

## INFORMATION BULLETIN

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**DATE: October 1, 2014**

**SUBJECT: *Process to come up with new Yarmouth ferry terminal design being launched***

**SOURCE: *Tina Comeau, The Digby Courier, 9/30/14***

YARMOUTH – There won't be a new ferry terminal in place for Nova Star's sailing season next year, but the early stages of the process for coming up with a design for a new terminal in the future is being launched now.

The Yarmouth Area Industrial Commission has put out a request for proposals dealing with the Yarmouth International Ferry Terminal. Specifically, it is seeking the services of a qualified engineering firm to plan, lead, consult and develop the design and specifications for the development of a new ferry terminal.

Money was spent on upgrades and improvements at the terminal facility and property in advance of this year's sailing of Nova Star. The federal government covered the bulk of the costs with a contribution of around \$2.5 million. But there are still shortcomings.

The decision had been not to proceed with a new terminal facility until it was known for certain what the needs of the users, in particular Nova Star Cruises, would be. And this wouldn't be known until the company completed a season or two sailing in and out of the facility.

"We all knew that the terminal was short-term, but we had to have something up and running," says Yarmouth Warden Murray Goodwin, chair of the Yarmouth Area Industrial Commission.

While he says the terminal and border facilities are functional, they're not ideal.

Moving forward will involve consultations with Nova Star Cruises and Canada Border Services Agency to determine what their needs are.

“We’re good for next year, we know that,” Goodwin says. “But longer term we all knew that we need a new terminal. This is just the preliminary stage of hiring a consultant, bringing in the stakeholders . . . and sitting down and figuring out what do we need in this new terminal. What’s it going to look like? What do we need in square footage?”

He notes some of the shortcomings already identified are the lack of a covered area to do truck inspections by customs border staff. The loading and unloading of foot passengers via the same ramp used for vehicles is another area to address given the current configuration of the facility.

And although he didn't mention this, if you want to throw in first impressions, there's no doubt the terminal looks tired and aged.

An advertisement inviting proposals from engineering firms says the ultimate goal is to come up with a design and new site footprint, with budgetary estimates, for the replacement of the existing terminal with “a modern, user appropriate, efficient passenger and vehicle interface facility at the terminal site in Yarmouth.” Written and electronic proposals are being accepted until Oct. 31.

Goodwin won't give a target for what season a new terminal would be in place, just in case that target isn't met. But he says planning needs to begin now.

He notes very few municipal units operate international ferry terminals so it's not like there's a big inventory to examine or get ideas from.

“Nova Star has had a year in and they're starting to get an idea for what they need. Canada customs have been there for a season, they knew coming in what they needed and they didn't have it, but they did accommodate us,” says Goodwin.

Asked whether the existing terminal site would still be the one used, Goodwin says at this stage this seems to be the plan.

“There was talk of Bunker's Island, but there is so much infrastructure at the ferry terminal now, if you're got to start from scratch it's hard,” he says.

He does say they won't be able to proceed with a new terminal without financial assistance from the federal government.

"I don't want to put a financial figure on it but definitely we'll need the federal government to be a partner," he says.