

Bridges could shorten ferry routes

Back in the late 1980s Mladen Zorkin and Pat McGeer were actively supporting a fixed link to Vancouver via Vales Island. This link would require a number of bridges to Gulf islands, including Gabriola, that were loudly criticized by residents of the islands.

Today, in this time of fiscal restraint and high ferry fares, it would make sense to revisit the short-link ferry routes that were included as an option in the proposals.

The idea of a ferry route to a terminal near YVR that would link ferry travelers with both the airport and the Canada Line makes sense now.

If this “short” route was implemented both the Horseshoe Bay–Departure Bay Route and the Duke Point–Tsawwassen could be eliminated in favour of a new crossing that would take 40 minutes. It is also possible that this route could be used for some traffic that now uses the Swartz Bay–Tsawwassen route because the total travel time from much of greater Victoria would not change or would be reduced.

The effect of a 40-minute crossing would be to double the usefulness of the fleet of new ferries. The savings in capital cost of vessels should more than offset the cost of bridges and terminals, not to mention the possibility of eliminating some of the smaller Gulf islands routes that are presently subsidized by the major routes.

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