



Staff Report

Request for Decision

TO: Committee of the Whole – July 17, 2025

AUTHOR: Shelley Gagnon, General Manager, Community Services

SUBJECT: **New Brighton Dock Facility Feasibility Study Update**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with the preliminary findings of the New Brighton dock feasibility study as well as options to consider regarding progressing the study to the public participation phase.

This report requests Board decision to accept, reject or provide alternate direction with respect to staff's recommendations as presented below.

Recommendation(s):

- (1) THAT a public participation process to gather community input regarding the future ownership, management, service level, and funding of the New Brighton Dock Facility (dock and barge ramp) be undertaken in the fall of 2025;**
 - (2) AND THAT staff return to the Board with:**
 - (a) A summary of public input ("What We Heard"), and**
 - (b) A final version of the Feasibility Study report to inform next steps.**
-

BACKGROUND

On July 25, 2024 the Board directed staff to undertake a feasibility study to explore options for the ownership and operations of the New Brighton dock (Recommendation 235/24). Concurrently, the Board maintained the position that the Province of British Columbia is the appropriate authority to maintain jurisdiction for the New Brighton dock as a critical marine highway, and that they would continue to advocate accordingly. The Feasibility Study project scope was presented to the Board later that fall (Attachment A) and a consultant was retained to conduct the study.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

Over the past eight months, staff and the consultant have engaged in conversations with provincial staff, Islands Trust, Nch'kay' staff, BC Ferries staff, BC Ferries Authority representatives, and Gambier Island Community Association representatives.

Updates:

- Nch'kay', on behalf of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), has re-

affirmed their position to find a solution, including divestiture, for the dock to remain open for community use (Attachment B). The main goal of the Nation (and Nch'kay') is to support ongoing community use (including access by nation members) while removing them from financial responsibilities and risks related to the dock and barge ramp.

- The barge ramp was built by the Ministry of Transportation in 1999. It remains unclear as to who 'owns' the asset. Provincial authorizations staff asked Nch'kay' Development to submit a *Land Act* application for the barge ramp as well, in order to ensure it was formally authorized. This formed the basis of why an application for the barge ramp was submitted by the Squamish Nation.
- The barge ramp is unmaintained.
- While it seems beneficial for the tenure holder of the barge ramp and New Brighton dock to be one and the same for maintenance purposes, provincial staff have confirmed that the two assets are currently considered for issuance as two separate *Land Act* tenures and do not need to be held by the same tenure holder.
- At the time of this report, the tenure (water) agreements with the province for both the dock and barge ramp remain unsigned.
- BC Ferries is open to exploring fee-for-use agreement (for the New Brighton dock) similar to other docks rather than an arrangement of owning (or leasing) a dock for ancillary community use.

As per the scope of work for the feasibility study, the attached Interim Feasibility Study report provides information on the financial implications of the established dock service (Ports), the financial implications related to owning/operating the New Brighton dock and ramp, service level considerations and implications, options on the role that the SCRD may want to take in moving forward, and service establishment options (Attachment C).

Public Participation

The next step is to engage in community conversations. Staff will develop a public participation plan with various tactics to engage with the community (e.g. community open houses, Let's Talk page, on-line survey). The intent of the public participation is to solicit feedback from the current Ports Service participants (Area F, including islands, Area E, Area D, and Area B) related to the following:

- What role do they want the SCRD to take in relation to the New Brighton dock and barge/ramp?
- Should the service level of the two assets remain status quo or should it decrease to mirror the other 9 docks in the SCRD service?
- What service establishment option does the community support?
- Is there support for a tax increase for the costs related to the additional assets?

These discussion points will be presented to the community in a visual and engaging manner.

Following conversations, staff will return to the Board with a report outlining the public participation findings (e.g. "What We Heard"), as well as a final Feasibility Study report.

A check-in with the Board was identified prior to engaging in community discussions.

Given the preliminary information contained in the Interim Feasibility Study, staff are seeking Board confirmation to move forward with the project and engage with the public.

OPTION 1 – Direct staff to move forward with public participation in the fall to gather community input on ownership preferences, service levels and funding mechanisms.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications associated with this option, as the participation strategy will be tailored to fit within the approved budget (e.g. advertising, materials).

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend this option. Ensuring an opportunity for the community to provide input to help inform decisions on the future of the dock and barge is important. Should the Committee choose to go with Option 1, proposed recommendations are outlined in the Overview section of this report.

OPTION 2 – Continue to maintain the Provincial Government to be the appropriate authority to maintain jurisdiction for the New Brighton Dock as a critical marine highway.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications associated with this option.

Staff Recommendation

Staff do not recommend this option. Providing the community with information regarding the dock and ramp as well as options that the SCRD could play in its future prior to a final decision by the Board is encouraged. The feasibility study contains information that the community may not have been privy to in the past that may help inform their feedback on this important community matter.

Should the Committee choose to go with Option 2, the following recommendation could be considered:

THAT the feasibility study be concluded;

AND THAT SCRD Board provide a letter to Nch'Kay' and the Province confirming their position that the Provincial Government is the most appropriate authority to maintain jurisdiction for the New Brighton Dock (and barge ramp) as a critical marine highway.

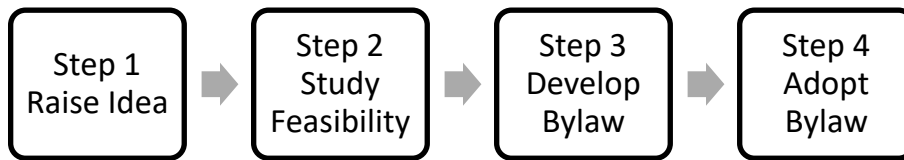
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A budget of \$25,000 has been approved for this phase of the feasibility. Any subsequent phases would require an additional budget request.

LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

If the SCRD were to assume responsibility to operate New Brighton dock and/or barge ramp, the service arrangement will need to be contemplated as a next step (indicated as Phase 5 in the scope of work, Attachment A). The resources required to move to this step are not included in the current budget and would need to be brought forward in a future Financial Planning process for the Board to contemplate priorities. The general process for establishing

any new service is as follows:



Once the idea has been raised, the following steps are then required:

- Consideration of service decisions
 - Define service area, service level and proposed annual budget
 - Define the boundaries of the service
 - Identify the participants of the service
 - Determine the method of cost recovery
 - Calculate tax rate (should be sufficient to ensure amendment isn't required for at least five years)
 - Public consultation via online survey/information sessions to determine community support for service arrangement
 - Staff report to Board summarizing community response
- Develop/Draft service establishment bylaw
 - Bylaw must receive 3 readings and be approved by the Inspector of Municipalities prior to commencing the decided upon elector approval process (Assent Vote or Alternative Approval Process)
- Prepare for and initiate the elector approval process
- If elector approval obtained - Bylaw adoption and submission to Province
- Information to BC Assessment for service area coding

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Engaging in New Brighton discussions is not identified as a focus area in the SCRD Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

TIMELINE

Community conversations would commence in the fall, with staff returning to the Board with a subsequent report prior to the end of the year.

COMMUNICATIONS

Staff will develop a public participation strategy for the community conversations and report back to the Board accordingly.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

As directed by the Board, an Interim Feasibility Study report has been provided for the Boards information prior to engaging in community conversations. Staff are recommending that the

study proceed to the public participation phase. Following the public participation phase staff will return to the Board with a summary of the community feedback and a final Feasibility Study report for consideration of next steps.

ATTACHMENT(S):

A – October 24, 2024 – New Brighton Feasibility Study Scope of Work Staff Report

B – April 16, 2025 - Letter from Nch'kay'

C - June 23, 2025 – New Brighton Dock Facility Interim Feasibility Study

Reviewed by:			
Manager		Finance	
GM		Legislative	X - S. Reid
CAO	X - T. Perreault	Other	