

IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO CTC CUSTOMERS

UPCOMING CHANGES IN FERRY AND BUS SERVICE

The mission of the Chebeague Transportation Company is to provide safe, reliable, efficient transportation for Chebeague Island. We also need the service to be as reasonably priced as possible for our customers. To achieve this goal, CTC must carefully control its expenses.

In order to evaluate our success in achieving our mission, we have asked you - our customers - for your preferences, ideas, and assessment of our service through three surveys. In the fall we conducted a Customer survey and received 124 responses. The results were shared with our customers and are posted on our website. In November we did a Parking Service survey that had 157 responses. Those responses have been, and will continue to be, helpful in continuing to evaluate our parking service. In March we conducted a Ferry Schedule survey and received 84 responses. The results are posted on our website and the ferry.

While it is impossible to have a transportation company that meets the needs of all customers at all times, the overwhelming survey response has helped us identify what changes in our service the community desires. Of course, in some cases there is not a consensus among customers. (For example, in our Customer survey, we asked what changes you felt should be made to the ferry schedule. Roughly 1/3 of respondents said "reduce trips", 1/3 said "add evening trips" and 1/3 said "leave schedule the way it is".) However survey results, conversations with employees, analysis of current ridership data, and input from the community have identified several areas where a change in service is warranted. Following are some major areas of concern and how CTC will address them.

Personal freight on buses is an issue, especially on summer weekends. The amount of freight on busy days and the method of handling freight could be improved.

1. *CTC is purchasing a number of carts to be used by bus customers to unload freight at Cousins and load directly onto the ferry. The carts will be rotated between the Cousins Island wharf and the ferry. Customers who elect to use the carts can load the cart at the bus, roll it onto the ferry, and unload the cart on Chebeague. The cart will then be transported back to Cousins where they will be exchanged with full carts being loaded at Cousins on the next ferry*
2. *Under the current schedule, the ferry frequently does not leave Cousins at the scheduled time. Depending on weather, tides, and passenger/freight loads the boat may actually depart from Cousins more than 5 minutes after the scheduled time. Additionally, because the ferry arrives, unloads, and loads as quickly as possible there are often significant amounts of freight on the float in the way of disembarking customers (a safety concern). Furthermore, customers must wait at on the wharf while the boat crew loads all freight, adding to the overall trip time. In order to allow more freight loading time at Cousins, the ferry will have a 15 minute layover at Cousins for all boats except the first one. The bus will arrive 20 minutes before the boat departs from Cousins, position the bus so that it can exit the wharf when loaded, and unload and load passengers and freight. Because the bus will be in position 20 minutes before the boat leaves, it will allow more room and time for customers from the Blanchard lot to drive to the lot, unload, and park their vehicles.*
3. *The new schedule adds one trip on Friday and two trips on Sunday to accommodate peak travel time. More choices should help reduce passenger counts per trip.*
4. *During peak times on busy weekends, there will be a second employee at the Route One parking lot to help collect fares and load freight.*
5. *Changes will be effective the first day of summer, June 21, 2011.*

Fares should not be increased over 2010 rates. Reduce fares if possible.

1. *Ferry fees will be similar to the 2010 summer rates, with slight reductions in children and pet fares.*
2. *Age limit for **free** passage for children will be increased from the current limit of first birthday to sixth birthday.*
3. *Summer fees and age limit changes will be effective 5/15/2011.*

CTC should offer monthly or annual passes.

1. *CTC will implement a monthly commuter pass program.*
2. *Other passes will be considered in the future.*

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Customers are most interested in flexibility in leaving in the morning and returning in the afternoon, retaining the mid-evening ferry, adding later Sunday night trips, and retaining late boats on Friday and Saturday nights.

Our challenge is to accommodate the needs of most of our customers while not increasing operating costs, and thus fare prices.

1. *The survey results show that demand for a noon boat is low. Therefore, this boat is eliminated but an 11am ferry is added. This allows us to better control payroll expenses.*
2. *A 1PM ferry has been added on Saturday and Sunday because these are peak travel times for people coming to the island as renters (Saturday morning) and people leaving on Sunday.*
3. *Friday night and Saturday night late boats have been retained, although departure from Cousins is earlier.*
4. *A 9PM Sunday evening boat has been added.*
5. *A 7:00PM Friday boat has been added.*
6. *The 6:40AM boat has been moved to 6:30AM. While this is not an ideal solution, it is the best solution we can find to balance the needs of early commuters and school children. Unfortunately, we are prohibited from arriving at Cousins Island prior to 6:30AM so we cannot add a ferry that can deliver commuters to Cousins early enough to return for school children.*
7. *Changes will be effective the first day of summer, June 21, 2011.*

The freight shed should be improved.

1. *Lights have been added to the front of the freight shed, inside the freight shed, and at the end of the wharf near the freight shed.*
2. *The freight shed will be painted, new windows installed, and a new door installed.*

CTC should find a way for families and friends to visit the island for a day at a more reasonable cost.

1. *We are developing a “day pass” program for our website. The pass will offer reduced fares for day visitors. Credit cards will be allowed for payment. Date of implementation has not been finalized.*

CTC should offer more information about the ferry and Island to visitors.

1. *Bus drivers will have information brochures for visitors and offer them as people load the bus.*
2. *We are developing a new website that will be published in June. The new web site will provide comprehensive information to anyone using our service, including fares, schedules, passenger fare policies, and general information about our service.*

Implementing some of the additional suggestions from the surveys remain on our “to do list”. We are grateful for your input and hope that these changes will better meet the needs of our customers. There are significant changes being implemented, and change is always difficult. We ask your patience and cooperation as we transition. Let us know what works, and what doesn't work, for we are more than willing to make future adjustments. As always, feel free to contact Martha Hamilton, Office Manager, or Carol Sabasteanski, General Manager, if you have suggestions, questions, or concerns. Thank you!

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