

## 'Amazing' hourly service on Sunshine Coast ferries will likely end in April

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*B.C. Ferries vessel the Queen of Surrey approaches the Langdale ferry terminal on the Sunshine Coast. Temporary hourly service has residents smiling.*

Hourly sailings on the Horseshoe Bay-Langdale ferry route has Sunshine Coast residents ecstatic, and B.C. Ferries is paying attention. More than 100 people responded to a straw poll about the temporary schedule on the Sunshine Coast Facebook page with responses ranging from "amazing" and "fantastic" to "it actually runs on time."

The praise is "insane," according to the page administrator Duane Burnett. "It's not at all what I was expecting."

The outpouring of positivity is unusual in a community where bagging on B.C. Ferries is a popular pastime, said Roberts Creek resident Lars Guinard.

"Hourly ferry service is awesome," he said. "We don't need a bridge."

Maria Kojic is relieved she no longer has to worry about when she gets back to Horseshoe Bay on a trip to the city.

"It doesn't matter when the worst case is an hour wait and most of the time less than that," she said.

The change was implemented while Berth 1 in Langdale is upgraded. Two vessels were put on the route instead of one. During construction, two ferries accommodate about 165 vehicles each using just the main car deck, while a single ferry in regular service can load about 310 vehicles on two decks.

Regular service, with sailings roughly every second hour with a single vessel, will resume after work is completed in April, said B.C. Ferries spokeswoman De-

borah Marshall.

"Labour and fuel costs are double (with hourly service)," said Marshall. "This is a temporary measure and is not sustainable."

But that doesn't mean the company won't find a way to make the popular service work at some future date.

"We are getting positive feedback from our customers," said Marshall, who said the temporary hourly service is a good trial for service changes when B.C. Ferries' Class C vessels retire in the mid-2020s.

"Future plans for the Langdale route could include two smaller vessels operating on an hourly schedule," she said. "It's not currently possible with the current vessels."