

Casco Bay Lines
Vessel Advisory Committee – Down Bay Vessel
1/14/2025 Meeting Minutes

On January 14, 2025, the fifth Down Bay Vessel VAC meeting was held to provide an update on the work of BHGI on the preliminary design for the down bay ferry. Those in attendance were as follows:

- Nick Ferrara
- Lorinda Valls
- Paul Belesca – Committee/Board Member
- Dave Crowley – Committee/Board Member
- Nick Bishop
- Joe Donovan – Committee Chair/Board Member
- Paul Pottle
- Nick Mavodones
- Mike Bryand
- Cory Wood – Naval Architect, Design Firm
- Zachary Martins
- Cooper Collins
- Nate Mills
- Chris Leddy
- John Warnock – CBL General Manager
- Pat Donovan
- Joshua Sebastian – Design Firm Representative
- Bill Jordan – Design Firm Representative
- Jean Hoffman – Board Member
- Jen Lavanture – Board Member

Nick M welcomed all to the meeting and Paul P outlined that the goal for this meeting would be to hopefully reach some type of consensus on which style of vessel to move forward with so that the design team could begin to focus on some of the other details to evaluate in the final development of a preliminary design report and a recommendation to the Board. The meeting was turned over to Cory Wood from BHGI to review the comparison slides of the two vessels that were under consideration. Cory did point out during his opening statements that he wanted to make clear the presentation did not address previous comments raised on the Maquoit III style vessel since their focus had been on doing the comparison. If the Maquoit III style was the one to advance, then they would be able to evaluate and offer solutions to those comments.

During the presentation, there was a side issue brought up with regard to the height of the 01 deck and clearances on the main deck as well as the placement of stanchions to support the 01

deck. Overall, it appears that the height of the 01 deck remaining similar as it is today was the most important factor and there seemed to be a willingness to give up some clearance or to have stanchions to achieve this would be an acceptable compromise. The details could be worked out as the design of the vessel was evaluated for various options and features. Cory went on to complete his presentation on the differences and features of the two styles and summed up the presentation with the following points:

- The beam has been maxed out for both vessels
- The freighter style has a little more cargo capacity but does have more stanchions to deal with.
- The Maquoit III style is similar to the vessel today with more cargo capacity and more passenger seating than the freighter style.

The floor was then opened up to the committee members and the public for their comments on the two styles and an indication of the style they would prefer for the new ferry. In summary, there were 11 committee members that favored the Maquoit III style vessel, and their highlighted comments are:

- Concerned with the ability to move vehicles very well on the freighter style vessel. Think the Maquoit III style will be more effective.
- Thinks the Maquoit III style will handle freight better overall and will be a better tourist vessel which improves revenues.
- Believe, the proposed design for the Maquoit III style needs some adjustments but thinks that they can be made and would work easier for the operation.
- Thinking consistency is important and would be more acceptable to the crew. Also, the Maquoit III would provide more space for tourists, which is a large revenue maker.
- Liked the freighter initially but after discussions with crew and observations, thinks the Maquoit III will work better with the existing facilities.
- Works better with the facilities and more acceptable with the crew.
- Both styles have interesting options but leaning towards the Maquoit III. Both provide more freight space but need to be mindful of mailboat cruises which creates a good local revenue stream that helps to match federal funds.
- While all opinions are important and have value, need to listen to the crew and their opinion.
- Thinks the Maquoit III works well and that this design can improve on any of the shortcomings with the vessel.

There were two committee members that favored the Freighter style vessel, and their highlighted comments are as follows:

- Want throughput of rolling freight to an open bow, creating a vessel that exceeds our current needs, try and get beyond current freight handling capacities and methods and keep up with the growth of all the islands. May be a vessel that can be used at Peaks and looks beyond current freight to the future.
- Need to look to the future, too many passengers on the vessel, intended to be a freight handling vessel and our freight capacity needs to improve, need a back-up vessel for when

the car ferry breaks down, need to be able to drive on the stern and off the bow, avoid holding onto what we have always done. Think freighter design is safer because can keep a better eye on the crew.

After the committee, there were comments from those attending that are not on the committee. Their comment highlights are as follows:

- No opinion on style, need input on operational cost considerations and what the trade offs are, need lower operating costs, do not believe freight will be handled as it is today but may need drive on and drive off features but at least be flexible for the future demands.
- Favors Maquoit III style, does not see roll-on/roll-off as a viable option in the future. The Maquoit III style fills all of the needs, have and need a two deck operation which this vessel would do.
- Optimize efficiencies may have a role in servicing Peaks Island.

Joe summarized what he thought was being said. He did not have a real preference for vessel style, both would serve freight and passengers, both could help serve Peaks when necessary. Pointed out that operational concerns have not been ignored and are being considered and evaluated and remain a work in progress. Commented on the concept of box trucks being sent to the islands and indicated that the islands do not want those types of vehicles on the island and that the road infrastructure would not support it. Thinks that the consensus leans towards an improved Maquoit style. Joe did want to specifically hear from Paul P and Cory W on what their thoughts were.

Paul P indicated that he tries not to take a position, he does not live on the islands and does not ride the vessel often. He indicated both vessels have merit but thought that neither would provide everything that people think they might. Touched on the roll-on/roll-off discussion indicating that it would require an extensive investment at each island because that type of facility would start around \$10 M for each site. Need to focus more on what they want for systems on the vessel that will handle the variety of freight handling options available for use. Also think that should look at operational systems that will minimize operational costs even if the upfront costs are more, since can usually find the capital funding for construction but no funding available for operational costs. He highlighted the benefits and risks of new technology but felt that it should be carefully evaluated and not just dismissed. He leans towards the Maquoit III style for it is important that the crew likes the style and feels more comfortable with that style. Also feels that if the vessel operates completely different from all the others, that the crew will need to adjust their mindset each time they change vessels which could create issues.

Cory also shared his thoughts and indicated that to get 10 out of 11 captains to agree on a style or concept is not easy and that he was very pleased to see that with this effort so far. He would defer to the captains and the crew on the style, and he thought that the Maquoit III had the consensus and seemed to hear that it would be more palatable and more flexible than the freighter style. He pointed out that the design, construction and the operational costs would be very similar since the vessel size and hull form would not vary much for either. While he liked the freighter style idea,

mainly because there was not one out there that was similar to this, it was not a reason to choose it.

Joe then attempted to get the group to do an informal vote on the direction to be given to BHGI. There were a few side discussions that came from that focused on cost drivers pertaining to operations, potential for revenue growth with various styles or options and whether there had been sufficient process or if process improvements were needed. Joe summed up the conversation and suggested that the design work could be done simultaneously with some of the operational cost evaluations. Joe then asked for a show of hands for several potential paths forward. They are:

- Focus on flushing out details on the Maquoit III style vessel which there were 11 committee members in favor of and 1 public member in favor of.
- Further evaluate the Freighter style vessel which there were 2 committee members and no public members in favor of.
- Continue to evaluate both styles further, which there were 2 committee members and 2 public members in favor of. Please note that all four of these votes were from Board Directors.

After some additional discussion, Joe attempted to summarize what the next expectation was of BHGI in preparing information for the next VAC meeting. He wanted them to move forward with the Maquoit III style vessel and respond to concerns that had been raised at earlier meetings along with updating the operation study work to include an update to the propulsion study. Wants to focus on energy costs and fuel consumption along with other operational costs for both vessel and shoreside operations as it pertained to the vessel. We should be looking at how to do things efficiently and effectively, with a focus on the movement of freight more than vehicles and keeping a reasonable amount of seating capacity. He also mentioned looking at the conditioned space and whether it could be handled or not. There were a few additional comments, and the meeting came to a close.

The date for the next meeting has not been chosen yet. Joe wanted to wait until after the board meeting to set the next meeting date. Should anyone have additional comments on the meeting or wish to share any additional thoughts or input, please send them to Joe or Paul so that they can be shared with the entire committee and design team.