

# Pelee Island Transportation Needs Study

## Public Information Centre #2 – Handout

May 26, 27, and 28, 2011

### Detailed List of Key Pelee Island Transportation System Problems

#### Ferry System Vehicle Capacity

Ferry system vehicle-carrying capacity is insufficient to meet service demand/need, particularly with respect to semi tractor trailer trucks:

- Ferry vessels do not have adequate vehicle-carrying capacity
- Jiimaan weight capacity/load line sometimes reached before vehicle deck is full due to weight of cargo on tractor trailers and large trucks
- Pelee Islander cannot carry large trucks

Excessive and last-minute cancellation of trip reservations unnecessarily wastes ferry system vehicle capacity, limits trip access for other users, and damages the Pelee Island economy

Lack of readily available motorized vehicle alternatives to the private car on Pelee Island drives up demand for car capacity on the ferry system

- No on-Island public passenger service to attractions and/or activities to facilitate passengers leaving their cars on mainland

#### Ferry System Reliability

Trip cancellations due to inadequate ferry system reliability are caused by inability to maneuver under high wind conditions and vessel mechanical breakdowns:

- Jiimaan bow thruster is inadequate under high wind conditions
- Wind/wave conditions sometimes result in the ferry docking at a different mainland Ontario port than was scheduled
- The lack of extra engines means that the ferries cannot operate through a breakdown while repairs are being made
- Use of an improved Scudder Dock/North Dock could reduce sailing cancellations under some wind conditions
- Trip cancellations hamper financial sustainability for businesses and cause reluctance of some tourists to return to the Island

The Pelee Islander is approaching the end of its service life, and will likely be withdrawn from service at the end of 2016

Periodic loss of all early spring ferry service because the second vessel is not ready for sailing if the operational vessel breaks down

#### Ferry System Convenience

Long ferry trip duration:

- The ferry boats have a slow service speed
- The duration of the trip between mainland Ontario and Pelee Island is longer than it would be if Scudder North Dock were utilized for a shorter travel distance

Inadequate communication system for advising users of ferry trip cancellation or rescheduling:

- Phone line and website do not always provide up to date daily sailing status
- Travelers often left sitting in parking lot without being notified of trip delays and reason for same
- Inadequate information is provided to ferry users regarding the severity and anticipated duration of breakdowns

Some aspects of the current ferry system, or aspects of some alternatives, are inadequate or inconvenient for the users:

- Ferry Vessels:
  - Lack adequate racks for bicycles
  - Side-load Pelee Islander vehicle access makes loading / off-loading difficult, and it must be done by crew
  - Jiimaan elevator is unreliable and passengers sometimes get trapped in it
  - Need to refuel during daytime services causes service delays
- Ferry Schedule:
  - Inadequate number of daily trips during summer peak season and fall season
  - Departure time of the last Friday evening sailing from mainland Ontario is too early for many travelers
  - Inadequate number of daily trips during peak tourism season
  - Inadequate on-Island time for single-day trippers from Ontario mainland
  - Schedule does not provide for U.S. ferry service in early spring and late fall weekends, May/June weekdays, or for July/August single-day return visits to the Island from the U.S
  - Schedule layout and web site difficult for some users to understand
- Ferry Reservation and Cancellation System:
  - Users experience significant switchboard answering delays during peak booking periods (March)
  - System does not allow for the purchase of roundtrip tickets, which could prevent return-trip passengers being stranded and alleviate some waiting times at the ticket booth
  - Reservation system does not allow for “standbys” to eliminate low ridership when individuals cancel reservations
- Ferry Ports:
  - Limited passenger amenities (e.g., weather protection for walk-on passengers; facilities for disabled passengers; provisions for walk-on passengers with luggage; washroom facilities at the Pelee terminal)
  - Design of ports requires pedestrians to cross live lanes of traffic when disembarking from the ferries at all of the terminals
  - Limited parking, particularly outside border-secure area on Pelee Island
  - Inadequate provision is made for individuals who have difficulties walking the far distance between the ferry and terminal
  - Stakeholder perception that border security provisions are unnecessarily interfering with West Dock operation during off-season when no US service is provided (perception that security provisions in the US interfere to a lesser degree)
  - Signage, maps and schedules are confusing to some tourists because only one (1) of the two (2) mainland Ontario ports is in service at any time

Provision of ferry service to the U.S. greatly decreases flexibility for ferry service to the Ontario mainland, with respect to vessel alternative selection, schedule and Pelee Island port location

#### Ferry System Cost

Changes in ferry service schedule, capacity, cost, or ports serviced, that are associated with some alternatives may have a negative impact on local commercial sectors

High MTO implementation cost for some alternatives

High MTO annual operational cost for some alternatives

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### Pelee Island Transportation System Alternatives The Recommended 20 - Year Strategy

#### 1. Recommended M.V. Pelee Islander Replacement Alternatives

1(b) Replace the Pelee Islander with a new combined passenger / car / truck roll-on roll-off ferry with conventional bow visor/stern ramp and with moderately larger hull dimensions

#### 2. Recommended M.V. Jiimaan Major Vessel Improvement Alternative

2(d) Extend the Jiimaan hull and vehicle deck, provide improved maneuverability, and provide propulsion system redundancy through a four-engine diesel power plant

#### 3. Recommended Two-versus- One Vessel Ferry System Alternatives

3(a) Two-vessel ferry system with service to both U.S. and Ontario mainland, comprised of Pelee Islander replacement plus Jiimaan improvement alternatives

#### 4. Recommended Ferry Schedule Trip Frequency/Timing Alternatives

4(c): Delay first and last Friday Ontario mainland departure times during July and August by 2 hours so that the 8:00pm last departure time better accommodates user travel time to ports with respect to the end of a standard working day

4(d) Provide one additional return trip from the Ontario mainland during each day of Pelee Fest, and on the Friday and Monday of each of Victoria Day weekend, Canada Day weekend, Civic Holiday weekend, Labour Day weekend

4(e): During May, June and September weekends, extend the time period between first departure from Ontario mainland and last departure from Pelee Island to provide for 7.5-hour single-day visits to the Island (same as July/August), and pro-rate the additional operating cost to all Ontario mainland trip fares

4(g) Limit access for ferry trips between Pelee Island and the U.S. to non-commercial vehicles

#### 5. Recommended Ferry Trip Reservations and Cancellation Alternatives (applies to vehicles only)

5(b) Require 5 Day minimum advance notification to cancel a credit card guaranteed trip reservation without forfeiture of trip fare (increased from 48 hours)

5(d): At the time of a reservation or a change of reservation, charge on a credit card a non-refundable fee to reserve each one-way trip that is credited to the trip fare at time of boarding

5(f) For spring-time advance-booking of pheasant hunt sailing season trips, at the time of a reservation, charge on a credit card the full fare of each one-way trip, which is not eligible for refund in the event of a trip cancellation by the client, and allow hunters to book their next year's trip during their hunt on the Island

5(g) For farm crop shipments only, no reservation fee, and 48 hour minimum advance notification without trip fare forfeiture. If more than 10% of annual crop shipments are cancelled less than 5 days in advance, this policy exemption to be revisited

#### 6. Recommended Communications Alternatives With Ferry System Users

6(b) Provide additional telephones and staff for period of peak spring start-up ferry trip reservations

6(c) Provide on-line ferry trip reservations and cancellations after Pelee Islander replacement is in service (software specific to vessels must be developed)

6(d) Notify users of ferry trip cancellations or delays through timely recorded messages at the reservation desk and announcements at the ferry terminals

6(e) Issue "return tickets" for walk-on passengers for Pelee Fest, Canada Day weekend, Civic Holiday weekend, and Labour Day weekend, so fewer passengers are unable to leave the Island at end of day because vessel passenger capacity has been "maxed out"

6(f) In the event of trip cancellations from Pelee Island, provide notification of the Legion Hall's "Golden Era" program to provide overnight accommodation to stranded users

#### 7. Recommended Pelee Island Port Location Alternative

7(a) Continue both Ontario mainland service and Sandusky U.S. service at Pelee Island's West Dock

#### 8. Recommended Ontario Mainland Port Location Alternative

8(a) Continue operating both ports on the Ontario mainland with each of Leamington and Kingsville operating for only half of the sailing season

#### 9. Recommended Ontario Port Facility Alternative

9(c) Increase size of passenger wait area at Pelee Island West Dock

#### 10. Recommended Early Spring Sailing Season Vessel Preparedness Alternative

10(b) Ensure both ferry vessels are "ready to go" during early spring sailing season to provide back-up in event of mechanical breakdowns

#### 11. Recommended On-Island Transit Alternative

11(a) Continue on-Island transit as a private sector endeavor

#### 12. Recommended Island Winter Transportation Service Alternative

12(a) Continue to provide Island winter transportation service by aircraft