (NCUC) on February 19, 2024.

Below is a snapshot of the results.

- Responses to the survey were collected utilizing Survey Monkey from February 23 – March 1, 2024. A link to the survey was emailed to the 1,704 subscribers of BHA's *Compass* electronic bulletin on February 23rd and a reminder email was sent on February 28th.
- 100% of respondents stated they are BHI property owners. Property owners were asked to review the application and share whether they supported the application or had no opinion.
- 76% of owner respondents are opposed to the proposed change. 16% support the proposed change and 8% have no opinion. In total, 196 property owners shared their opinion; 185 submitted comments.
- Many respondents stated they understood that changes needed to be made to the schedule but didn't like the schedule that was proposed by BHIT. Others preferred the current schedule. There were numerous concerns about the removal of the current late evening ferry service particularly between Thursday – Sunday, which would affect Hammocks owners, and property owners and their renters who may be driving to the Island after work on Fridays.
- A significant number of respondents shared their observation that the proposed schedule would reduce the number of ferry runs that will be available per day and had concerns whether the increasing number of passengers could be serviced with reduced capacity. Others further questioned if they would see a reduction in ferry tickets with reduced service.
- Numerous respondents voiced concern that the proposed schedule would negatively impact the Island's employees and further described concerns about the Club's and other employers' ability to retain employees if the schedule were adopted.
- Several property owners offered ideas to make the schedule more palatable, such as adding contractor ferry runs on Saturdays, one-way tickets, relaxing regulations in the off-season and adding additional runs between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

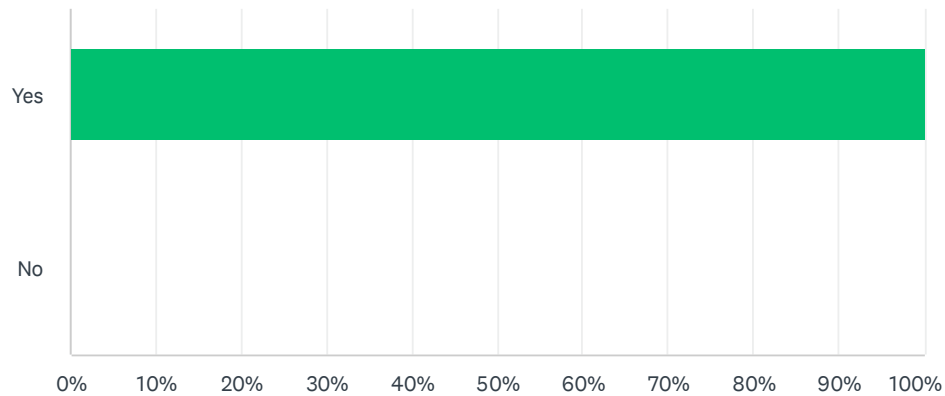
BHA's goal with the survey was not to produce an instrument that met a statistical significance threshold. Instead, BHA had just two simple goals with the survey. First was to inform BHI property owners that the application had been submitted to the NCUC and second, to engage property owners to learn their opinions about the schedule change. These two goals were accomplished.

BHA's Board of Directors thanks the individual property owners who took the time to share their opinions on this important issue. All disparaging remarks and personally identifiable information have been redacted. The Board will forward the results of the survey to the NCUC for its consideration. Property owners who haven't expressed their opinions through the survey should contact the Public Staff of the NCUC using the below link:

<https://www.ncuc.gov/contactus.html>

Q1 Are you a BHI property owner?

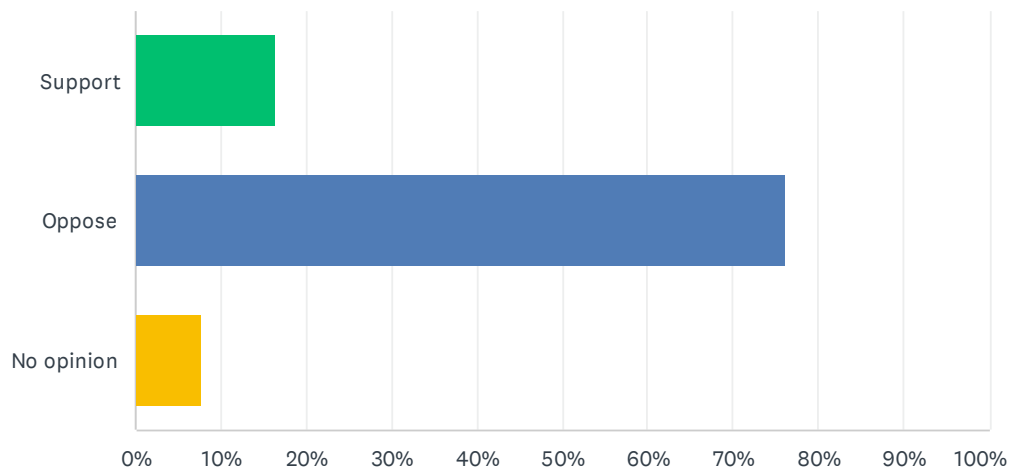
Answered: 196 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	196
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		196

Q2 BHA encourages members to read BHIT's filed application. Once informed, how do you feel about this proposed change?

Answered: 196 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Support	16.33%	32
Oppose	76.02%	149
No opinion	7.65%	15
TOTAL		196

Q3 Please provide comments or questions about the proposal.

Answered: 171 Skipped: 25

Q4 Thank you for your comments. For any additional questions or comments, please email [HERE](#). For the NCUC comment page, go [HERE](#).

Answered: 14 Skipped: 182

BHI Transportation's Proposed Passenger Ferry/Tram Schedule Change

Please provide comments or questions about the proposal.

Answered - 171

Skipped - 25

Responses

Makes absolutely no sense. Fewer ferry runs will not help, particularly during the peak summer season. Maybe better to increase number of ferries in the summer and have more staff to expedite moving luggage trolleys on and off ferries. In the winter time not as important to run every thirty minutes unless during major holidays. The proposal is ludicrous!

The 45 minute schedule will mean that if you just miss a ferry, you will need to wait 1.5 hours for the next ferry. This is difficult especially for those who have traveled hours to get to BHI. Eliminating the contractor ferry will mean the peak hour ferries will be very crowded.

The proposed 45 minute schedule reduces the number of overall ferry seats available for passengers at a time when more people are coming to BHI. The solution to delayed ferries is having more staff to load/unload bags and operate trams, and invest in the fleet of vessels transporting passengers. If this means higher ferry fares, so be it. Finally moving the final ferry leaving the island (Thursday through Saturday) from 11:30 to 11pm will have a substantial negative impact on island restaurants and visitors alike. Restaurants rely on the late night ferry to get employees and vendors (including vendors for weddings and special events) off the island after the venue closes, allowing for cleanup, etc once customers depart.

The logic presented does not hold because ridership is not even throughout the day. Similarly, their points about tram time do not hold because that is a simple matter of running more trams. Our concerns are getting our guests on and off the island with the reduced ferry offerings during the heavily traveled times. And we are very, very concerned about the removal of the late ferry departure from the island. This means that any event, and restaurants, have to shut down earlier. Weddings for example will now need to end substantially earlier.

Oppose as stated.

The change is somewhat agreeable for regular ferry service during non-peak periods. Would like to see the proposal accompanied with a provision that includes additional ferry service (multiple ferries) during Friday/Saturday/Sunday peak periods.

While I agree that 45 minutes is the correct amount of time needed to make on time trips across the river and load/unload passengers and luggage, I DO NOT AGREE that cutting the number of trips to and from the island by 5-7 boats every day can even begin to meet our needs, especially during peak 'rush hours' mornings and afternoons. In addition to the contractor ferry, additional trips using a second passenger ferry need to be added mornings and late afternoons, so that employees can get off the island at the end of the work day in a timely fashion, and residents can get back HOME at a reasonable hour. Departure times should be staggered to provide commuters with more options than is currently proposed.

I believe the proposed schedule change will create difficulties primarily for the people who spend the most time on the island- residents, homeowners, and employees.

This proposal to spread out the ferry departure times to every 45 minutes has been billed as a way to improve on-time departure. However, what it really is doing is merely decreasing the daily capacity for passengers needing transportation to the island. I understand that 30 minutes may be a challenging turn-around for the ferry and tram workers. However, last summer often even at the current capacity, there was no availability for reservations for many consecutive ferries at peak times when people need to get on and off the island. The new schedule, especially given the continued housing growth on the island, will aggravate this issue significantly.

At the briefing with the BHI Village Council, BHI Limited stated that not many people were bumped from a ferry last summer if they were in the standby line and did not make an advanced reservation. I am very concerned that this will not be the case when, with at least four fewer ferries running per day, there are at least 400 fewer reservations per day and 200 fewer stand-by spots available.

Vacationers who are renting on the island book their tickets months in advance. Homeowners coming off and on the island regularly cannot practically make plans this early, which means that they, and business employees, will be the ones who have their schedules affected by being bumped and possibly having to wait multiple hours to leave the island. With so many fewer tickets available and a continually growing island population, it is clear that by decreasing capacity, ferries will be packed full, people will not be able to get a ferry at a convenient time for them, and there will be additional stress in traveling to and from our island home.

If a ferry is "canceled," as many were last summer, this will create even more significant hardship. Last summer, when my brother and his family were visiting from Wisconsin, their ferry was canceled. They had been waiting with a reservation, and it was announced that because of delays, their ferry would no longer be running, and those with reservations for the following ferry were now the only ones who would be admitted through the reservation line. My family and all the others with reservations for the canceled ferry were told to go to the back of the standby line, which was already full for the next ferry, and told they would not have any priority on the next scheduled ferry. This caused them a multiple-hour delay and missed flights at RDU airport. In prior years, those in line for the ferry first, would have priority for the first ferry to arrive, even if a ferry was cancelled.

Should such an event occur again this summer, the new schedule will compound these delays and stress. When a ferry is canceled outright, there will be up to 150 more people to wait "stand-by," which, on a full summer travel day, would mean that some folks would likely need to wait (at 50 stand-by passengers per ferry) more than 5 hours, given that there would also be additional standby passengers who would be anticipating getting off/on the island during that time. I have not seen a proposal from BHI Limited as to how they intend to take responsibility for and provide alternative means of the island should there be canceled ferries and multiple passengers who are not able to get off and on the island when they need.

I am also concerned that because of the lack of availability of ferry tickets during summer weekends, people will reserve tickets, "just in case" they need them, and move the reservations later, causing further confusion and stress. I am very disappointed that with the additional growth of the island, the service from BHI ferry for homeowners and residents is decreasing in capacity, access, and customer service. It is hard to understand why, at this time, with so many more vacationers, homeowners, businesses, and business employees requiring transportation, there would be less service to and from the island than there was five years ago.

It's better just to leave things as they are, and the schedule can be adjusted to accommodate the increased traffic as it is now. Otherwise, the ferry will be absolutely overloaded at certain times of the day because there are fewer trips.
It could get confusing. Hopefully it will reduce people from standing in line. But, it's a longer wait, if you miss the ferry. Time will tell
It would appear that BHIT's response to increased ridership and demand for ferry services is to REDUCE availability....decidedly counterintuitive. I would suggest the obvious...another boat and more employees. If that response to the demand causes financial issues for the company, then perhaps BHIT needs to do what every other business under these circumstances must do...revise their business plan. I am outraged as a RESIDENT of this Island that their solution is to CUT SERVICE. I strenuously oppose this DECREASE in service.
Im fine with 45 minute schedule in the off season or in non-park hours, but during the summer that is going to cause A LOT of problems, congestion, frustration, and bottlenecks of passengers.
I am concerned about the backup on Saturday and Sunday afternoon when renters are trying to get on to the island. There seems to be "extra" ferries in the morning to help renters leave the island but not when new renters are arriving. We do not rent our house but I feel that it will make travel to and from the island much more difficult. I think that the weekday schedule is probably OK, but only time will tell if the ferries get too crowded and no stand by passengers can board
Have some concerns with less boat runs, however, it doesn't appear that we can continue to manage with every 30 minute runs.
The ferry service has diminished SO significantly in the past few years. It is horrifying how late, slow or off schedule it has become. People depend on the ferry to make a flight or doctors appointment. Bumps are absolutely understandable on rare occasions of medical emergency but have become standard even multiple per day occurrences. I guess the proposal is their answer to late, slow and inept. We are at their mercy
Reduced service means less access to our property. It is difficult enough with 11PM ferry to make it to Bald Head as flight schedules are not accommodating. Stopping ferry service earlier will require hotel stays in Wilmington and extra taxi rides.
I do not support the elimination of the later evening runs.
While it is evident that the 30 minute turnaround during peak season weekends and holidays, given current staffing and operating procedures, the result is essentially a 45 minute turnaround. However, the current proposal reduces daily weekend capacity by over 25%. And essential second ferries later in the day need to be added to the peak weekend and holiday proposed schedule as well as late ferries every day of the week in the during the summer AND winter seasons. If not, a negative effect on businesses, employees, property owners getting to the island and back to the island if engaged in late afternoon/evening activities on the mainland. And how about a couple contractor runs in Saturday and Sunday morning and evening to ensure housekeeping, restaurant, market, and Club employees are more assured of on time arrival to work vs getting "bumped" to next ferry or two?
It reduces the number of ferry runs which impacts all island residents, guests and workers. We are especially opposed to the elimination of the late evening runs on both the winter and summer schedules
Changing the schedule will help insure the ferry runs on time. Who can complain about that??
The 25% service reduction in this new schedule will negatively impact homeowners, renters and employees. It makes no sense.
More built in chaos. It will simply make it worse.
I am vehemently opposed to this idea for the following reasons. Wait times in season are already excessive, lines at the marinas are already long, Ferry's will be even more packed, more issues w/ being on time and more tram delays and FTPU (fail to pick up). This is an awful idea, as was launching a new ticket system at the height of the season.

Did you consider what would happen to the people that work on the island Added time to travel to the island and possibly not make a ferry due to crowding. Did you consider the time required for people on the island that need to make an appointment off island We all build extra time due to ferry delays
Reducing service without reducing cost is not better service. The logic seems to be cut the number of runs to improve on time statistics. Using that logic why not stop all service and guarantee on time performance. Please you can do better. Let's pull back and give the people that use this service a chance to contribute to a true solution. Thank You.
The reason it does not run on schedule is the poor digital ticketing and reservation system they have in place. Get rid of the reservation system and set up a kiosk to scan tickets and you can board twice as fast. You don't need to reduce service just improve it.
Fewer ferries daily and at peak times translate to difficulty getting on ferries. Reduced number of trams daily and late evenings imposes travel difficulties on residents. Additional ferries not being added during peak times. Inconsistent schedule.
This seems reminiscent of the "cure" used to avoid the persistent late trains in Italy: Change the schedule to match current late arrival/departure times! You are proposing to DECREASE the frequency of runs to maintain an on time schedule. In sum, it looks like OTP is merely an administrative parameter. The real issue is insufficient ferry runs during peak demand times, and that can only be resolved with ADDITIONAL ferry runs/ferries, not lowering the frequency.
Will severely impact the schedule of our workers
Strongly oppose application for changes.
The new schedule makes it very difficult for our regular instructors/care givers to get to and from the island in a timely fashion. Vets, Yoga instructor, water aerobics instructor, BHI Academy instructors.
I hope the utility commission will appreciate and understand the different magnitude of importance the ferry has for island residents that commute to occupations rather than, say, renters, vacationers and island visitors. I hope the application will be reviewed and evaluated with consideration of those different needs.
Runs every 45 minutes will create confusion and fewer trips will just create more of a backlog - especially in the peak season. I can think of alternatives to eliminate the issue presented in the NC application but clearly BHI Ltd is not interested in hearing residents' thoughts or they would have asked before submitting the application.
Given growth on the island and annually increasing ridership, reducing the number of ferry runs hardly seems like a move in the right direction. Tailoring the number and timing of ferry runs, and the availability of tram service, to match demand makes much more sense than simply reducing service across the board. The answer is likely another boat and more personnel.
As a senior who lives full time on island I need to be able to go off island for appointments. I do not want less ferry times during the day
Village is reaping what it sowed by starting foolish lawsuits to coerce limited to sell ferry under unfavorable terms. THIS is the result of biting the hand that feeds you. Fewer boats CANNOT result in more capacity - especially during high season - and will result in additional overcrowding and bumping.
I think there needs to be a late ferry every night for club/restaurant workers. I'm concerned that cutting the number of ferries by 1/3 won't be enough in the summer.
They run that way anyway most of the time!
This will make it more difficult during the heavy summer months to access and regress the island. I would rather eliminate late evening trips for cost savings.
I'm glad to see extra ferries on turnover days/saturday and sunday.

1) Part of the reason for ferries not being on time, particularly during the high season, is the increased ridership from years past. The proposed schedule change would REDUCE the number of runs. A better solution would be to ADD ferry runs. There should be two ferries running during busy times, which are not just during Friday-Sunday rental turnover.
2) The contractor ferry runs are not sufficient to handle all of the workers coming and going, so they also use the passenger ferry. Reducing the passenger ferry runs will put a hardship on workers trying to get to work on time or get home at a reasonable hour.
3) Not all of the BHI Academy students live on the island. The proposed change, which would make the time between departures 90 minutes instead of 60, would mean that students must arrive at school over an hour before school starts or an hour late.
this really means less ferries on and off the island on a daily and weekly basis- less access on and off the island for residents- more competition for residents during the summer for ferry slots- less ferries for guests of the island- less tips for the tram guys and luggage workers on the Deep Point side- a bad option for all, all the way around- if the issue is tram time around the island, invest in smaller additional trams- designate certain trams to go to east beach/middle island- lots of other ideas to consider
Tram service ending up to an hour and a half earlier can cause difficulties for people traveling later in the day; reduced number of departures from DP will make getting to BHI much more difficult and there is no other way to get to the island (without renting a private driver).
I would be ok with the proposal under two conditions: (1) there is sufficient passenger capacity (especially during peak season) with the new schedule, and (2) if the result was a highly reliable departure schedule as a result of the change. Currently, it is a complete guess when arriving at Deep Point as to whether the ferry will be departing on time, which makes timing the drive impossible. Knowing that the ferry will depart on time, every time, would make trip planning much easier with less time wasted at the terminal.
The last ferry at 10:30pm in the summer is much too early particularly on the weekend. That is 1 1/2 hours earlier than the current schedule. Currently it's not unusual for us or our family to take an 11 or 12 ferry on the weekends. Also the hour and a half gap between 7:30 and 9pm in the winter is not ideal. Finally the ferry often fills up on the summer weekends. Every 45 minutes will make an already bad situation even worse.
Rather than inconveniencing those with reservations I would favor increasing staff and continuing the 30 min schedule. Missing a ferry will result in a 3 hour wait. That's not acceptable
I think it would take a ferry every 2 hours to accomplish what you are wishing to accomplish - so instead of a 45 minute turn around - go to an hour turnaround.
Reducng service when they need more service makes no sense.
Ferry departure reliability from Deep Point for travelers from afar, is important.
Will be fewer trips probably for more people
There must be later Ferries as well as lift rules for for islander and guest to use alternate transportation
I was concerned about peak season weekend access but noted the schedule allows for additional ferries from Memorial Day to Labor Day which addresses those concerns.
We need the late ferries to and from the island for businesses, homeowners and visitors. Less ferries per day will result in more bumping during peak times. They do need to adjust the schedule as 30 minutes is not achievable. But they need to increase capacity at peak times, not reduce it by 1/3. They have 4 boats that seem to be under utilized.
Does not solve the issue of insufficient ferries and workers during peak times; not enough late night ferries when events on island; need to address issue of investment into ferries and also hire more workers.
This proposal only benefits the owner of the ferry system. It is disadvantageous to a number of the stakeholders of the ferry system, most notably island employees.

My support comes with the caveat that this change actually improves service during peak, I time that I rarely use the service, but my guests will. It seems to me that in the off season, delays are uncommon unless they are weather-related or due to some emergency situation. I'd be in favor of fewer on-the-hour runs as there are often times when fewer than a dozen people are heading in one or the other direction, particularly in winter. I feel certain that the 80% range during off-peak is more due to weather, dredging, and such than to baggage handling.

I know this is hugely unpopular due to the difficulty of keeping the schedule in the minds of users and is just one more concerning issue for families who prefer off season and rent their homes out in summer, but I don't know that there is a better solution.

We drive 7 hours to get to bhi. We often can't leave until work/school is over and slip down for long weekends. We need the late night ferries, with tram, to be able to access our home. This new schedule would require is to get a hotel room for the night and come over the next morning. Not feasible. Also, we are on east beach so much have the tram service as walking that late isn't an option. We are on the waiting list for a golf cart parking spot but it has been full for years. We need more ferries, not less.

The current schedule is required to handle the load. It can be made workable by adding more tram and baggage staff. This is costly but waiting up to 3 hrs after getting bumped is unacceptable

I think the proposed schedule will create confusion but may eliminate the late-rate and overcrowding that occurs in summer months. This proposed new schedule might only be beneficial six months out of twelve.

Was a second ferry during peak times not considered? By extending the trip window (30 min vs 45 min) the number of ferry options is diminished...making getting on/off island more difficult.

The ferry can't keep up with 30 minute departures, this proposed schedule actually might keep them on time.

The proposed schedule change to the Ferry is bound to hurt the islands sustainability. It will become an issue for the owners, renters, workers and businesses of the island. The island sustainability is 100% dependent on the Ferry working reliably, consistently and often. When the ferry becomes overloaded or has medical "calls" it could cause frustrating delays much worse than years past at the current schedule. less ferries running means more people waiting for each ferry and more chance that each Ferry will be full. While I see why, this is ideal for the fairies operating costs, it is not ideal for passengers. This new schedule also causes the last ferry to leave at 10:30pm. For people traveling to catch a late ferry, who might hit a delay this could be a huge inconvenience.

I believe this will lead to confusion and over full ferrys in the peak months. Currently everyone knows the ferry leaves Deep Point on the hour and BHI on the half hour.

The ferries/trams will be much more crowded than they already are!

this will create a multitude of problems: overcrowding on ferry crossing, people having to wait for long times if they miss a ferry time: the ability to practice social distancing will be hampered because of increased crowding

Many of the ferries that run on the 1/2 hour are overbooked. How will this issue be addressed? Will they run additional ferries? It appears the ownership group is already not honoring its promises made when purchased. Will they permit private boat docking for water taxis?

There are more people coming to the island than ever. Why make transportation more limited? Already booked at high volume times!

Not in homeowners best interests to limit ferry service.

I have written to [REDACTED] on 2/27 with my objections. As [REDACTED] also filed a petition to intervene on 2/27 with [REDACTED]. Have also listed my concerns at NCUC site. Only thing I missed was whether, with the ~24% reduction in passenger boats, there will be a reduction in rates? I have heard from good sources that there is an 85% rate of return on the ferry parking. I would point out that not ALL of the components need be profitable in the parking-ferry-tram system, but I suspect that a LOT of potential sources of money for ferry are simply not being done to enable MORE ferries and MORE trips at peak times. One idea: a ferry-specific gift shop at DP. Just sayin...

As a homeowner on Bald Head Island, I am strongly opposed to the proposed changes to the ferry system. These changes would render the island almost inaccessible. It would severely restrict access and would not come anywhere close to accommodating the current passenger demand. This is an obvious attempt by the current ferry owners to extract retribution due the ongoing litigation over the ferry ownership. Unfortunately, the residents, visitors and workers are the ones being caught up in this litigation and being forced to pay the price. We are relying on the NCUC to protect us from the profiteering attacks on the island. Please help to protect and preserve our access to the island that we have all dedicated our time and resources to preserving.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

At first glance, the proposed change to a 45 min schedule makes sense for the Bald Head Island ferry. Those of us who own property, live and work on the island, especially during the summer, know that the boats are frequently off schedule and a little more time would aid the ferry in staying on schedule and managing its operations. However, going a little deeper, there are many boat runs being eliminated on this schedule....an overused and overloaded system eliminating runs will have a negative impact on the constituencies that utilize this system everyday, all year round.

We are employees who travel to and from the island for work and are obligated to certain hours while juggling family, travel to and from the marina and other schedules on the mainland. We are businesses, clubs and restaurants that host members, visitors and events in the evening. Eliminating our latest boat will negatively impact these venues, businesses, employees and guests. We are homeowners who travel to and from the mainland for work, necessary appointments, leisure and emergencies. Homeowners, paying Brunswick county taxes, will be denied reasonable access to their homes with this decreased schedule. Ridership is growing, not shrinking. This is a moment for investment in a schedule and equipment that can adequately manage the current ridership. The very idea of lowering capacity through decreased trips, especially during the summer is going to produce significant hardship, especially as there is no affordable option for folks.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment-something BHIT did not solicit before proposing a new schedule. I encourage the commission to engage the ferry's riders in this discussion before making alterations to the current schedule.

Bald Head Island Transportation (BHIT) has represented its ferry system as making a “bridge” to Bald Head Island by reliable, frequent ferry service. The proposal by BHIT to eliminate 5-7 runs of the ferry service per day, and eliminate its late night runs breaks that promise to people who have infested their livelihoods, businesses, family homes, and vacation memories on the island. Only Bald Head Island Limited, BHIT, and possibly The Island Times Café (and eventually SharpVu Capital), have anything to benefit from approving the revisions.

Every homeowner, employee, contractor, business owner, and vacationer I’ve spoken with (over 100), is against the proposed revisions. How would it make any sense to decrease ferry runs in order to transport more people and workers with the growth of the island? There are several contradictory statements within BHIT’s submission to the honorable NC Utilities commission.

Even more sadly, there are also outright lies in their sworn statement. Paragraph 29 is particularly upsetting. And I am sure you can see from the comments you’ve received here, a complete lie. Almost all stakeholders have a problem with the proposed changes to the schedule (and keeping the contractor ferry how it is running only until 5PM on weekdays), does not make up for the proposed changes to the passenger ferry. This seems like a vindictive attempt to harm the Village of BHI, property owners, and business owners because of lawsuits that most of us had NOTHING to do with. Please do not approve the request to change the ferry schedule as all it is, is an attempt to increase their profits and punish the stakeholders.

Many of our friends (and my husband and I) bought property on Bald Head because of the frequency of the ferry. Most of our friends that have homes there are medical professionals and rely on the ferry running from 6AM to midnight, especially on the weekends, in order to have a house there.

Reducing the frequency of ferry runs is harmful to residents, owners, and vacationers while there, in terms of access to medical treatment, but it also threatens the health, safety, and lives of individuals who get sick on the mainland while doctors are on the island.

This means high season’s crowded ferry become more crowded and access to the island and mainland will be more difficult. Being a home owner it puts limits on us.

The current schedule is very easy to remember with the passenger ferry departing BHI on the half hour and returning to BHI from Deep Point on the hour. The proposed schedule will take time to get used to since the departure time bounces around with BHI departures in the summer and winter schedule on the quarter hour, half hour, three quarter hour, and hour and Deep Point departures on the half hour and hour. Would prefer the schedule to be less complicated.

The way to improve on time departures and arrivals is to increase, not decrease, the number of ferries running. Run them every half hour as on summer weekends. Perhaps limit the number of passengers per ferry run (125 instead of 150?) when they are running on the half hour.

Seems like less theories available during peak months would create more delays and not less

I understand that the ferry/tram employees need more time for each roundtrip, but I oppose the curtailing of the schedule, particularly on weekends and during the high season. The ferries were already crowded and the system was quite stressed; fewer daily ferries will exacerbate the issues.

I've read the entire petition to the NCUC. A couple of things jumped out at me:

First, the volume of passengers transported on the ferry system in 2023 was very high at over 782,000! We all know how dependent the island is on renters and visitors, but this really puts it into perspective. In peak season, the pressure to turn over homes, get them cleaned and ready for the next guests on weekends already is a tight, stressful window, with most homes asking renters to be out by 10am.

Second, the proposed changes mean the number of departures on Saturday or Sunday from BHI that would enable a guest to be out of the home by 10am drops from 6 boats (with tram service for 4) down to 3 boats (and only 2 with tram service). It was already difficult for guests to adhere to the checkout time, and now it will be impossible for most.

I support getting more reliable and realistic schedules, but this proposal ignores the realities of other parts of the island economy and will shift more burden to others. I do not support this new schedule as it stands, but could if additional capacity during peak departure and arrival times could be solved.

The proposal reduces the number of ferries during the high season - recommend you add another ferry run between to accommodate the huge number of passengers. This is what primarily contributes to the OTP. If you limit runs, you will not be able to carry everyone that needs to get to or from the island in the general timeframe they need. It's already tough to get a tram reservation with the 30 minute window

More houses and more businesses on BHI mean more visitors, contractors and needed employees. More boats or bigger boats are the answer. Fewer ferry runs is nonsensical. Running 2 boats in the high season on most days is the answer. It's basic math

We need later ferry runs in the evening, especially on weekends. Dining out will definitely suffer under the proposed schedule. I understand moving to a 45-minute turn time. It happens already in the summer. But fewer boats running on weekends in the summer will make it impossible for us to leave the island due to all the renters coming and going. Will they run the "bump" boat more often if we need it? And we will need it!

Making 5-7 less ferry runs per day will cause more overcrowding of boats and more people bumped during the full season. I have been forced to stand many times because the boats are very overcrowded now in the off season because of the lack of contractor boats. Also making the 9 pm the last run of the day prohibits residents for getting home who work or doing activities off island in the evening. For instance I have an evening class at BCCC Southport Center from 6-9 pm and I would not be able to get home. I understand these changes are supposed to help with on time boats but there are other ways to help efficiency such as enforcing the 3 bag limit which is not being done and maintaining the correct lines for the electronic ticket scanning. The current scanning procedure is very time consuming and one person in the wrong line holds up the process. Improving this process would help a lot in efficiency. Running fewer ferries would be a considerable cost saver of fuel and personnel but would those savings be passed on to the consumer.

Cutting Tram and Ferry service is detrimental to the well being and safety of those living on the island. 30 percent reduction in service for the same price. Those [REDACTED] are trying to screw the island.

The ferries can't handle the current schedule - hopefully this will allow them to run on time

For those of us that spend a lot of time on island. The ferry is our lifeline. Reducing time slots and no tram service after 9:00 will affect the people that pay the most into the service. Those of us that use it weekly and need the flexibility

I think the reduction of ferry's is a huge miss for the island. Running them every hour is a lot easier to plan for. We tend to come down in Fridays and catch the 5pm. Also the ferry service in its current capacity can't keep up with demand so why creat less ferry options. Seems very near sides as they are essentially looking to pay less for employees!!

I appreciate BHI Transportation's concern for on time ferry service. I have read the Application for Revisions to Ferry Schedules and offer the following comments/questions.

1. Paragraph 7 references customer growth and increase in passengers on the ferry as one of the main reasons to reduce the number of ferry's that transport passengers each day. Passenger count has increased from 700K in 2019 to over 782K in 2023 yet the proposal plans to reduce the number of ferry trips from 27 to 20. Additionally, one of these trips will start at 6:00 a.m which will have few, if any, passengers. This logic seems counterproductive.

2. Paragraph 16 states "The only viable solution to resolve this problem..". This statement suggests other solutions were considered. Have those been presented to the Utility Commission for review? The easy solution can sometimes seem to be the only solution unless challenged.

3. One of the basis for the decision is customer satisfaction and reduced wait times at Deep Point. I agree more predictability would be appreciated. However, I will point out that if someone misses their ferry appt. due to traffic, etc they will be waiting an hour and 1/2 for the next Ferry. Waiting an hour is tolerable but waiting an hour and 1/2 is going have a negative affect on customer satisfaction.

4. We are homeowners and do not rent but I do not see how the proposed approach can improve passenger traffic for rental turnover days. Again, the logic of more people to be transported on fewer ferry runs does not seem logical to me.

5. Could it be considered to run multiple passenger ferry's during peak season on 45 minute intervals. I fully understand there is no margin of error in the current 30 minute turnaround. I am not opposed to the change in turn around time, but the reduction in total ferry trips is concerning for the island homeowners and employers.

it's about time - there is no way with any amount of dollies/luggage that the boat can turn around on either side in 5 minutes. i would much have some certainty in the schedule with fewer boats per day than always having the boats late. nothing is more frustrating during the summer than rushing to just catch that 2 PM ferry that you have a reservation for, getting there just before 2, and learning that is really the 1 PM ferry and you need to wait another hour!

High season ferries are too crowded, especially with renters and all their gear. This will worsen the problem.

Very concerned about the schedule during the peak season- ferries are already packed on the weekends during the summer. If we eliminate 5 or so runs a day with a 45 minute ferry i can only imagine how chaotic the ferries and trams will be - I don't think it will help with on time performance or with luggage getting left/lost or too much weight to hold all the luggage.

This will reduce the number of ferries and create more crowding on the ferries that are running. It will also lead to long wait times for workers. Getting employees to come to the island is hard enough. Now the risk of. It being on the mainland in time to get children from child care etc will be more difficult for them. Also, the busiest times are weekends in the high season but they are not running the contractor boat on weekends. Really out of touch with the reality of the island.

It seems to us that this will merely add to the chaos in the only way we have on and off the Island.

The ferry schedule at 30 minutes results in too little time to load and turn around a ferry when full in the summer. The schedule quickly falls behind to the point that it becomes meaningless. 45 minutes makes more sense.

With the decrease in the number of ferry's per day but the same number of passengers expected I can only see mass confusion and lots of unhappy people. This will put added stress on the outriggers who will have to deal with very unhappy people.

Great idea. Been needed for a long time.

Reductions in service will negatively impact property owners, rental activity, and island businesses. BHIT should seek ways to add capacity during peak travel periods, not reduce.

45 minutes is too big a gap. Less runs further apart will make it less efficient not more. At least ramp up the runs during the busy warm weather seasons.

There is a need for more runs during peak times to keep up with the volume of passengers. Less runs due to the proposed longer wait times will burden homeowners, visitors and employees. If the ferry has run late due to high volume, ADD MORE TRIPS. If there is really a need to lengthen the travel time add additional vessels to bridge the gap. The current proposal does not address volume of passengers. Please do not increase the wait times on and off the island.

1. Overall reduction of ferries with increasing time between ferries may make the on time numbers look better, but the same number of people still need transportation to the island. Wouldn't the waiting and standby lines grow through the day?

2. We leave for BHI after school lets out MANY times during the off season. Usually, if we leave straight from school, we can make the 9pm ferry by 20 min. We absolutely rely on having a tram to get us to our home. This would affect our off season renters who do the same.

The elimination of Multiple ferries per day AND the drastic change in the timing off the last ferry every night (especially in the winter) will have a negative impact across all aspects of island life. The employees shifts will be reduced and impact their income, as well as island wide service.

With so much building on the island, contractors work 6+ days a week. An extension of the contractor ferry to run on Saturday would ease some of the passenger ferry congestion.

We are barely in to the massive change implemented this past spring which wreaked havoc on the commute and severely impacted the island workers that are dependent on the ferry to get to work and to serve the most important jobs they do. Our visitors were so confused and finally it seems to be functioning pretty well. I cannot imagine cutting the ferry service during the summer months. Winter could be ok.

It limits our access on and off the island later in the evening. We have used the late boats often. How will this impact the businesses on the island that are open later? Fewer boats will be a problem with capacity more often. Have all other improvements been studied for reducing the turn around time? Will the longer time allow for an increase to the old baggage limits? Will fewer boats lower the ticket price?

The proposal reduces the number of ferries and thereby reduces the number of passengers that can travel in a given day. The argument by BHIT that this will not reduce passenger load is disingenuous as it will force ridership throughout the entire day and will not provide enough ferry seats at the correct times. Renters will be forced to take a 7 am ferry for a house that will not be available until 4 PM with no where to go or store their luggage in the interim. Conversely, renters may have to vacate a home at 10 AM but will not be able to get off the island until 4 PM with nowhere to go and nowhere to store their luggage.

Island businesses will have difficulty getting all of their staff to the island at the correct times.

This is just further example of the complete deterioration of the ferry by an investor group not interested in the island. I sat inside recently for the first time in years on the ferry. I was flabbergasted at the poor condition of the cabin. Duct tape on the walls and seats, split vinyl cushions, foam spilling out. Stains everywhere: wall, ceiling, floor. [REDACTED]

Just another service deterioration. How can anyone possibly view less service as a good thing? Summer will be a disaster.

It needs to be an even time and be consistent every hour. No one especially in the summer will be able to figure out the schedule.

I am very concerned about fewer ferries running especially during holiday weekends and peak season (May-mid September). For the past 2 years the ferries at times are at full capacity and not able to handle all of the luggage going back and forth as it is. With fewer ferries everyday this will only be worse and more people will be waiting for multiple ferries to be reunited with their luggage, and more people will miss scheduled flights. Further the proposed ferry schedule reflecting the final ferry leaving the island at 11pm every night of the week is a real problem. This will result in events (i.e., weddings, etc) and businesses having to close earlier in the evening than they already do (which is already early) in order for employees and vendors to pack up and get off the island. Already weddings at the club have to end by 10pm. How is a band supposed to play until 10:00 and pack up in time to make an 11pm ferry. Our daughter is getting married on the island this May so I am very concerned about this issue should this take effect this spring. This change will result in less revenue not only for the businesses on the island but less revenue for the ferry operations as well. I would assume that this proposed change would result in the cost of ferry tickets increasing while service is decreasing. I realize that the ferries are often running behind schedule, but running this many fewer ferries on a regular basis is not the answer and would not be good for the island or its businesses, residents, or visitors. Keeping the schedule as it currently is and skipping an occasional ferry when it gets too far behind would be best for all of the above.

It is hard for employees to stay on schedule with a 30 min turnaround. Then confusion exists when more than one time boarders after waiting at the same time.

We need the current frequency of the schedule, especially in the summer months! Why is this change being proposed?

Although I selected no opinion in changing the ferry runs, I did so as I see valid points on both sides. I understand the need for the increased time to 45minutes; the time, distance, speed explanation is accurate. However, if the electronic system recently implemented worked seamlessly, I would be a bit more confident. I have experienced hiccups in the system where trams did not arrive to collect visitors/residents because it did not register in the system with the original reservation. Those issues are continuing to be resolved and I DO NOT wish to subject the tram workers to additional abuse from disgruntled passengers. They work with tremendous emphasis on customer service, additional wait time, decreased ferry runs, etc. could negatively impact their income.

Another concern is the amount of wait time employees moving on and off the island will have to endure. Most especially on the weekends as there is no contractor ferry. We already have difficulty acquiring and maintaining qualified individuals ~ this potentially puts another barrier in the way of recruiting and keeping employees.

Finally, I would like to see a ferry departure from Deep Point later than 10:30PM, Thursday ~ Saturday.

Will put an undue burden on property owners trying to get on and off the island.

it looks like this makes fewer ferry departures to/from the idland on most days. In solving one problem (apparently because you don't say) related to how long it takes to load/unload causing back-ups, having fewer ferries will only make things worse. this is especially problematic if someone needs to catch a plane and they get closed out of a ferry that is too full of walk-ons or other. it has not been rare to be picked up late and miss our reserved ferry because of capacity.

To address the problem of increased demand leading to lower on time percentage, your solution was to DECREASE the number of ferry trips. Another solution would be to INCREASE the number of ferry trips. More trips means fewer passengers each trip, speeding turnaround.

Presenting the average number of passengers per trip at 74 is unhelpful because that number includes early and late trips where there are hardly any passengers. Trips at peak times (10-4) will be full and people find space at their preferred time. This will be extremely problematic for passengers who have to catch a plane.

This plan is not a service to customers.

How do you propose making up lost capacity when eliminating the double runs on the weekends? The early runs probably have good OTP due to low ridership and should stay at 30 minute turns. The idea of starting earlier is certainly not accommodating to the ridership- who wants to get up at 5am to catch a ferry because there's no space in the middle of the day?

Fewer scheduled transits will lead to even greater ferry congestion, particularly during the high season. Rates will inevitably be raised to maintain revenue.

Concerned not enough ferries during the high summer months...June-July.

Its already difficult to travel on and off the island. Taking away the late night runs will make it worse. The ferry system ran beautifully for decades. Only since the past few years has service and quality diminished. electronic tickets, reservations, baggage limitations, several mates with anger issues, luggage guys who hide in the small room on the mainland and dont offer help, and now cutting runs. The ferry system is no longer listening to the needs of homeowners

Lowering the daily capacity will cause even more backups than we already have.

The summer schedule will result in overcrowded boats and people getting bumped.

Will the ferry sit idle during the break? With the engine running spewing exhaust?

the ferry is overloaded in peak season at 30 minute intervals with passengers waiting.

I strongly oppose reducing the number of ferry trips. The number of passengers increases annually so reducing numbers of trips will only add more stress and pressure for the passengers, including added pressure on rental properties. I'll choose a late-running ferry any day over reducing the number of rides

This change will result in decreased number of ferries and trams running. During peak season this would be problematic. Only worsening an already existing problem. Although it would likely help prevent the ferries from running late during peak season, it will result in the same number of people trying to book a decreased number of ferries and trams. As it stands there is already major difficulty in trying to access a ferry /tram during peak season, even with the new reservation system in place. This will result in people having increased difficulty trying to get on / off the island during "peak times". The reservation system may people from getting "bumped", with the expectation of workers who will also face increased difficulties with this change making it even harder to find people willing to travel to our island to run the establishments. However, it will result in many people not being able to get reservations because the ferries/trams will remain booked and likely increasingly further out. This subsequently will result in an increased number of people trying to access stand by and getting bumped. Although this may assist the problem with delayed ferries and stress on ferry crews (which we are very grateful for) it will only worsen an existing problem. Solving a problem with another problem doesn't fix the issue. Changes do need to be made, but this is not the correct solution.

Our main concern is the possible overcrowding of the fewer ferries that will be traveling. We do understand the positive effect on ferry wear and tear and on meeting ferry schedules that the change could have but in light of increased numbers of people visiting the island, we worry about longer wait times, more crowded waiting area (we have a dog that's super reactive to other dogs), and more people per ferry (which doesn't seem to help ferry health given the extra weight). BHI should always have had much smaller and more efficient ferries for the earliest and latest times (handfuls of people) instead of using the large existing ferries. However, if the schedule change reduces the (exorbitant) cost of fares (and super exorbitant cost of parking), then we would be in favor.

I think it would be beneficial to know that we can depend on the ferry to be on time. The 45 minute schedule will allow the time needed on holidays and in the summer for the ferry to remain on schedule. I also hope that the ticket costs will not have to be raised any time in the near future since there will be a savings on fuel with fewer "runs"

We own a fractional that gives us one week per month. When the electronic system started we had the very first week to travel during the implementation and with 10 possible family members using the ferry at different times during the week, last summer was difficult to the point that each family member had to purchase their own tickets- because of mistakes. Now, once again trying to implement a significant change during the busiest months. PLEASE wait til September- please.

The ferry never runs on schedule during anytime there is passenger volume. I would prefer a predictable schedule vs tracking the delayed ferry.

It's about the money not about the convenience and accessibility of the homeowners and renters - summer will be a nightmare under this schedule. Thinking about selling our house - very unhappy with the direction of the ferry. Love everything else about the island but this is a MAJOR drawback for the island. Boats need updated, trams need updated ... this will only cause more chaos for everyone. Find a system that will be more efficient instead of putting bandaids on it. Bald Head is better than this!

10:30 ipm and 9 pm are too early to be the last runs. Families and residents working out of town travel large distances to make it to island. There needs to be more Service in the evening

This proposal further isolates residents, limiting our ability to move freely between the mainland and the island, particularly in evening hours. It limits our freedom of movement significantly compared to existing schedules.

The times will be screwed up no matter what

Arbitrary change with no island input. That is why we should own the ferry.

Going to make it difficult for some visitors and workers to get on and off the island

We are losing several ferries per day.

I understand that they are trying to adjust the system schedule to improve overall performance.

The boat will be too full

I do understand the need to move to 45 minute intervals. I support the fact that the move to Deep Run extended the travel time AND that more trams are running out to CFS. We're out in CFS and I understand the impact. So I'm supportive of needing to adjust the passenger times to allow for those timing impacts. I was supportive when I heard [REDACTED] mention it at the BHA Annual Meeting HOWEVER, I was surprised to see that they are ending ferries quite early in the evening and am not supportive of ending that last ferry. This is going to lead to early closings at the club and many more nights for me to spend in the Wilmington Marriott because I can't catch the ferry. In the end, I am supportive of changing the ferry schedule, but not supportive of the large reduction in ferries per day, especially on Thursdays.

Can current infrastructure support more people waiting longer for ferries? Island side needs a makeover.

Based on BHIT's proposal, BHIT proposes to cut number of boats going to BHI each day in order to provide OTP. However, BHIT further cites dramatic increases in ridership. As a homeowner who spends at least 6 months a year on the island, I am at a complete loss for words that ANY solution for OTP involves LESS runs. This plan seems truly unjust for all employees (especially those who work weekends in the summer) and tourists during high season (families with kids).
I am a full time resident and the ferry works fine for me. I arrive at the marina and get in the next ferry leaving. It does not need to be more complicated.
Not as many ferries. They may not be late but especially in the summer they are going to be so much more crowded.
Is there no end to the revisions that limit and restrict homeowners access to the island. First the ticket system is completely changed during the busiest time of the year and now the stretching of the departure schedule to 45 minutes makes access even harder for both homeowners and especially service workers to the island. Ridiculous
Reduced frequency should be accompanied by reduce fee.
I support the 45 minute schedule but hope extra ferries will continue to be utilized during the peak summer holidays as needed.
I'm ok with the changes to 45 minute departures EXCEPT Thursday and Friday evenings when they need to run two ferries for longer bc otherwise the already really long summer lines will only be even longer!
We understand the proposal but reducing the number of ferries, especially during peak season, may create more negative than positive impacts.
It's a reasonable solution to a different situation.
I support any changes that would increase the reliability of the ferry/tram system. Over the last year, I was "forgotten" for tram pick up several times, delayed for over an hour at several points and overall annoyed with the inconsistency of the ferry. I appreciate the efforts to analyze and fix the problems. Looks like a ferry and tram nightmare in the summer. People who rent will not be pleased
A 90 min window between ferries, especially during peak season is too much of a wait. I think it will negatively impact the number of visitors coming to the island.
The winter schedule, with the last ferry on Monday-Thursday leaving Deep Point at 9pm, would effectively rule out permanent residents attending talks or meetings in Southport in the evening. Why does the winter schedule need to start at 6am? If it started at 6:45, the last ferry to the island could leave at 9:45.
The current hourly schedule is unsustainable in busy times, yet the proposed 45 minute schedules substantially decrease the # of ferries & thus convenience compared to the former schedules. A more detailed analysis of daily & seasonal hourly passenger volumes & ranges could help determine whether a more variable mix of 30 & 45 minute trips could provide better overall service. So I support the need for change but am not yet convinced a 100% shift to a 45 minute schedule is the best solution.
How does BHIT plan to more the increased 2024 visitors on Saturday and Sunday (2-6 pm)with fewer runs? Deep Point is going to look like a Trump rally with no place to go. 3 boats?
45mins. is not enough
For the first time in a long time the ferry is actual on time...not sure if that is the hour scheduling or more efficient process.....but whatever keeps the ferry running on time, I am all for. If the plan is to have 2 running ferry at the same time in an effort to keep the schedule then I am fine with the 45 min schedule....however, there is always some sort of "issue" with a ferry.....and the prospect of having two that operate well and as expected during peak season is fairly slim given their history.

The proposal does not adequately analyze the capacity of the revised schedule to handle the demands during peak times - it only provides a statement that there is adequate capacity across the day to handle the passenger demands. In particular, given the available data, how much bumping will occur during the morning runs to the island (carrying contractors, employees, etc) and the afternoon runs from the island? Are employers likely to shift from employee tickets to bulk 40?

The analogous capacity issue occurs during changeover days (Sat and Sun, and to some degree Th and F), with heavy late morning traffic off the island and afternoon traffic to the island. A detailed analysis using their extensive database about load factors and bumps is needed.

The ferry could never stay on the 30-minute schedule so why not try the 45-minute schedule.

While in theory some of the reasoning behind this sounds appropriate, using averages obviously skews the data and makes it challenging to understand how eliminating several runs a day will help anything during the peak summer days when the boats are at maximum capacity, other than the bottom line for the owners who will benefit from reduced costs. It would seem that adding staff or implementing cut off times for check in would help. The addition of the new ticketing system hardly seems to have helped the efficiency of the process, which they have managed to make more confusing, less user friendly, and more difficult to manage (for example, the online reservation system now means that it is virtually impossible to ever speak to anyone in the reservation office, if there even is anyone manning that now, no one ever knows where to stand or line up to get on and off the ferries, and the lack of organization creates mayhem even on the quietest of days. Can't imagine this new schedule will be any different or better from a user perspective but will instead frustrate homeowners even more.

There needs to be contractor boats on the weekends. Not every business is only open 9-5 Mon-Fri.

We have a 10 hour drive when we leave the island for our other home. Under the new schedule, we would be delayed even later leaving. During the winter, this is an issue as we have to drive in the dark to reach our home. I wish they would have an earlier ferry that provides tram service in the morning.

1. BHIT sponsored testimony in Docket No. A-41, Sub 22 that, among other things, assured the Commission that it did not anticipate significant or immediate changes following closing of the sale of the ferry system. See Order at p. 13. And yet, less than 6 months following issuance of the Commission's Order Approving Application With Conditions, BHIT has requested significant changes to the terms of ferry and tram service.

2. BHIT is proposing to solve the on-time performance problem by, ironically, running fewer boats. Indeed, BHIT's Application indicates that under the current 30-minute-turnaround schedule, the ferries make 24-27 one-way runs per day. Under the proposed new 45-minute-turnaround schedule, however, the ferries will make only 19-20 one-way runs per day and the second boat will be removed from service altogether during peak season. This despite the figures reported in Figure 2 in the Application, reflecting an average of 647 "bumped" passengers each month under the current ferry schedule due to maximum ferry capacity having been reached. Paradoxically, BHI is now arguing that eliminating 4-8 ferry runs per day and taking the second boat out of service during peak season will somehow provide adequate ferry capacity, despite the "bumped" passenger data and the consecutive year-over-year record growth in ridership.

3. As [REDACTED] indicated in his presentation to Village Council, the anticipated savings associated with these proposed schedule changes will be negligible. These changes will, however, come at a significant cost to those of us who live and work on the Island.

4. The last departure times would be earlier in the evenings and without tram service, causing problems for (a) people who commute to the island for work; (b) people who commute off the island for work; and (c) residents and visitors who have to travel 6+ hours to get to the island.

5. A better solution to the OTP problem that unlike what has been proposed here, will not result in poor quality of service, inadequate ferry capacity, and significant hardship to Island residents and visitors would be increasing the staffing levels, specifically luggage handlers, tram operators, and customer service representatives. Moreover, BHIT could reduce or eliminate a number of inefficiencies in the way ferry and tram services are managed that would help improve OTP, including for example, the hand-scanning of ferry tickets of all passengers in line in the moments before the scheduled departure, stricter adherence to luggage requirements and policies, etc.

6. In addition to Island residents and workers, these proposed changes also stand to negatively impact visitors and those who offer their island homes for rent, as well as the overall island economy, which heavily depends on tourism.

7. The alternatives to ferry service, which in my estimation are the only people/businesses who stand to benefit from these proposed changes to the ferry schedules, are extremely limited and cost-prohibitive for many island residents—essentially, the alternatives are (a) buy and operate your own boat; or (b) take one of a few private taxi options at a cost of \$200 each way between Deep Point and BHI.

Proposed schedules will be problematic for island employees

The current schedule works fine. This is a cheaper solution in search of a problem. If implemented anyway, I'd encourage additional departures between Memorial Day and Labor Day on additional days -- not just Saturday and Sunday. Friday for certain, possibly also Monday, and maybe 2-3 additional runs on Tuesday-Thursday in the true Summer months.

will be less ferrys and more chaos during the summer season. too long between ferrys. need more contractor ferrys.

Ridership is up, so can we not assume ticket money receipts are up? Why not run another boat during the busy summer months or during the busiest times of the day? I realize it's havoc in the summer with all the renters, but why not strictly enforce your baggage quotas? Why not make changes from Memorial Day through Labor Day only without affecting the entire island for the remainder of the year. As usual, the BHIT has applied for this change with no consideration of the residents, contractors/employees and the service industries on the island. These ferries are in deplorable condition; [REDACTED]

With fewer ferries running in the summer Monday through Friday. Will there be an increase in risk that people will get bumped due to capacity limitations

BHIT must operate in a way that is consistent with the requirements of the laws regulating common carriers. BHIT claims that it is unable to meet its current schedule because of high passenger volume. Therefore, it seems strange that BHIT proposes to reduce service and passenger capacity while passenger volume continues to increase.

I support moving to a 45 minute schedule. But the proposal from BHI Transportation does more than that—it slips in severe cuts in service. For example, a weekly reduction of 56 trips each way during the Winter service period alone! That is a reduction of over 5,600 passenger spaces per week! Moreover, it calls for elimination of the late night ferries, which are crucial for those coming from longer distances, such as my wife and I. (DC area.) The late night service must be restored and additional ferry runs add to provide reasonable service as a public utility.

Less boats on weekends going to cause chaos. Most rental homes have checkout at 10am. Add more boats around 10am.

I think the schedule needs more ferries on Fridays in the summer, holiday periods and possibly other times but it would be nice if this schedule actually permits the ferries to be on time

BHI Transportation's Proposed Passenger Ferry/Tram Schedule Change

Thank you for your comments. For any additional questions or comments, please email [HERE](#). For the NCUC comment page, go [HERE](#).

Answered - 14

Skipped - 182

Responses

It would be useful for BHI Limited to share the data they have on travel time.

If the 45 minute trip on Passenger ferry is approved would BHIT consider additional contractor ferries?

Love an deep appreciation for those workers at the tick office, on the front line at the docks and on the trams and ferries. They perform important jobs that are often thankless and met with only disgruntled passengers. They are amazing people and I always go out of my way to thank them and tip them because they get so little credit and know so little of the underworkings of this transportation business.

BHIT should consider a fact based presentation of the proposed ferry schedule and a pro forma of the ferry financials with and without the proposed change in schedule. BHIT may also want to present to the island stakeholders the pros and cons of the proposed changes. Island stakeholders should be receiving a balanced view of the proposal.

I would like to see One Way tickets sold. Full time residents often leave/arrive without any specific departure date in mind. Fabricating and changing departure/arrival dates on the app is a poor substitute for simply buying a one way ticket, even if the ticket is at a slightly higher price.

You are welcome and thanks for doing this. [REDACTED]

Please also consider relaxing restrictions in the off-season for owners. I understand the restrictions during the high season when the ferry is overflowing with people and bags. However, owners need to be able to bring over the occasional larger item to keep the houses in working order. I appreciate your consideration and time.

Trams need to run later in the high season. More people on island will have fewer options because businesses will have to close early to get their employees back to the mainland. People will stop coming to BHI and our property values will plummet.

This is egregious. A drastic shift from current service and island needs for both residents, employees and guests. The absolute wrong direction. Please do not pass it.

Why? what problems do they think this will solve, summer already is tough

[REDACTED]
45 min makes sense for nonpeak seasons.

If a ferry breaks down, with reduced number of scheduled trips, how does that work? How to accommodate day trippers and employees and homeowners leaving at the same time? Thursday's - only 3 ferries for Hammocks owners to check out- what?

I have submitted these comments to the Public Staff attorney responsible for handling this matter. In my opinion, consumer statements of position are not worthwhile. The only way to move the needle at this point is (1) convince the Public Staff to oppose this; and/or (2) intervene in the docket, which I am considering doing.