

# Anacortes to San Juan Islands Walk-on Ridership Maximization Study

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DECEMBER 2023



**Washington State  
Department of Transportation**

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# Executive summary

This study, initiated by the Washington State Legislature in the 2022 Supplemental Transportation Budget, ESSB 5689, Section 222 (21), aimed to engage with stakeholders to identify and recommend cost-effective strategies, and public funding sources to support them, that will maximize walk-on passenger ridership of the Anacortes/San Juan Islands ferry route. The study was carried over into the 2023 Transportation Budget, ESHB 1125, Section 222 (6).

The Anacortes/San Juan Islands route faces high ridership demand during the peak summer season, often exceeding vehicle capacity. While the capacity for vehicles is routinely reached on each ferry run, passenger capacity remains underutilized. This presents an opportunity to boost ridership and maximize ferry usage. Accordingly, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Ferries Division (WSF), is exploring strategies to encourage passengers to walk, bike, or roll onto the ferries between Anacortes and the San Juan Islands archipelago served by WSF—San Juan, Orcas, Lopez, and Shaw.

The WSF Anacortes to San Juan Islands Walk-on Ridership Maximization Study (Study) was guided by three main goals:

- Engage with route-dependent communities and key stakeholders.
- Identify cost-effective near- and long-term strategies to maximize walk-on/roll-on ridership informed by that engagement.
- Determine potential public funding sources.

## Approach

The Study reviewed existing transportation options and challenges for walk-on/roll-on passengers to identify potential strategies that provide an alternative to driving on the ferry in a personal vehicle. Community and stakeholder engagement were integral to inform transportation needs and potential strategies.



Community and stakeholder engagement included:

- A three-week public online survey that launched on the same day as summer reservations (April 25, 2023), which garnered nearly 700 responses and over 330 written comments.

- Listening sessions with key stakeholders from 15 jurisdictions, agencies and organizations to discuss the feasibility of potential strategies.
- Briefings and meetings with the San Juan County Council and the San Juan Island Ferry Advisory Committee to promote the online survey, share Study updates and discuss preliminary findings. The team also met with WSDOT's Public Transportation Division to share information about the study and discuss engagement strategies for transit-dependent populations.

## Findings

Feedback from engagement played a crucial role in understanding transportation needs and identifying the feasibility and implementation considerations of potential strategies to increase walk-on ridership. Potential strategies include:

- Transportation options such as shuttles, bikes, and scooters.
- Operational or capital improvements to enhance parking and pedestrian movement through terminals and vessels.
- Policies aimed at supporting or incentivizing walk-on/roll-on ridership.

The study team examined the implementation considerations for these strategies, focusing on their potential effectiveness in addressing the diverse requirements of system users and how combinations of these strategies could enhance the overall door-to-door customer experience. Key findings are detailed below.

**Focus on the unique needs of different user groups:** Strategies must address the unique transportation challenges of different user groups. Certain user groups, such as island visitors traveling without children, may present greater opportunities for mode shift. Additionally, funding opportunities and partnerships may align with strategies that serve specific user groups, such as senior island residents requiring transportation to medical services in Anacortes or visitors connecting to attractions or lodging on the islands.

**Consider the cost and user experience of a door-to-door trip:** Most ferry riders are unlikely to switch modes unless walking on is notably less expensive, faster, or more convenient. In addition to specific transportation strategies, the Study explored potential operational improvements at ferry terminals and on vessels, as well as the first- and last-mile connections, which would enable a vehicle-free trip. Supportive policies like fare incentives or funding for transportation alternatives could encourage more people to travel to and from the San Juan Islands without cars.

**Need for multiple concurrent strategies:** Implementing a single strategy alone (such as a shuttle service route at only one terminal) may have a limited impact in walk-on/roll-on ridership. To create a higher impact, WSDOT should implement a set of strategies that, together, support walk-on/roll-on passengers on both ends of the route and consider their trip through the terminal and vessel.

As was heard during engagement with island representatives and tourism stakeholders, an increase in walk-on ridership requires supporting infrastructure on the islands. Therefore, incentives and improvements need to have a holistic approach with thoughtful phasing.

## Recommendations

To address the key findings, the Study includes the following recommendations.

**Foster regional partnerships:** Collaborate with transit agencies and connecting communities to implement transportation strategies. For instance, given that many San Juan Island trips extend beyond Anacortes, coordination should encompass transportation to regional hubs including Burlington, Mount Vernon, Bellingham and Seattle.

The San Juan Islands is the only area served by WSF that lacks governance by a regional transportation and planning body. Therefore, comprehensive strategies and funding opportunities for overarching strategies will require active engagement and support from WSDOT for current and future planning efforts.

**Coordinate with planned studies and projects:** Seek opportunities for WSDOT to engage in planning efforts related to transportation connections to the Anacortes or island terminals to ensure that potential connections and strategies are in alignment with WSF operations and service levels. Maximize opportunities for implementation of walk-on/roll-on transportation strategies through partnerships on grant applications and state funding requests.

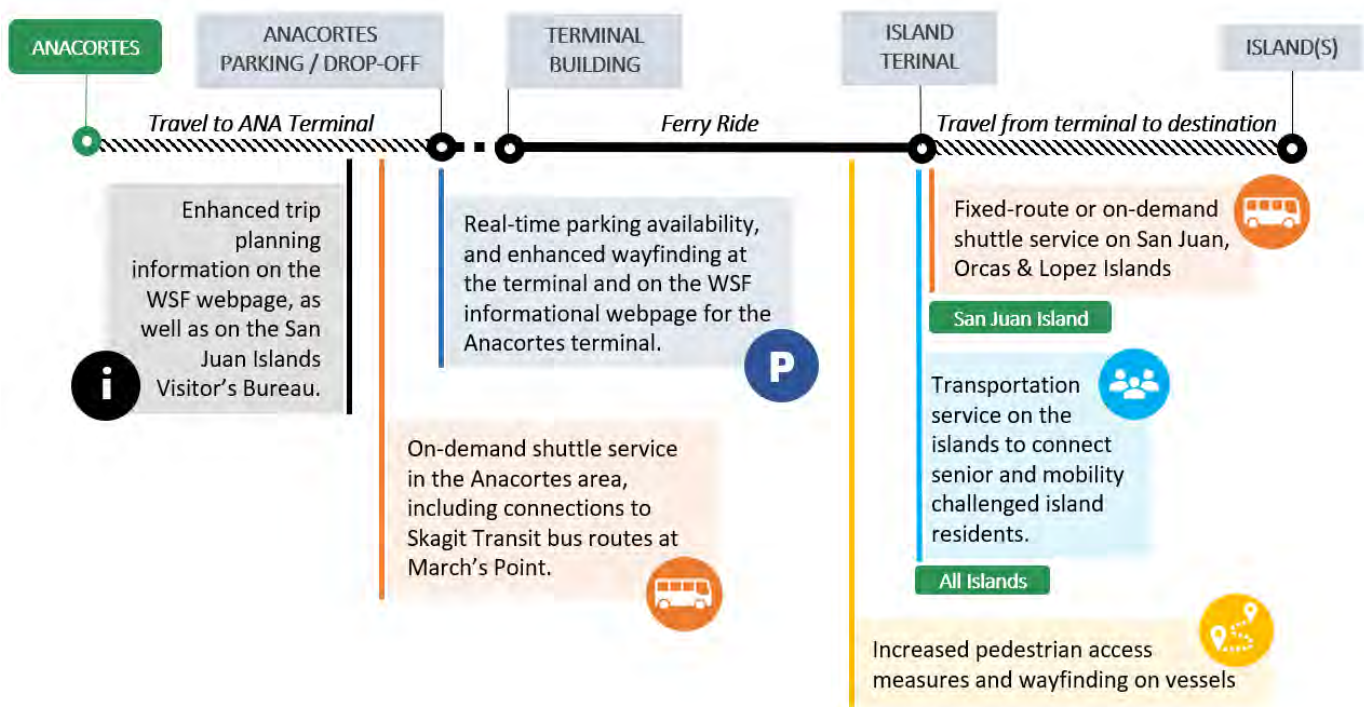
**Implement multiple coordinated strategies:** Aim to simultaneously implement two or more of the most feasible and cost-effective strategies, along with operational improvements and supportive policies.

**Consider supportive operational or capital improvements and policies:** In addition to specific transportation strategies, explore potential operational improvements and fare policies to promote walk-on/roll-on ridership.

To achieve success, it is crucial to implement a combination of strategies along each segment of the route. As a starting point for WSDOT's implementation of potential strategies, the Study identified three scenarios, found in Chapter 5: Scenarios for implementation, which provide examples of coordinated implementation of strategies targeted to different user groups. Each scenario calls for regional partnerships and coordination with ongoing planning efforts of local communities and transit agencies committed to improving transportation for their user groups, community members and visitors.

The third scenario, representing the most robust buildout of strategies to support walk-on passengers through each trip segment, is displayed below. Potential strategies include improved visitor information and wayfinding, enhanced shuttle service, and increased parking.

### Scenario 3: Year-round access for island residents with mobility challenges and seasonal mode-shift for island visitors



The recommended next steps toward implementation of Scenario 3 focus on strategies within WSDOT control or through partnership with existing operators. To that effect, they are the most feasible to implement. The specific recommendations are summarized below. To read the analysis of all three scenarios, see Chapter 5: Scenarios for implementation.

- **Continue to focus staff and crew resources on providing reliable ferry service**
- **Encourage walk-on trips for island residents**
  - Offer discounted passes to island residents for long-term parking at the Anacortes terminal.
  - Explore options for contracting with a private operator to introduce a carshare fleet at Anacortes terminal by providing convenient curbside and/or parking spaces.
  - Conduct outreach with San Juan County staff to understand existing needs and identify next steps to expand medical transportation services.
  - Encourage walk-on trips for island visitors
  - Explore options for contracting with an existing private operator to provide expanded shuttle service on San Juan, Orcas and Lopez Islands.
- **Maximize the use of parking at the Anacortes terminal:** In the next request for parking lot concessions operations proposals, scheduled for release in 2024, stipulate that prospective bidders offer "Smart Parking Systems" or "Active Parking Management" services in their responses.
- **Improve customer information**
  - Provide additional, current information on the WSF Anacortes and San Juan Island terminal webpages.



- Incorporate wayfinding at terminals and on vessels to direct users to multimodal connections.
- **Collaborate with transit partners, San Juan County, and local agencies to support current efforts studying feasibility of shuttle services and multimodal improvements.**

# Chapter 1. Introduction

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As directed by the Washington State Legislature, WSF conducted the Anacortes to San Juan Islands Walk-on Ridership Maximization Study to explore ways to maximize ridership by encouraging more people to walk, bike, or roll on the ferries to and from the San Juan Islands archipelago—San Juan, Orcas, Lopez and Shaw. Available space on the vessel car decks fills quickly, especially during the summer months, but vessels typically have plenty of space for more walk-on passengers.

This Study aimed to:

- Engage with route-dependent communities and key stakeholders.
- Identify cost-effective near- and long-term strategies to maximize walk-on/roll-on ridership informed by that engagement.
- Determine potential public funding sources to support strategy implementation.

Based on the language of the proviso directing this Study, assessment focused on trips between Anacortes and the San Juan Islands, where vehicle capacity issues present the greatest challenge. The San Juan Islands are also served by the Interisland route, which provides connection between the islands. While Interisland passengers would benefit from strategies implemented on the islands, those users may also have unique trip purposes and transportation needs beyond the focus of this Study.

## Document organization

This document is organized into the following sections:

- **Chapter 2 – Existing conditions:** Provides an overview of information reviewed to support the Study including ridership and capacity trends, terminal and vessel conditions, current transportation options and challenges, and user groups.
- **Chapter 3 – Key findings and implementation framework:** Key findings related to how strategies can be implemented most effectively were established based on evaluation of existing conditions and findings from public outreach and stakeholder listening sessions.
- **Chapter 4 – Evaluation of strategies to maximize passenger ridership:** This section provides an overview of the identified potential strategies, the screening process and criteria used to identify recommended strategies, and assessment findings.
- **Chapter 5 – Scenarios for implementation:** Based on the key findings presented in Chapter 4, example approaches for strategy implementation are represented in three scenarios, which target specific user groups.
- **Chapter 6 – Costs and funding opportunities:** Identifies potential costs and funding opportunities to support strategy implementation, including grants and partnerships.
- **Chapter 7 – Recommendations and next steps:** Identifies recommended next steps for WSDOT to support walk-on passengers.

## Approach

The Study first focused on understanding current opportunities and constraints to identify and evaluate potential strategies for increasing walk-on/roll-on ridership. Through that review, the Study developed recommendations for strategy implementation and identified funding opportunities.

The Study was divided into the following phases.

1. **Identify user groups and transportation needs, and understand challenges faced by current walk-on/roll-on passengers.** The Study team gathered information on existing transportation options and challenges through the following activities:
  - Site visits to vessels and terminals conducted by the project team and WSF staff.
  - Review of existing transportation options.
  - Examination of recent studies, planning documents and best practices of other ferry-served islands and rural communities.
  - Public engagement including an online survey and listening sessions with stakeholders and community representatives.
2. **Identify implementation framework:** Discussion with WSDOT staff and listening sessions with stakeholders helped inform goals for supporting walk-on/roll-on ridership and identify potential next steps and challenges for implementation of strategies.
3. **Develop and evaluate list of potential strategies:** The Study team developed an initial list of strategies, drawing from the legislative proviso language, review of best practices from ferry-served islands or other rural areas, team brainstorming sessions, feedback gathered from an online survey of ferry users, and feedback from WSF employees. The strategies were screened to understand their relative impact and ease of implementation. Selected strategies were then advanced for more detailed assessment.

## Outreach and engagement

WSF implemented a community engagement process to share information and gather input to inform the study.

The goals of the community engagement efforts were to:

- **Engage** with a wide range of riders who use and depend on the Anacortes/San Juan Island ferry routes, especially those who have been historically underserved.
- **Provide** multiple opportunities for public input; demonstrate how community input is considered and how it will influence final recommendations.
- **Ensure** public understanding of, and transparency around, the need for maximizing walk-on ferry ridership, and the challenges and constraints involved in making it easier to walk on the ferry.

Public engagement efforts, summarized in the graphic below, included an online survey, stakeholder listening sessions and stakeholder briefings. Additional detail and summary of outreach findings are presented in more detail in Appendix A.



**Figure 1-1: Summary of public outreach and engagement**

The public online survey was open from April 25 through May 16, 2023, and launched on the same day as summer reservations. The survey gathered information related to how riders typically use and connect to the Anacortes/San Juan Islands ferry service, the transportation challenges to walking on, and their priorities for addressing those challenges. WSF promoted the survey through rider alerts and reservation confirmation emails. Nearly 700 people responded to the survey and provided over 330 comments. (The number of survey responses is higher than the number of people who responded because respondents starting in Anacortes were given the option to fill out the survey for more than one island).

In addition to the online survey, five listening sessions were held with stakeholders including local agencies, transit providers, ferry riders, island residents, tourism and business representatives, and the terminal and fleet crew that serve the routes to discuss the feasibility of potential strategies. Key stakeholders invited to participate in the Study included WSDOT/WSF staff, San Juan County Council, San Juan County staff, the Anacortes/San Juan Islands Schedule Update Task Force, San Juan Economic Development Council, San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau, City of Anacortes, Town of Friday Harbor, Skagit Transit, North Sound Transportation Alliance, Orcas Island Chamber of Commerce, Lopez Island Chamber, transit-dependent populations and others.

Briefings were held throughout the Study with the San Juan County Council and the San Juan Island Ferry Advisory Committee to promote the online survey and share Study updates and preliminary findings. The team also met with WSDOT's Public Transportation Division to share information about the study and discuss how to engage transit-dependent populations.

## Key findings from survey and listening sessions

During the listening sessions, participants shared their suggestions and priorities for implementing strategies. The most commonly expressed barriers preventing people from walking or rolling onto the ferry included the lack of multimodal connections, difficulty transporting baggage, unreliable ferry service and the amount, location and cost of parking.

From both the survey and listening sessions, the following priorities were identified.

### **Develop strategies targeted to a subset of riders**

- Most participants suggested that strategies will be easier to implement and more effective if they are focused on the unique needs of a subset of riders, such as older residents or certain types of summer visitors. Participants also noted that strategies should be island-specific and prioritize locations/islands where existing connections are lacking, and demand exists. Specifically, many noted that the transportation needs and opportunities on San Juan Island are very different than those on Lopez, Orcas and Shaw.

### **Focus investment on the greatest opportunities**

- Connections on the islands should be a top priority. Participants cautioned against encouraging ferry riders to travel to the islands without their cars until there are sufficient alternatives for people to get around on the islands, particularly in the off season. People need a way to get around that does not yet exist.
- Strategy implementation should be focused on the summer season when capacity is the biggest issue. Participants recommended the use of pilot programs to explore the effectiveness of potential strategies, while also stressing the importance of looking for partnership opportunities with existing businesses offering transportation options on the islands rather than competing with them.

### **Apply a holistic approach to strategies**

- Participants stressed that a strategy will only be effective if it is implemented together with other strategies to solve multiple barriers on both ends of the route.
- Participants also cited concerns regarding the potential impacts from certain strategies on island roadway traffic and capacity, as well as potential safety issues related to poor road conditions for bikes and scooters.

### **Prioritize cross-jurisdictional collaboration and partnership**

- To accomplish a holistic approach, participants encouraged WSF to prioritize cross-jurisdictional collaboration and partnership opportunities. Specific suggestions for collaboration included expanded multimodal trail connections in the City of Anacortes and on San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez Islands, Skagit Transit's Micro Transit Pilot Program, and partnerships with island accommodations and venues interested in shuttle connections.

### **Improved ferry service reliability**

- Improve on-time performance and schedule reliability to support trip planning and ease of using multimodal connections.
- Ensure that service schedules for multimodal connections are coordinated with ferry arrivals and departures.

## Chapter 2. Existing conditions

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At the outset of the Study, the current conditions of the Anacortes/San Juan Islands routes were reviewed in detail to understand the opportunities for encouraging greater walk-on ridership to each destination.

The key findings are provided in the sections below.

- Current trends in passenger and vehicle ridership and capacity.
- Existing multimodal connections at terminals and transportation options for pedestrians.
- Connections between vessels and terminals for walk-on passengers.
- Availability of trip planning information for walk-on passengers.

### Current capacity snapshot

Ridership demand on the Anacortes/San Juan Island route is highly seasonal, with a sharp increase in demand during the peak summer months (June, July, August and September). On peak demand days throughout that period, multiple sailings reach or are near vehicle capacity due to increased use by visitors and seasonal island residents.

However, even with multiple sailings at or close to vessel capacity for vehicles, passenger capacity is rarely reached, even during peak summer days across all sailings. Maximizing capacity on vessels, notably during summer peak season, would imply increasing the number of walk-on passengers to fill available passenger deck space.

The following sections provide an overview of trends in passenger capacity and highlight the months, days and specific sailings most likely to reach vehicle capacity to provide an understanding of the greatest opportunity to promote walk-on passengers to maximize vessel capacity.

### Passenger capacity

Walk-on ridership departing from Anacortes more than doubles during summer months compared to non-peak months. Specific sailings experience peak walk-on ridership when students travel to the YMCA camp on Orcas Island, during holiday weekends or other special events on the islands. Analysis of ridership data over the last five years (2018-2023) indicates a consistent trend of increased demand during summer months between June and September, reaching a peak demand of 2,000 to 2,500 average daily riders, as illustrated in Figure 2-1 below. The only exception is lower demand in summer 2020 due to COVID-19. Despite these spikes in ridership during the summer months, most sailings often have available passenger capacity. In fact, during the peak summer months in 2023, no sailings reached vessel passenger capacity.

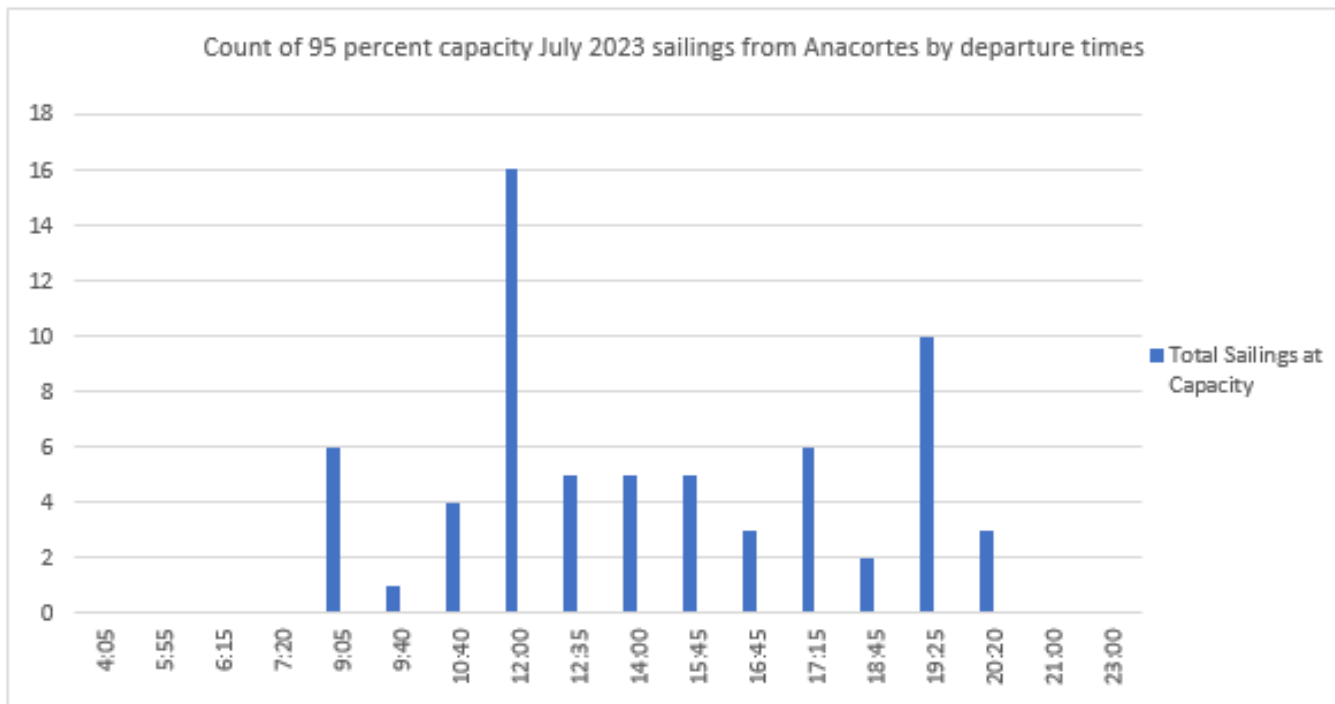


**Figure 2-1: Walk-on ridership on Anacortes/San Juan Islands routes, 2018 – 2023**

**Vehicle capacity**

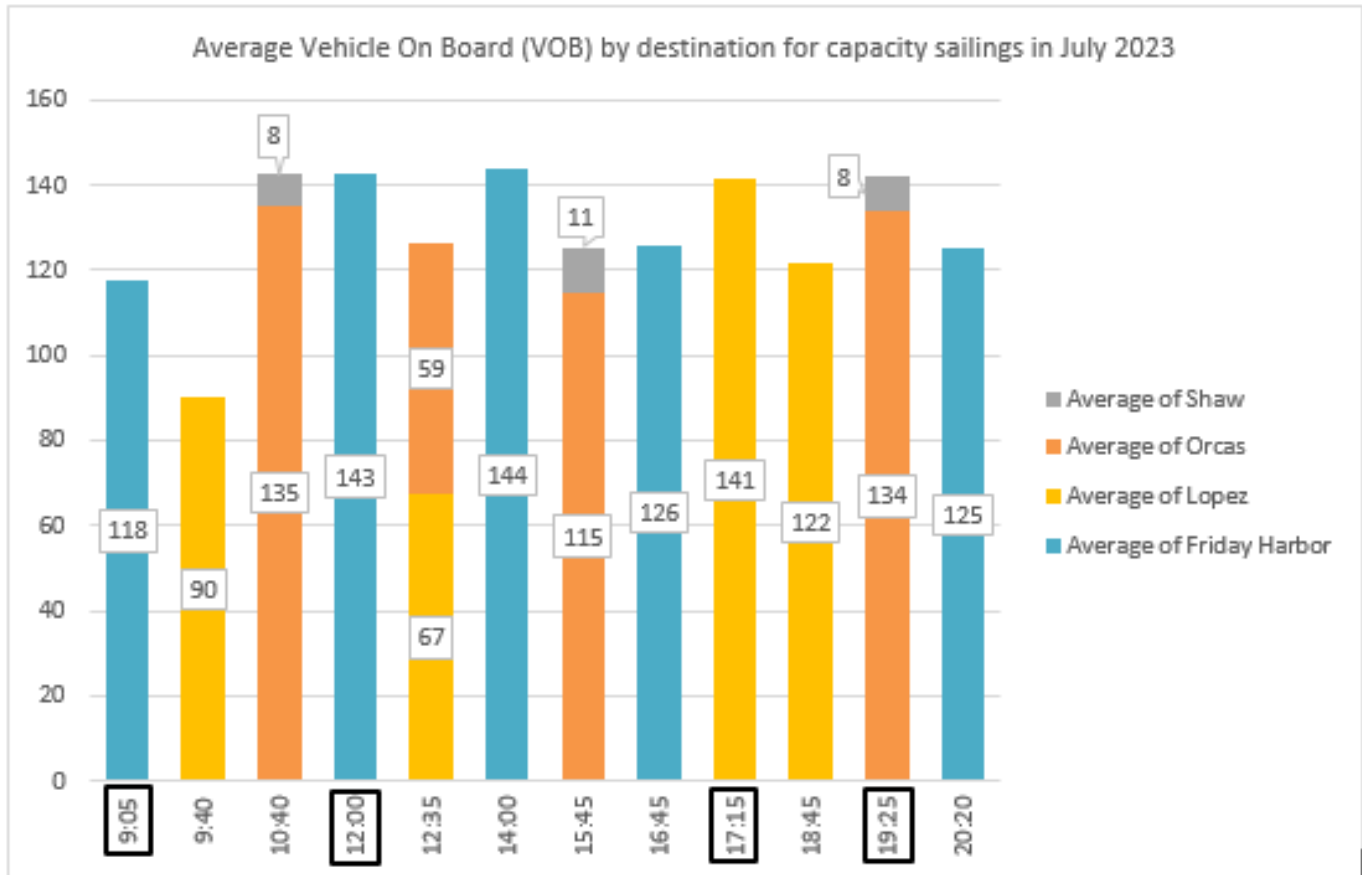
The Study reviewed historical vehicle ridership data to identify the times and sailings with the greatest opportunity for encouraging walk-on ridership. Average ridership data for July 2023 was reviewed to understand ridership trends during a period of peak demand.

Of the 505 sailings departing from Anacortes in July 2023, a total of 66 sailings (13 percent) exceeded 95 percent vehicle capacity. Among these, the 12:00 PM sailings had the most frequent instances of near or at vehicle capacity, with 16 occurrences throughout the month. Figure 2-2 displays the total sailings at capacity by scheduled departure from Anancortes.



**Figure 2-2: July 2023 Sailings at 95 percent from Anacortes**

For the sailings at or near capacity, the average vehicles on board by destination from Anacortes is shown in Figure 2-3. Scheduled departure times for those sailings which most frequently reach 95 percent vehicle capacity are highlighted. The vehicle capacity of vessels is affected by the size of the vessel and size of vehicles on board, resulting in the variation of average number of vehicles for the sailings at capacity.

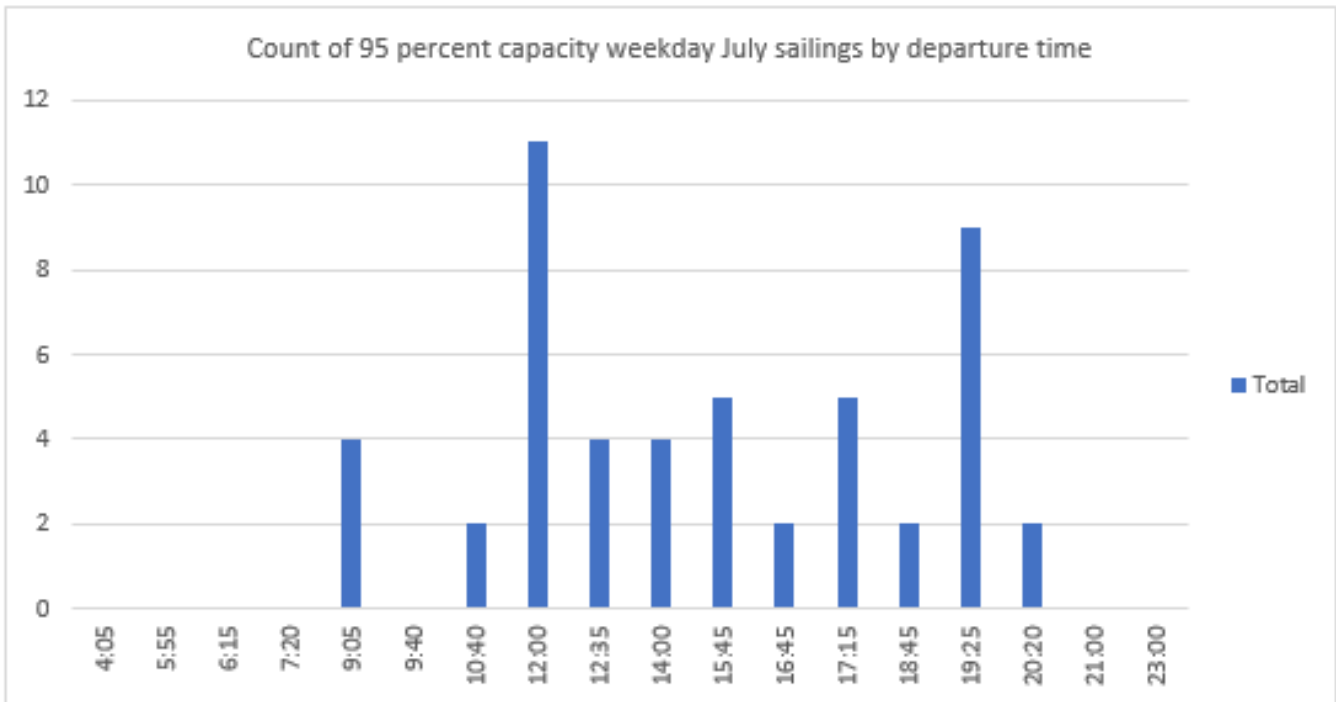


**Figure 2-3: Capacity sailings from Anacortes by destination (July 2023)**

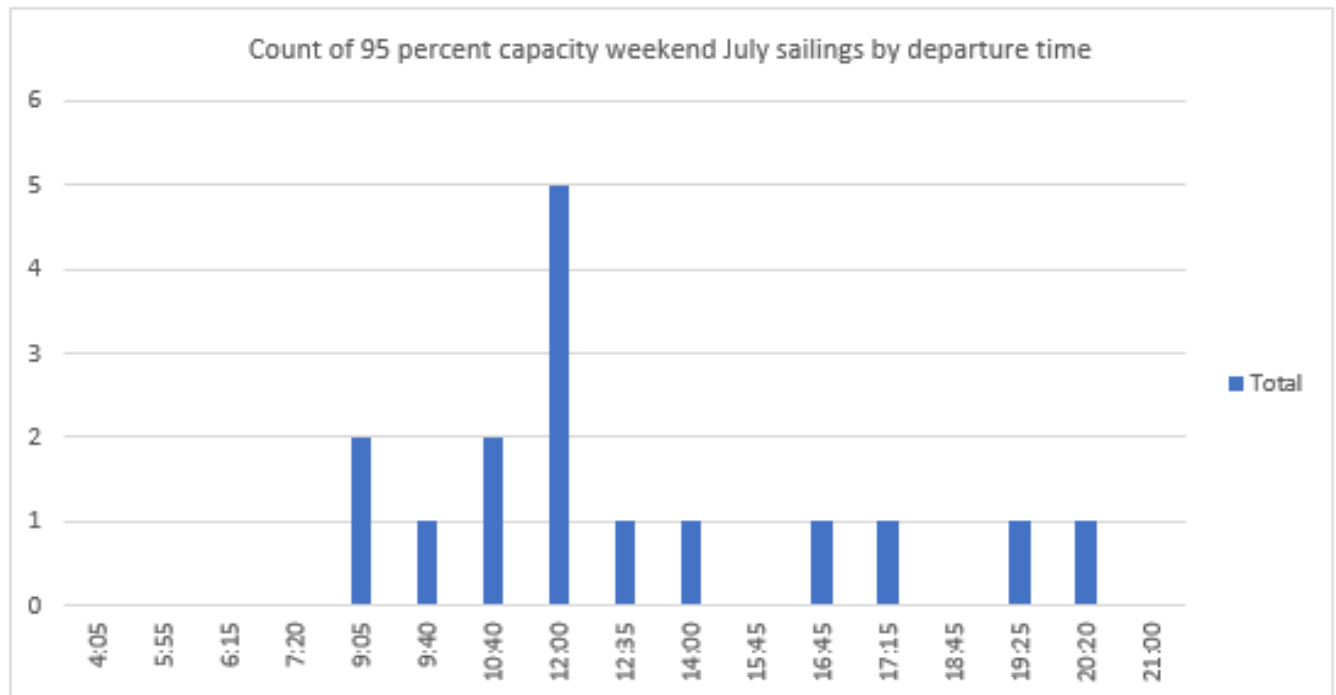
Figure 2-4 and Figure 2-5 compare the number of sailings departing Anacortes at capacity in July 2023 for weekdays and weekends, respectively. For both weekdays and weekends, the sailing most often close to or at capacity is the 12:00 PM departure, with the 07:25 PM weekday sailing the second most common occurrence of at-capacity sailings.

Vessels departing from the islands reach vehicle capacity much less frequently than those departing from Anacortes. For the month of July 2023, three sailings departing from Lopez Island at 10:50 AM and three sailings departing from Friday Harbor (two at 11:00 AM and one at 2:25 PM) were at vehicle capacity. Two of the Lopez Island sailings and one of the Friday Harbor sailings occurred on weekends. The other three occurred during the weekdays.





**Figure 2-4: Weekday sailings**



**Figure 2-5: Weekend sailings**

## Existing transportation network

Access to terminals and available transportation connections vary by island. While the Anacortes terminal, the mainland transportation hub, is served by a Skagit Transit bus route, transportation options on the islands are limited and all are privately operated. Additionally, many of the transportation options are seasonal and only available during the summer months.

Figure 2-6 and the following subsections exhibit the transportation options currently available at each terminal, including transit, rentals, parking, taxi/rideshare and shuttle service.

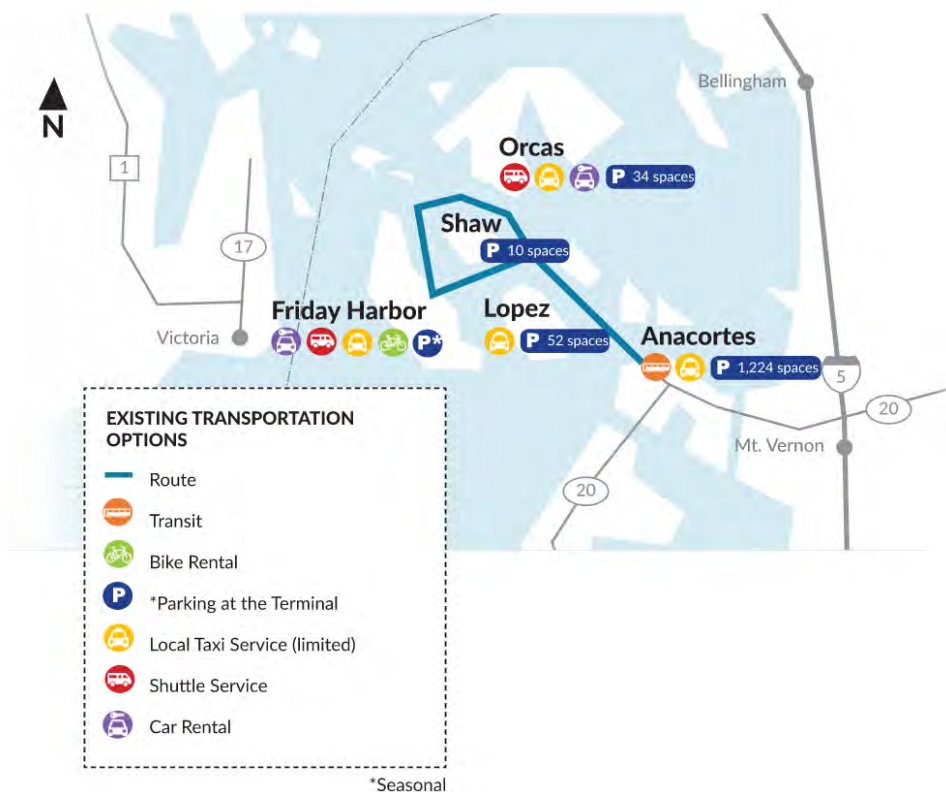


Figure 2-6: Existing transportation options

### Anacortes

Anacortes has five parking lots, providing a total of 1,224 for visitors traveling to the islands, island residents who keep a car on the mainland for errands, and WSF employees. Parking areas are not designated for monthly pass versus daily pass holders. While the parking lots closest to the terminal (Lots A and B) frequently reach capacity between July and September, all five lots rarely exceed 95 percent daily capacity. In 2022, the Anacortes terminal’s total parking capacity was only reached on seven days, mainly weekends. Lot D, located uphill of the terminal, requires users to walk downhill approximately 12 minutes to reach the terminal building.

The Skagit Transit 410 bus route provides hourly service between the WSF terminal and Anacortes’ downtown area, which is 3.7 miles away. The bus also connects to the March’s Point Park and Ride, 9.5 miles away from the terminal. The Park and Ride offers additional regional bus connections to La Conner, Mount Vernon and Burlington.

Additional transportation options include limited taxi and rideshare services, and a connection to the Guemes Channel Trail bicycle/pedestrian path located about 0.5 miles from the terminal.

## San Juan Island

Near the San Juan Island terminal, there is limited short-term street parking. Seasonally, additional satellite lots are made available to accommodate peak-season demand. In the Friday Harbor town center, there are a few privately-owned paid lots as well as free short-term street parking. The Lot C holding lanes may be used as parking during non-peak times.

For visitors traveling from Anacortes without a car, options include bike or moped rentals, with rental shops conveniently located near the ferry terminal, although options are limited, relatively expensive, and are often booked months in advance. However, there are no dedicated bike lanes and often no shoulders on roadways. This may present congestion and safety concerns including potential conflicts between vehicles and bike and moped traffic. When peak demand sailings offload in Friday Harbor, traffic conflicts may occur between unloading vehicles and pedestrians at several points between the terminal and downtown area, potentially impacting dwell times, the time required between vessel arrival and departure.

San Juan Transit and Friday Harbor Jolly Trolley both offer seasonal bus service to major tourist destinations around the island, with daily service during the summer; however, schedules and destinations are limited. Private shuttles and taxis, available for reservation online or by phone, provide additional transportation options.

## Orcas Island

Parking near Orcas Island Ferry Terminal is available but limited. Most spaces are in the three lots above the Orcas Inn, located 0.2 miles uphill from the terminal.

The Orcas Island Shuttle operates from the ferry terminal and aligns with the ferry schedule. Operating upon request, the shuttle makes stops based on daily demand. On the island, there are a few small taxi services. In Eastsound, roughly nine miles from the ferry terminal, there are multiple bike and scooter rental shops. There are no dedicated bike lanes and often no shoulders on roadways. A rental car company in Eastsound offers vehicle delivery to the ferry terminal.

## Lopez Island

Lopez Island has 52 public parking spaces at or near the terminal. Terminal parking is limited to 72 hours. Lopez Island Taxi and Tours offers on-island transportation services by reservation. The Lopez Islander Resort offers free parking in Anacortes and provides a complimentary shuttle from the Lopez terminal to the resort. While bike rentals are available on the island, they are not located in close proximity to the ferry terminal, and bike and pedestrian infrastructure on the island is limited with narrow or no shoulders on most island roadways.

## Shaw Island

Shaw Island has ten public parking spaces adjacent to the ferry terminal with a 12-hour limit. There are no transit services on the island but bike rentals are available.

## User groups

WSF's vision is to create a safe, sustainable and integrated multimodal transportation system for all travelers. As part of the state highway system, WSF ferries bring economic opportunities to island communities through tourism and trade and provide a critical lifeline to island residents who need medical or other services on the mainland. While WSF is focused on providing transportation for all users, different groups of users on the Anacortes/San Juan Island route have differing priorities,

needs and challenges. The two major user groups for the Anacortes/San Juan Island route are island residents and island visitors.

**Island residents** – Both seasonal and year-round residents of the islands rely on the ferry to travel between their island home and mainland Anacortes. While some of their basic needs can be met on the remote islands, many residents must travel to Anacortes for substantial grocery runs (Costco, etc.) and primary/emergency medical care.

**Island visitors** – People visiting the islands make up a significant user group, particularly in the summer months (June through August), contributing to a daily influx of over 3,000 people.<sup>1</sup> Visitors are drawn to the islands for nature, recreation, or to visit family and friends that live on the islands. Upon arriving at the island ferry terminals, tourists travel to accommodations including hotels, rentals and campsites. Many people who visit the islands stay with family or friends who likely have on-island transportation. This includes roughly 15 percent of Orcas Island visitors, 19 percent of San Juan Island visitors and 29 percent of Lopez Island visitors.<sup>2</sup> Island visitors often rely on local amenities like grocery stores, rental cars and bike rentals during their stay, increasing the demand for these goods and services. Visitors and tourists frequently take advantage of recreational offerings and attractions, often traveling between islands to do so.

Within those categories, additional groups with specific transportation needs related to walking on the ferry include:

**Mobility impaired** – Many users have mobility impairments and depend on devices like wheelchairs, electric scooters and walkers. This user group relies on elevators and ramps, both on the vessel and at the terminals. It is important for members of this user group to have easy access to shuttle or car pick-up locations at the terminals.

**Aging population** – A large demographic of island residents and visitors that use the ferry system are elderly individuals who require special considerations related to mobility and disability. According to 2021 census data, the average age in San Juan Island County is 56.5,<sup>3</sup> with approximately 34 percent of the population, or 5,935 people, aged 65 years and over. By 2040, the portion of the population over the age of 65 is expected to increase to 38 percent.<sup>4</sup> For older or mobility-challenged users, the option to walk or roll onto the ferry can pose many challenges during their trip. These challenges may include navigating stairs on the vessel, slopes on terminal ramps or uplands and distances between terminals and their destinations. Additionally, older island residents may face an increased need for access to healthcare and other services that are only available on the mainland.

## Transportation for seniors and mobility impaired passengers

Several community-based transportation programs currently exist specifically to connect senior island residents and other transportation-vulnerable individuals to medical appointments. However, many of these services face funding challenges or difficulty recruiting volunteer drivers.

- **IslandRides** is a non-profit organization that provides free or low-cost service to residents of San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez Islands who are without a car or are unable to drive. This includes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sanjuanco.com/DocumentCenter/View/15767/06042018-Final-San-Juan-Islands-Visitor-Study-June-2018-with-cover>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sanjuanco.com/DocumentCenter/View/15767/06042018-Final-San-Juan-Islands-Visitor-Study-June-2018-with-cover>

<sup>3</sup> <https://data.census.gov/table?q=San+Juan+County,+Washington&tid=ACSST5Y2021.S0101>

<sup>4</sup> Community Transportation, *San Juan County Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan*, March 12, 2019.

seniors, people with disabilities, and others in need. United Way of San Juan County, San Juan Island Community Foundation, Orcas Island Community Foundation, Lopez Island Family Resource Center, local businesses, and individual donors provide funding to subsidize or cover trip costs.

- The **Transportation Voucher Program (TVP)**, facilitated by the San Juan County Health & Community Services Department, offers personalized assistance to transportation-vulnerable individuals who are without personal vehicles or unable to drive. TVP provides tailored transportation solutions, ranging from taxi services to ferry rides, particularly for medical or emergency needs. Participating providers include Orcas Island Taxi, New Orcas Taxi, Round Towner Shuttle, Rhode Trips Taxi, Bob's Taxi, and San Juan Transit.
- The **'RoundTowner'** is a non-profit shuttle service in Friday Harbor that caters to the disabled, elderly, low-income and the general rural public. It is part of the San Juan Island Shuttle System program, which is a Washington state non-profit. Since launching in 2013, the program has given over 26,000 rides. Passengers with walkers are easily accommodated, but those with wheelchairs need to give 24 hours' notice for a suitable vehicle. Non-ambulatory passengers must have an attendant to assist them during the ride. A round trip ride costs \$6.00 and includes home pick-up and drop-off.
- **Orcas Senior Center** offers limited off-island medical transportation, field trips, and other transportation services.
- **Community Action of Skagit County** coordinates community volunteers to provide transportation services for seniors 60 years and older, as well as adults with disabilities below the age of 60.

## Current challenges for walk-on/roll-on passengers

Feedback received from the public online survey and stakeholder listening sessions, along with review of existing conditions, identified several challenges faced by walk-on/roll-on passengers on the Anacortes/San Juan Islands route. These challenges, experienced at different segments of a trip from origin to destination, make many trips difficult or impossible to complete without a personal vehicle. For some trips, addressing one or more of these challenges may make walk-on/roll-on travel a more attractive option for some riders. Key challenges identified for walk-on/roll-on riders are outlined below.

### Luggage/cargo

- Island residents bringing home groceries and other goods purchased in Anacortes or nearby cities.
- Visitors to the islands carrying luggage or recreational equipment.

### Challenging non-motorized connections

- Passenger ramps and connections to parking at the Anacortes terminal may be long and steep for users with limited mobility.
- At island terminals, passengers must use stairways or small elevators to access the car deck and move through narrow pedestrian walkways between vehicles.
- On island roadways, sidewalks and shoulders are limited or nonexistent.

## Parking

- Limited availability of parking at terminals during peak demand periods.
- Lack of real-time availability information.
- Safety/security concerns.

## Timing of connections

- Bus connection at Anacortes terminal is not timed to ferry schedule, resulting in potential long wait times.
- Concerns of missed connections if ferry is late.

## Cost

- Higher cost of some transportation alternatives, especially for groups or longer trips requiring parking at a terminal.

## Challenges by trip segment

A review of existing conditions and insights gained from community engagement confirmed that during any door-to-door trip, a walk-on or roll-on passenger will likely encounter a combination of the challenges identified above. Figure 2-7 illustrates the various aspects of the trip between Anacortes and an island destination that could pose challenges for a walk-on passenger.

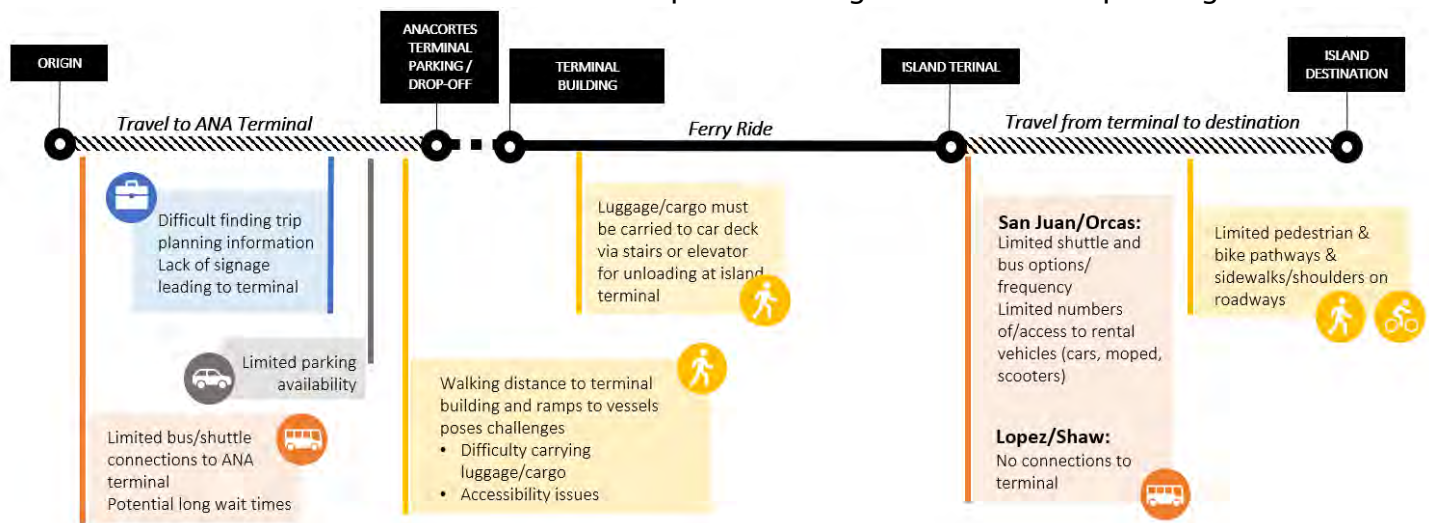


Figure 2-7: Challenges by trip segment

## Moving through terminals and vessels

Walk-on passengers, especially those with mobility challenges or carrying goods/luggage, may face difficulties moving on, off and throughout the vessel. The vessels themselves have limited elevator access and capacity, presenting a particular challenge to those with difficulty or an inability to use the stairs. Challenges for walk-on passengers are summarized below by trip segment.

**Loading and unloading at island terminals:** The island terminals, unlike the Anacortes terminal, are not equipped with overhead loading, requiring passengers to load and unload from the car deck, as shown in Figure 2-8.

**Loading and unloading at Anacortes terminal:** Passengers load and unload the vessel via an overhead pedestrian walkway. Some survey respondents noted challenges with the long, sloped



ramp, especially when they are carrying baggage or items. The pedestrian walkway is shown in Figure 2-9.

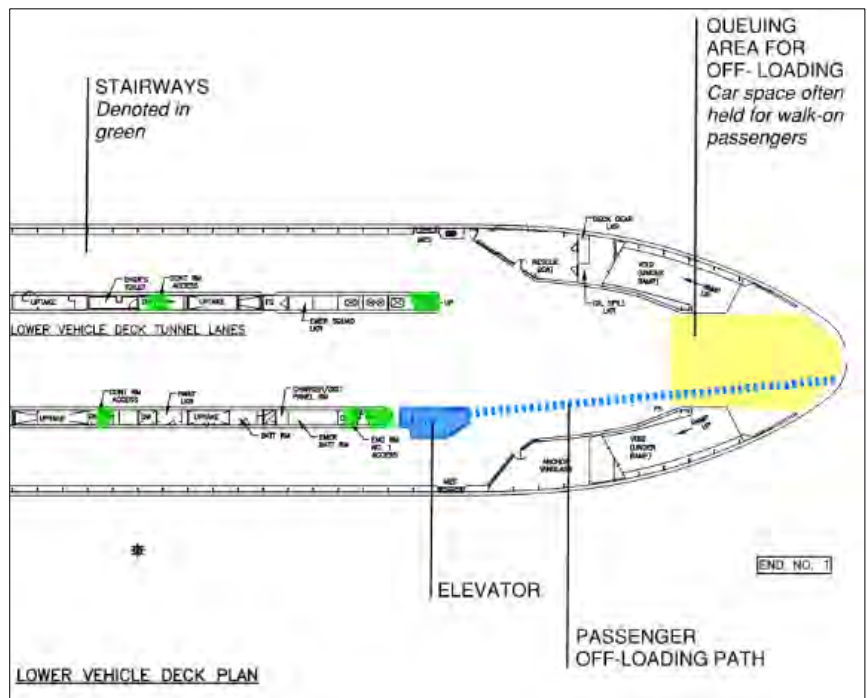


**Figure 2-8: Pedestrians walking off car deck at Friday Harbor terminal**



**Figure 2-9: Overhead pedestrian walkway at Anacortes Terminal**

**On the vessels:** The layout of each vessel dictates the path of travel for walk-on and bike-on passengers during loading and unloading, as well as potential points of constraint. When arriving at an island terminal, walk-on passengers must queue on the car deck for offloading which requires using stairs or the limited capacity elevator to access the car deck from the passenger deck (example vessel layout shown in Figure 2-10). Once on the car deck, pedestrians must walk between vehicles to reach the front of the vessel to queue for unloading before vehicles as shown in Figure 2-8. Vessel crew may leave one or more vehicle spaces open at the front of the vessel to allow space for walk-on/bike-on passengers to offload at the islands.



**Figure 2-10: Example elevator location and passenger walkway**

Figure 2-11 and Figure 2-12 show the stairs and elevator used by passengers to move between the passenger and car decks. Passenger movement between decks may be difficult for those with mobility challenges, strollers or large things to carry. Additionally, passenger movement between decks may be slowed when heavy volumes of passengers are on board.

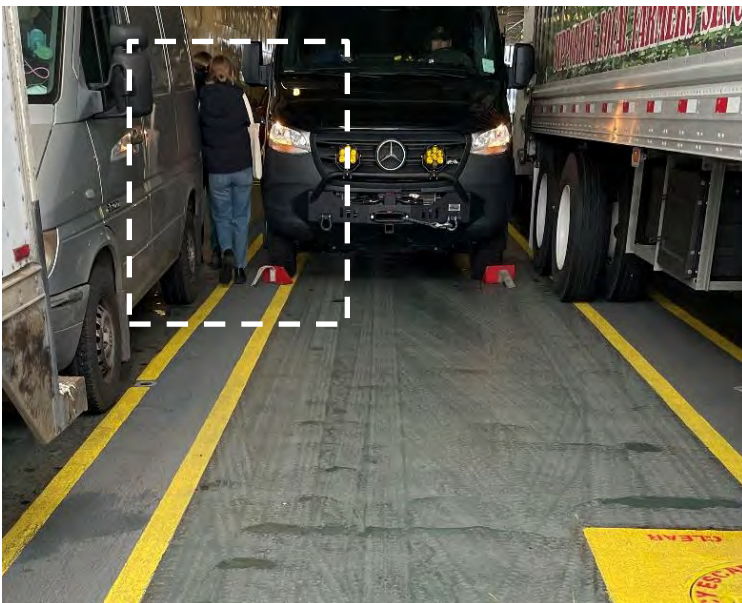


**Figure 2-11: On-board elevator**



**Figure 2-12: On-board stairway**

Figure 2-13 provides an example of the narrow walkway space available for passengers to move between trucks to reach the front of the vessel to offload at the islands.



**Figure 2-13: Passengers offloading between vehicle queue lines**



## Cost and time comparison

Currently, many users prefer driving their personal vehicles onto the ferry, and for many trips, it may be the most practical option. To increase walk-on ridership, strategies must support door-to-door trips by making them more convenient, cost-effective, or quicker than a similar trip completed by driving on the ferry in a personal vehicle. The following graphics compare the cost and time required to complete three example one-way trips. Figure 2-14 through Figure 2-16 illustrate that effective implementation of strategies needs to consider connections at both ends of the route, as well as the total time, cost and convenience of a trip.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 2-14 compares the differences in cost and travel time of options for travel between Orcas Island and a hypothetical medical appointment in downtown Anacortes. Findings show that driving by car from an origin on Orcas Island to a destination in Anacortes provides the fastest travel time. Despite the lower cost of the walk-on passenger fare, the cost of a taxi ride to reach the island terminal makes walking on cost more than driving onto the ferry.

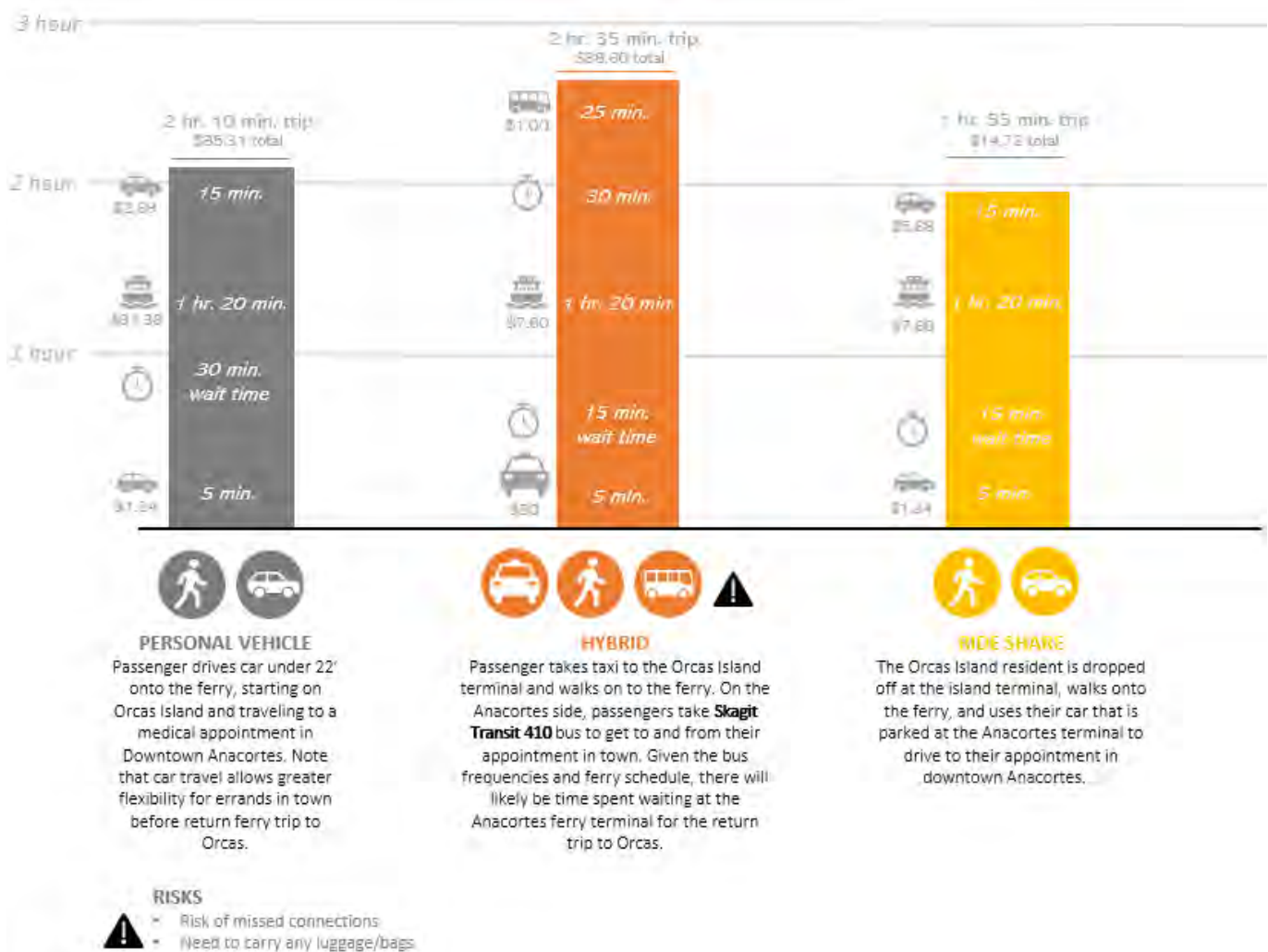


Figure 2-14: Orcas Island to Anacortes travel comparison

<sup>5</sup> Assumptions for this investigation include: Travel times from Google maps (August 2023), Wait times at terminals based on WSF guidance, and wait times for transit transfers based on average potential times (August 2023) and Mileage cost assumes \$.655/miles. WSF fare shown as half a round-trip fare (Aug 2023)

The second scenario details a hypothetical weekend trip for two adults from downtown Anacortes to Eastsound on Orcas Island. When factoring in the cost of parking and shuttle or bus connections, driving onto the ferry becomes both the fastest and lowest cost option. Figure 2-15 highlights the one-way trip to Anacortes. It can be assumed that the couple may have luggage for the weekend, adding additional potential challenges for the trip.

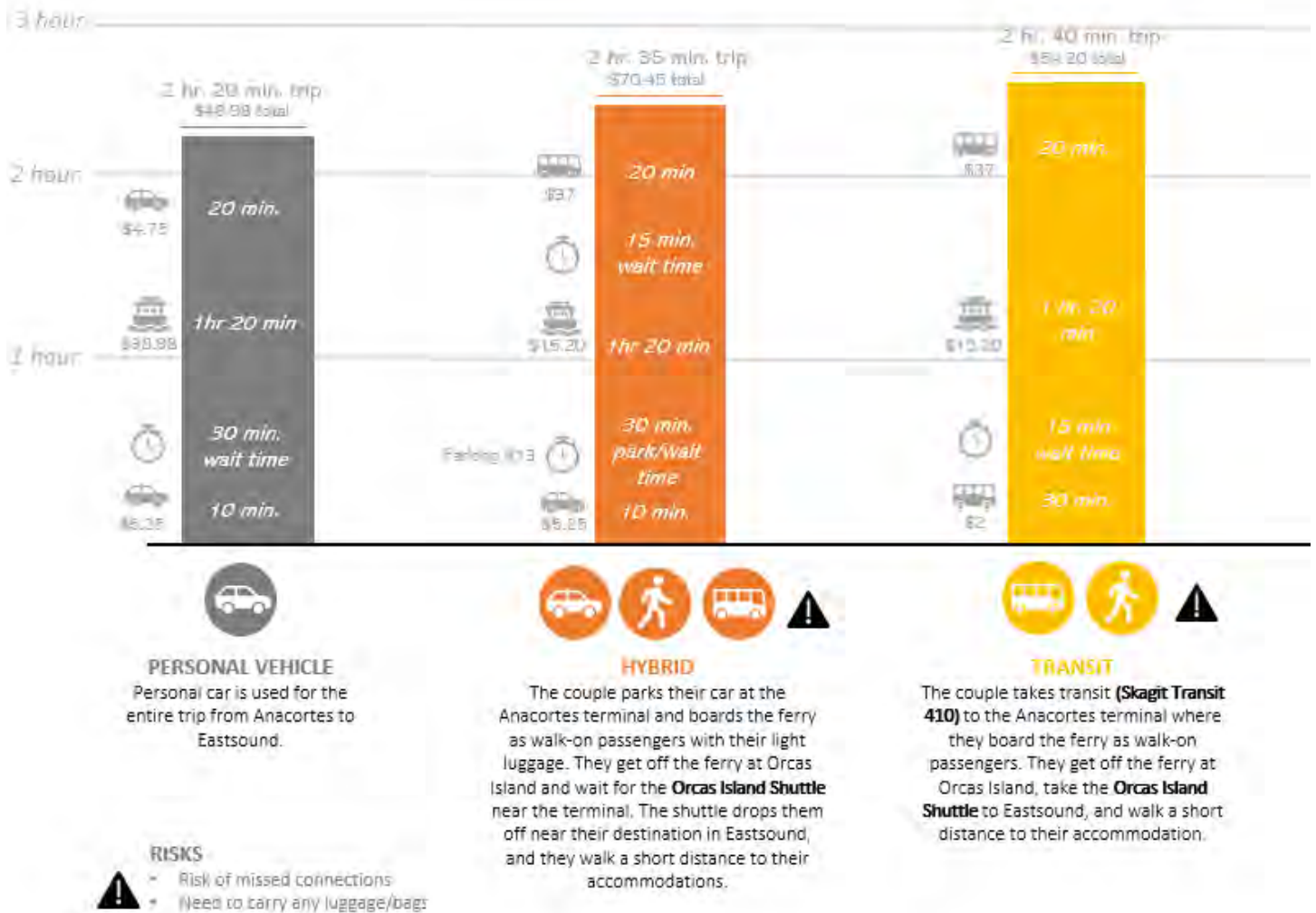


Figure 2-15: Anacortes to Eastsound (Orcas Island) travel comparison

Figure 2-16 looks at opportunities for travel between King Street Station in Seattle and Roche Harbor in San Juan Island. For this trip, traveling by personal vehicle was not only the fastest, but also the cheapest option. Utilizing public transit would more than double the cost and take nearly 2 hours longer.

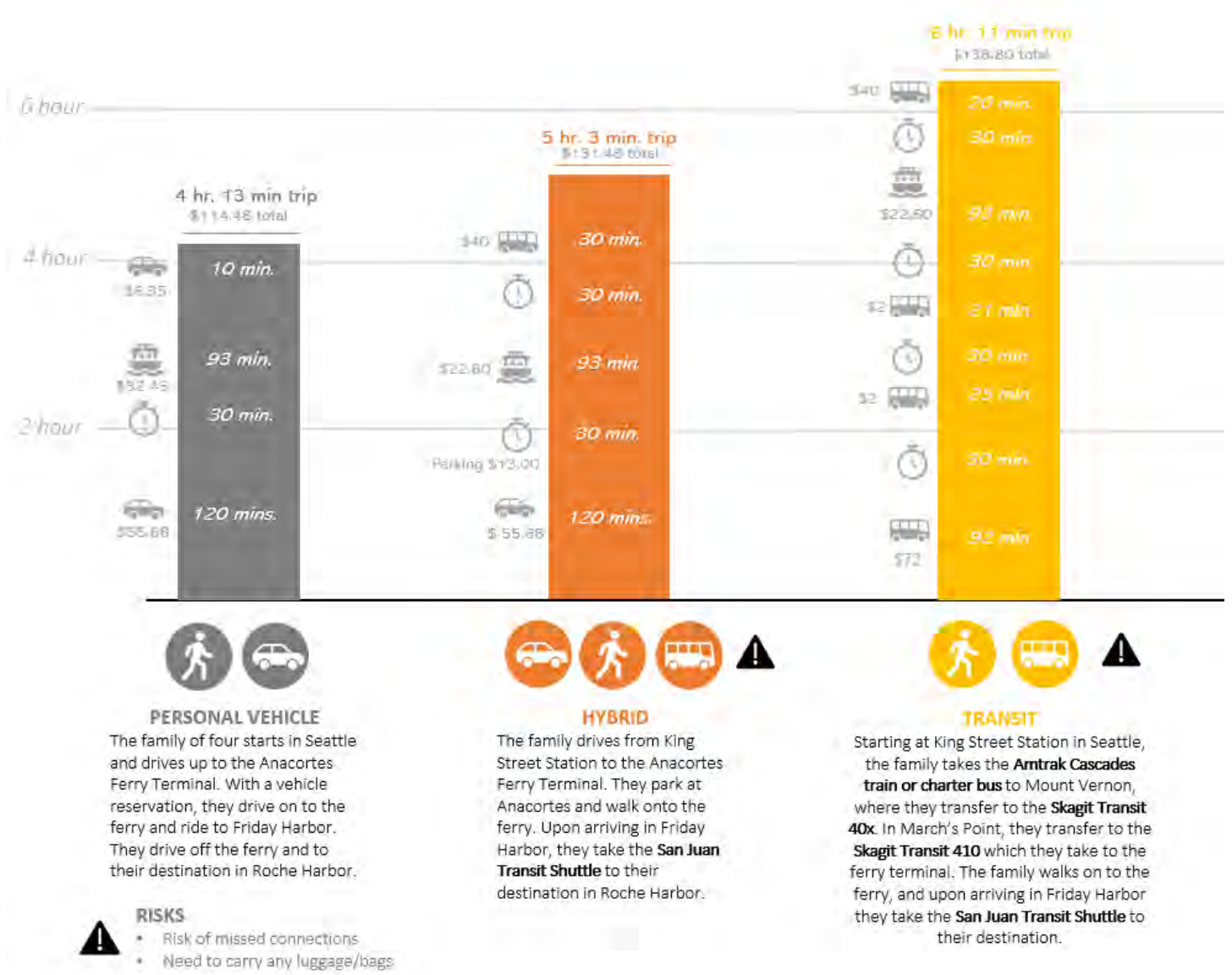


Figure 2-16: King Street Station (Seattle) to Roche Harbor (San Juan Island) travel comparison

# Chapter 3. Key findings and implementation framework

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While the goal of the study is to recommend feasible and cost-effective strategies for increasing walk-on/roll-on ridership, the evaluation of existing conditions and insights from community engagement found that implementing a single strategy is unlikely to be effective. Therefore, the study focused on identifying the key challenges faced by walk-on/roll-on passengers during each segment of their trip to inform how a set of strategies could be implemented together to support walk-on/roll-on travel and effectively encourage passengers to choose alternatives to driving their personal vehicles.

## Implementation goals

### **Implement a set of strategies**

Implementing a single strategy alone (such as a shuttle service route at only one terminal) may have a limited impact in walk-on/roll-on ridership. To create a higher impact, WSDOT should implement a set of strategies that, together, support walk-on/roll-on passengers on both ends of the route and consider their trip through the terminal and vessel.

Increasing walk-on ridership requires supporting infrastructure on the islands. Therefore, incentives and improvements need to have a holistic approach with thoughtful phasing, and marketing to encourage mode shift should not occur until additional transportation options are implemented on the islands.

### **Consider the cost and user experience of a door-to-door trip**

Most ferry riders are unlikely to switch modes unless walking on is notably less expensive, faster, or more convenient. In addition to specific transportation strategies, the Study considered potential operational improvements and supportive policies to make walk-on/roll-on trips easier and more attractive. Supportive policies such as fare pricing structure to incentivize walk-on/roll-on ridership or funding to reduce the cost of transportation alternatives could help encourage more people to travel to and from the San Juan Islands without their cars.

### **Focus on the unique needs of different user groups**

Strategies must address the unique transportation challenges of different user groups in order to effectively meet their needs and support walk-on/roll-on ridership. Certain user groups, such as island visitors traveling without children, may present greater opportunities for mode shift. Additionally, funding opportunities and partnerships may align with strategies that serve specific user groups, such as senior island residents requiring transportation to medical services in Anacortes or visitors connecting to attractions or lodging on the islands.

### **Coordinate on a regional level**

The San Juan Islands is the only area served by WSF that lacks governance by a regional transportation and planning body. Many other WSF routes are located in areas led by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), which can serve as a champion for transportation projects and manage and distribute grant funding for planning studies and project implementation. Therefore, comprehensive strategies and funding opportunities for overarching strategies will require regional coordination and support from WSDOT for current and future planning efforts beyond this Study.

## Next steps

Beyond focusing on the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of individual strategies, the Study holistically considered potential pathways for implementation of a set of coordinated strategies. The following recommended next steps aim to efficiently utilize WSDOT staffing resources by focusing on leveraging regional partnerships and incorporating walk-on/roll-on strategies and considerations into current and future planning efforts. The recommended next steps for WSDOT are summarized below and include implementation of transportation strategies, supportive operational improvements and policies and opportunities for cross-jurisdictional coordination.

1. **Continue to focus staff and crew resources on providing reliable ferry service.** As WSF continues to progress through its Service Restoration effort, the division is focusing resources on recruiting, hiring and retaining employees to fill key positions to operate ferries.
2. **Collaborate with transit partners and local agencies.** WSDOT should seek opportunities to collaborate on planning studies and support grant applications and funding requests for transportation connections to Anacortes and island terminals. Potential partners for collaboration include the North Sound Transportation Alliance, Skagit Council of Governments, Skagit Transit, San Juan Islands Visitor's Bureau, and island communities, organizations and businesses.

Specific near-term opportunities include the following planning efforts:

- **Skagit Transit Microtransit Study:** Beginning in 2023, Skagit Transit is studying potential implementation of on-demand micro transit shuttle service on Fidalgo Island, including the Anacortes ferry terminal. WSF involvement should inform feasibility assessment and support future implementation of connections to the Anacortes terminal.
  - **Friday Harbor Comprehensive Plan:** The 2024 comprehensive planning effort will review potential operational revisions or capital improvements to pedestrian loading/unloading infrastructure at the Friday Harbor terminal, as well as operational revisions to vehicle traffic and pedestrian pathways. WSF involvement should inform ferry operational requirements, including current and future capacity needs.
  - **San Juan County Comprehensive Plan Update:** The comprehensive plan update, beginning in 2024 with a 2025 adoption, requires integration of a Climate Change and Resilience Element (per House Bill 1181). To address this requirement, the plan will likely incorporate strategies to change how residents and visitors travel to and from the Islands to help reduce emissions. WSF involvement should inform and support development of multimodal transportation strategies connecting to the ferry terminals.
3. **Improve customer information:** Provide additional, current information on the WSF Anacortes and San Juan Island terminal webpages. Information should include links to transportation options, parking availability and other trip planning resources to support and encourage greater walk-on ridership. Partner with the San Juan Islands Visitor's Bureau, San Juan Island, Orcas Island, and Lopez Island Chambers, and other community groups to maintain accurate information.
  4. **Coordinate strategies with future capital projects.** Incorporate the strategies identified in this study into future capital projects, such as the Anacortes Terminal Building Replacement project.



## WSDOT Implementation framework

There are several factors to consider within the implementation framework that could affect the timing and approach to WSDOT's next steps, including:

**WSDOT funding cycles:** The state transportation budget is set on a biennial basis, with the current budget effective for 2023-25. For implementation of strategies to be funded through the state transportation budget, funding could be requested in the 2025-27 budget.

**Current and future WSF projects:** WSDOT capital improvement budgets and the WSF Long-Range Plan have identified or recommended several capital improvement projects at the Anacortes and San Juan Island terminals. WSF should ensure the design of these improvement projects incorporate strategies that support increased walk-on/roll-on ridership and improve the user experience, such as:

- Enhancing comfort and amenities in waiting areas.
- Facilitating easy movement from parking or multimodal connections, through the terminal and onto the vessels.
- Building capacity to support future increases of walk-on/roll-on ridership without impacts to dwell time, including strategies to minimize conflicts between pedestrians and vehicle traffic in areas surrounding the terminals.

**Impacts from increased ridership:** When planning for operational enhancements, it is important to consider potential strategies that address the impacts of increased walk-on/roll-on ridership on loading and unloading operations, crew requirements and traffic impacts at terminals.

Potential strategies to support increased walk-on/roll-on ridership include:

- **Additional crew to accommodate more passengers:** If the number of passengers is expected to approach or reach the U.S. Coast Guard's vessel capacity limits, the ferry system could consider adding crew members to open the passenger sun deck, allowing more passengers to be accommodated. The estimated cost for implementing this strategy in 2019, including the addition of two crew members for 14 weeks, was \$55,000 per vessel during the peak summer season. As passenger capacity limits are not consistently reached throughout the year, the increased crew size could be selectively applied to specific crew shifts that correspond to targeted sailings. However, the implementation of this strategy would need to consider factors such as compliance with labor agreements and potential challenges in hiring and recruiting additional crew members.
- Terminal improvements to increase the capacity of passenger waiting areas and enhance the user experience.
- Coordination with comprehensive and transportation plans to support non-motorized connections on the islands.

**Revenue impacts:** Prior to implementing adjustments to fares or parking costs, it's important to consider their potential impact on revenue. This assessment should consider ridership projections for the Anacortes/San Juan Island route, as well as the overall ferry system. Additionally, adjustments to parking costs at the Anacortes terminal would require coordination with the company responsible for operating and managing the parking lots.

### **Anacortes/San Juan Islands schedule update**

WSF staff, in partnership with the San Juan Islands Schedule Improvement Task Force, are in the process of completing a planning study to update the San Juan Islands sailing schedule.

The purpose of the schedule update is to:

- Improve on-time performance
- Support reliability of service and system
- Provide adequate travel opportunities for key user groups
- Maintain as much capacity as possible

The Anacortes/San Juan Islands schedule needs to be updated to improve on-time performance and reliability and to align with the reservations program that started in 2015. Current seasonal sailing schedules have not been updated in 10-15 years. Implementation of the updated sailing schedule is anticipated in early 2025.

Implementation of walk-on/roll-on transportation strategies should be coordinated with the upcoming schedule rewrite to understand implications to anticipated vehicle capacity by sailing and coordination of multimodal connections.

## **Coordination with regional transportation and comprehensive plans**

Transportation strategies, including shuttle services and mobility programs, have been previously studied and pursued in the Anacortes area and on the islands without successful implementation. A significant obstacle is the level of funding required to implement and sustain operations of transportation connections, especially for island communities or smaller transit agencies. Regional coordination for the implementation of walk-on/roll-on transportation strategies offers several potential advantages:

- Coordinated implementation of strategies on both ends of the route, including schedule alignment and coordination of capacity.
- Opportunities to provide feedback and ensure that transportation needs and priorities are incorporated into current and future planning efforts.
- Potential to identify, encourage or serve as a project champion.
- Partnership on grant applications and state funding requests to strengthen the request and increase the likelihood of awarded funding.
- Ensure consistency in travel information and marketing of walk-on/roll-on transportation options.

Table 3-1 provides a summary of known transportation planning efforts with the potential to impact connections to the Anacortes or island terminals and identifies potential opportunities for WSDOT involvement or partnership.

**Table 3-1: Current and future planning efforts**

Anticipated year of plan completion	Partner/Agency	Plan	Opportunity for WSDOT partnership
2024	San Juan County	Comprehensive Plan and Recreation, Open Space, and Stewardship Plan updates	Planned updates to be completed in 2024/2025
2023/2024	Skagit Transit	Regional Transit Study Microtransit Study Comprehensive Operational Analysis	Coordination for schedule and connecting to transit service. Potential funding needs. Opportunities for partnership to support strategy implementation and ongoing operations.
In Planning Phase - TBD	City of Anacortes	<i>Guemes Channel Trail Phase II - Ship Harbor</i>  Phase II of multi-phase project to construct a bicycle and pedestrian trail along the north shore of Fidalgo Island connecting the existing Tommy Thompson Parkway to Washington Park. This phase connects the WSF terminal to Edwards Way around an environmentally sensitive area and is in the planning phase.	WSF partnership needed to understand operational needs and impacts relative to the connection to the terminal and crossing the roadway terminal access.
2024	Town of Friday Harbor	<i>Comprehensive Plan</i>  The Friday Harbor comprehensive plan will review options to manage demands of a growing community while preserving the town's character, scale, and identity. Plan development will include review of potential improvements to pedestrian and vehicle traffic at the terminal and in downtown Friday Harbor.	WSF partnership needed to understand operational needs and impacts relative to passenger loading/unloading and vehicle access to the terminal, current and future service levels and potential terminal improvements.
Future – To be completed by June 30, 2025	City of Anacortes, Skagit County, island communities	Area comprehensive plans	Identify areas of growth to coordinate service needs and potential solutions through investment and other strategies.



## Chapter 4. Evaluation of strategies to maximize passenger ridership

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A key goal of the Study is to identify and recommend cost-effective strategies to maximize walk-on ridership. The process of identifying strategies considered the unique existing conditions and transportation needs of each terminal facility and larger community on the Anacortes/San Juan Islands route.

The following sections outline the process used to identify and evaluate potential strategies, findings from the two-step evaluation process and potential scenarios for strategy implementation.

### Strategy development

The Study developed a preliminary list of strategies— informed by guidance from the legislative proviso and early Study activities— that have the potential to encourage people to walk onto the ferry, rather than using their vehicles.

The legislative proviso, as a minimum requirement, listed the following strategies for review in the Study:

- *Increased public funding or other support for transit or shuttle service between ferry landings on Orcas, Lopez, San Juan, and Anacortes and nearby major town centers or connecting transit hubs.*
- *Options to increase availability of taxi and rideshare services at each of the landings.*
- *Short-term electric vehicle rentals at ferry landings, including bicycles and scooters.*
- *Public funding or other support to increase the available locations for additional parking and reduce the cost for short-term parking near each landing.*
- *Marketing of the availability of options through the WSF reservation system website, on ferries and at ferry landings and ticketing facilities.*
- *Increased public funding or other support for transit or shuttle service between ferry landings on Orcas, Lopez, San Juan, and Anacortes and nearby major town centers or connecting transit hubs.*

Other activities that informed the development of a preliminary list of strategies include:

#### Review of previous studies

- 2018 San Juan Island Visitor Study: The study included visitation analysis, counts, observations, inventories and surveys that informed use levels and patterns. This study highlighted the values of the community tied to natural resources, growing number of visitors and the need for effective management of transportation that could reduce the reliance on simply increasing parking infrastructure.

#### Review of data and existing conditions of the Anacortes/San Juan Islands route

- Review of current and historical ridership, service levels and planning data for the routes.
- Site visit to terminals and vessels familiarization visit, including discussions with terminal supervisors and vessel captains/crews.

## Research of best practices for transportation solutions and funding sources used by other ferry-served islands and rural communities

While there is no direct example to correlate to the San Juan Islands, the team reviewed other rural island communities for their transportation connections and best practices. Specific transportation solutions included shuttles and private ride hailing connections. Often these shuttle systems are funded and governed in different ways, such as through public transit authorities with different funding mechanisms and opportunities.

### Community engagement

- Discussions with WSF staff and crew.
- Public online survey.
- Listening sessions with stakeholders.

## Potential strategies

The strategies identified in the Study include transportation alternatives (e.g. shuttles, buses, and rentals and rideshare), capital or operational improvements (e.g. parking and terminal enhancements) and policy changes (e.g. fares, parking fees and crew additions).

The preliminary list of strategies identified in the Study are defined in Table 4-1a through 4-1d.

**Table 4-1a: Preliminary list of strategies (transportation alternatives)**

Strategy	Strategy description
On-demand shuttle	Provide on-demand, or dial-a-ride, shuttle bus service between terminal and unspecified locations using public or private operator
Fixed route shuttle	Provide fixed route circulator shuttle/transit between terminal and major town centers, connecting transit hubs or major destinations such as Moran State Park, Roche Harbor and Eastsound
Parking shuttle	Provide shuttle loop between remote parking lots and terminal linked to ferry schedule
Round trip shuttle	Provide round trip (drive on/off) passenger/luggage shuttle service between Anacortes remote parking and key island destinations
Transit/Bus services	Provide improved/expanded bus service that is coordinated with ferry schedule and connected to key destinations such as downtown/shopping areas, medical facilities or transit
Bike/scooter rental	Provide bike/E-bike/scooter rental at terminals
Electric vehicle rentals	Provide short-term electric vehicle rentals at terminals
Taxi/rideshare	Provide increased availability of taxi/rideshare capabilities
Transportation services for seniors	Provide services designed to transport senior citizens to and from medical and health care services, social services, meal programs, or other services

**Table 4-2b: Preliminary list of strategies (capital improvements)**

Strategy	Strategy description
Long-term/short-term parking	Increase available parking near the terminal and reduce cost for short-term parking
Satellite parking	Provide year-round or seasonal satellite parking, including shuttle to terminal
Terminal improvements	Support increased walk-on/roll-on ridership with improvements to passenger waiting areas and spaces for multimodal connections

**Table 4-3c: Preliminary list of strategies (operational improvements)**

Strategy	Strategy description
Marketing options	Enhance information and marketing around the availability of options
Luggage/cargo handling	Implement luggage/cargo handling process(es), such as low/no cost cart rental program
Terminal waiting areas	Improve terminal waiting areas
Walk-on passenger experience	Improve wayfinding, ease of movement on/off vessel and safety/comfort terminal accommodations
Bike access & stowage	Improve ease/efficiency of bike loading/unloading and stowage on vessels
Parking information	Implement technology to provide real-time parking availability, enhanced wayfinding information at the Anacortes terminal and WSF webpage, and explore potential implementation of parking reservations

**Table 4-4d: Preliminary list of strategies (supportive policies)**

Strategy	Strategy description
Reduced passenger & bike fares and/or parking fees	Reduce passenger & bike fares, and/or parking fees (including discounted long-term parking passes for island residents)
Schedule reliability/consistency	Schedule reliability/consistency, schedule coordination with transit & shuttles
Crew additions	Add crew to increase passenger capacity

## Evaluation criteria and approach

After identifying the strategies, the team developed a set of evaluation criteria to compare and assess them based on the goals of the study. The criteria were centered on identifying strategies that would effectively maximize vehicle capacity and promote walk-on/roll-on ridership. The assessment of strategies took place in two stages:

**Stage 1:** The full list of preliminary strategies was screened for:

- Effectiveness on maximizing vessel capacity.
- Relative ease of implementation for WSDOT.

**Stage 2:** For those strategies that passed the initial screening, a more detailed assessment was conducted to understand their relative opportunities and constraints and potential implementation in a coordinated scenario of strategies. Additional assessment included:

- Effectiveness/impact – potential users and levels of use, ability to target key sailings, alignment with WSF Sustainability Action Plan objectives.
- Implementation considerations and constraints – ease of implementation and WSDOT staffing/management requirements
- Timeline – potential implementation timeline.
- Costs – implementation and ongoing operational costs, revenue potential.
- Viability – interest/feedback from public and stakeholder outreach, partnership and funding opportunities, long-term financial sustainability.

Table 4-2a through 4-2d provides a summary of the findings from Stage 1 evaluation, which focused on assessing the relative potential ridership impact and ease of implementation for WSDOT.

**Table 4-5a: Summary of Stage 1 screening results (transportation Alternatives)**

Category	Strategy	Passenger ridership impacts	WSF/WSDOT ease to implement	Screening results
Shuttles	On-demand shuttle	●●●	●●	Advanced to Stage 2
Shuttles	Fixed route shuttle	●●	●●●	Advanced to Stage 2
Shuttles	Parking shuttle	●●	●●	Stage 1 only
Shuttles	Round trip shuttle	●●	●	Stage 1 only
Transit / Bus	Transit/Bus services	●●●	●●	Advanced to Stage 2
Rentals	Bike/scooter rental	●●	●●	Stage 1 only
Rentals	Electric vehicle rentals	●	●●	Stage 1 only
Rideshare	Taxi/rideshare	●●	●●	Stage 1 only
Rideshare	Medical transportation services	●●	●●●	Advanced to Stage 2

**Table 4-6b: Summary of Stage 1 screening results (capital improvements)**

Category	Strategy	Passenger ridership impacts	WSF/WSDOT ease to implement	Screening results
Parking	Long-term/short-term parking	●●	●●	Stage 1 only
Parking	Satellite parking	●●	●●	Stage 1 only
Terminals	Terminal improvements	●●	●●	Stage 1 only

**Table 4-7c: Summary of Stage 1 screening results (operational enhancements)**

Strategy	Passenger ridership impacts	WSF/WSDOT ease to implement	Screening results
Marketing options	●●	●●●	Advanced to Stage 2
Luggage/cargo handling	●●	●	Stage 1 only
Terminal waiting areas	●●●	●	Stage 1 only
Walk-on passenger experience	●	●●	Stage 1 only
Bike access & stowage	●●	●●	Stage 1 only
Parking information	●●	●●	Advanced to Stage 2

**Table 4-8d: Summary of Stage 1 screening results (supportive policies)**

Strategy	Passenger ridership impacts	WSF/WSDOT ease to implement	Screening results
Reduced passenger & bike fares and/or parking fees	●●	●●	Further evaluation required
Schedule reliability/consistency	●●	●●	Stage 1 only
Add crew to increase pax capacity	●●	●●●	Stage 1 only

**Table Key:** Lower ● Moderate ●● Higher ●●●

The following sections offer potential models of the identified strategies, their targeted user group(s) and terminal(s), and the impacts, assumptions and implementation requirements for each strategy.

## Focused transportation strategies

The team identified potential transportation strategies to support walk-on connections to and from the terminals at both ends of the route. The following list of strategies includes potential multimodal connections.

### Shuttles

The Study identified four potential types of shuttle service that could be implemented to support walk-on passengers using the Anacortes/San Juan Island ferry services: on-demand, fixed route, remote parking and round trip. Shuttle services could be operated publicly or privately.

**Table 4-3 Target ridership of shuttles**

Potential model	Description of strategy	Targeted user groups	Targeted terminals
On-demand shuttle	Provide on-demand or dial-a-ride shuttle bus service between terminal and unspecified locations using public or private operator.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Island residents</li> <li>Mobility impaired</li> <li>Visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anacortes (<i>service area including Anacortes area or beyond to Burlington/Mount Vernon</i>)</li> <li>Friday Harbor (<i>service area including San Juan Island</i>)</li> <li>Orcas</li> </ul>
Fixed Route	Provide fixed route circulator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friday Harbor (<i>connection between</i></li> </ul>

Potential model	Description of strategy	Targeted user groups	Targeted terminals
shuttle	shuttle/transit between terminal and popular destinations (e.g. town centers, airport, trail, tourist destinations, hotel and connecting transit hubs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility impaired</li> </ul>	<p><i>ferry terminal and island destinations, supplementing current shuttle options)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orcas (<i>connection between ferry terminal and Eastsound</i>)</li> <li>• Lopez (<i>connection between ferry terminal and Lopez Village</i>)</li> </ul>
Parking shuttle	Provide shuttle loop between remote parking lots and terminal linked to ferry schedule.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island residents</li> <li>• Mobility impaired</li> <li>• Visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote parking implemented at any of the terminals would require supporting shuttling service</li> </ul>
Round trip shuttle	Provide round trip (drive on/off) passenger/luggage shuttle service between Anacortes remote parking and key island destinations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility impaired</li> <li>• Visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friday Harbor (<i>connection between Anacortes and island destinations, supplementing current shuttle options</i>)</li> <li>• Orcas (<i>connection between Anacortes and Eastsound and/or Moran State Park</i>)</li> </ul>

**Potential Impact:** This strategy could replace an average of 4.6 vehicles per sailing, or 22.8 vehicles per day, assuming the operation of a 14-passenger shuttle with 60% average utilization serving the five peak daily sailings. This calculation is based on an assumed average of 1.84 passengers per car.

**Assumptions:**

- Capacity: A 14-passenger van. This was identified as the optimal size, as it can be operated with a regular driver’s license, whereas a 15-passenger van would require additional training and licensing.
- Service level: Peak sailings during summer season. The shuttle service would likely be targeted at the peak sailings each day during the peak summer season when demand is highest.
- Example service: Anderson Island Shuttle. Pierce County Public Works operated a pilot shuttle on Anderson Island in the summer of 2023 to support walk-on ridership during a period of reduced ferry service. The shuttle operated on a loop, stopping at five points around the island, with up to eight trips per day.

**WSF/WSDOT implementation considerations:**

- Operational considerations: WSDOT could provide dedicated loading zones at terminals to support the implementation of shuttles.
- Regulatory/environmental complexities: No major permitting challenges are anticipated.
- Staffing and acquisition implications may include:
  - Purchasing fleet vehicles.
  - Hiring drivers, management and maintenance employees.
  - Operating cost considerations and potential impacts on ridership if fares are changed.

- **Implementation timeline:** Depending on the chosen shuttle strategy, implementation timelines vary but are all under three years. Implementation could be faster if built upon an existing service or through partnership with a private operator.

## Transit and bus

Forming partnerships with regional transit agencies would be beneficial for improving or expanding existing fixed-route transit connections, creating new transit services, and implementing more efficient and effective transit strategies as needed. Collaborative efforts with regional transit agencies would enhance transportation options for both island residents and visitors, and increase access to employment, medical care, attractions and other relevant needs.

**Table 4-4: Target ridership of transit/bus**

Potential model	Description of model	Targeted user groups	Targeted terminals
Transit/Bus	Provide improved/expanded bus service coordinated with (and complimentary to) ferry schedule and connections to key destinations such as downtown/shopping areas, medical facilities, transit, rail and air travel connections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island residents</li> <li>• Mobility impaired</li> </ul>	Anacortes (already exists)

**Potential Impact:** This strategy could replace an average of 8.2 vehicles per sailing, or 40.8 vehicles per day, assuming the operation of a 30-passenger bus with 50 percent average utilization to serve the five peak daily sailings. This calculation is based on an assumed average of 1.84 passengers per car.

### Assumptions:

- **Service level:** Expanded bus or transit services would operate year-round, align with ferry schedules, be conveniently located, and serve Anacortes.
- **Example services:** Skagit Transit services the San Juan Island Ferry Terminal on the Anacortes side via the 410 Route. The 409 Route services downtown Anacortes and shares a five-stop route with the 410 Route in the northern part of downtown Anacortes.<sup>6</sup>

### WSF/WSDOT implementation considerations:

- **WSDOT could support the implementation of bus and transit by providing dedicated loading zones at terminals.**
- **Regulatory/environmental complexities:** No major permitting challenges are anticipated.
- **Staffing and acquisition implications may include:**
  - Purchasing fleet vehicles.
  - Hiring drivers and employees.
  - Method to cover operating costs and considerations to potential impacts to ridership if fares are changed.

<sup>6</sup> [Skagit Transit Interactive Route Map](#), October 2023

- **Implementation timeline:** Likely less than one year to implement once funding is in place, assuming the service builds upon existing services.

## Rentals at terminals

To implement rental strategies, WSF could establish partnerships with private transportation services to offer a wide range of vehicles, including bicycles, scooters and short-term electric vehicles at every terminal. These partnerships would provide convenient and affordable transportation options for travelers, as well as incorporate an appropriate focus on the proper maintenance and upkeep of the rental fleet. By offering a diverse range of rental vehicles, the transportation network could cater to the varying transportation needs of different individuals and help them travel efficiently and safely.

**Table 4-5: Target ridership of rentals**

Potential model	Description of model	Targeted user groups	Targeted terminals
Bike/Scooter	Provide bike/E-bike/scooter rental at terminals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• San Juan (already exists)</li> <li>• Lopez</li> </ul>
Electric vehicle	Provide short-term electric vehicle rentals at terminals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island residents</li> <li>• Visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anacortes</li> <li>• San Juan (already exists)</li> <li>• Orcas (already exists)</li> <li>• Lopez</li> </ul>

### Potential impact:

- **Bike/Scooter rentals:** On average, the operator would need to rent two bikes/scooters for each vehicle eliminated. Assuming an optimistic average of 20 bikes or scooters rented daily, this would replace 2 vehicles per sailing, or 10 vehicles per day.
- **Electric vehicles:** On average, the operator would need to rent one EV for each vehicle eliminated. Assuming an optimistic average of 10 EVs per day, this would replace 2 vehicles per sailing, or 10 vehicles per day.

### Assumptions:

- **Service level:** A seasonally focused program with some potential for reduced volumes during non-peak season.
- **Example services:** Several private businesses, such as Meat Machine Cycles and Susie’s Mopeds, provide rental services close to the San Juan ferry terminal.

### WSF/WSDOT implementation considerations:

- The size of the potential rental fleet is limited by space constraints at the terminal.
- WSDOT could support implementation of rentals by providing dedicated curb or vehicle parking space at terminals and exploring the feasibility of offering short-term or seasonal user agreements with businesses to operate rentals.
- **Regulatory/environmental complexities:** No major permitting challenges are anticipated.
- **Staffing and acquisition implications may include:**
  - Purchasing fleet of bikes, scooters and/or electrical vehicles (depending on the model(s) chosen).



- Establishing secure stowage and maintenance facilities.
- Installing charging facilities.
- Need to hire employees.
- Need to identify funding stream.
- Implementation timeline: Likely three to five years to implement, considering the establishment of dedicated charging facilities on the island. A private operator could likely implement the strategy in less time if financial incentive exists.

## Rideshare

Rideshare strategies, such as taxi services or medical transportation programs, would typically involve a private operator who would manage and maintain the service.

**Table 4-6: Targeted ridership of rideshare strategy**

Potential model	Description of model	Targeted user groups	Targeted terminals
Taxi/Rideshare	Provide increased availability of taxi/rideshare capabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Island residents</li> <li>● Visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Anacortes</li> <li>● San Juan</li> <li>● Orcas</li> </ul>
Medical transportation programs	Expansion of current transportation services aimed at supporting seniors or those with mobility impairments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Island residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● San Juan</li> <li>● Orcas</li> <li>● Lopez</li> <li>● Shaw</li> </ul>

### Potential impact:

- **Taxi/Rideshare:** Taxi or rideshare services could replace an average of 4.3 vehicles per sailing, or 21.7 vehicles per day. This calculation assumes two passengers per taxi/rideshare vehicle, a fleet of four vehicles operating to serve the five peak daily sailings and an average of 1.84 passengers per car.
- **Medical transportation programs:** This type of program could replace an average of 2.2 vehicles per sailing, or 10.9 vehicles per day. This calculation assumes two passengers per vehicle, a fleet of two vehicles operating to serve the five peak daily sailings and an average of 1.84 passengers per vehicle.

### Assumptions:

- Service level: Year-round service to support island residents.
- Example services: Existing programs for off-island medical transportation include Orcas Senior Center, Island Rides and Northwest Regional Council.

### WSF/WSDOT implementation considerations:

- WSDOT could support implementation of rideshare by providing drop-off and pick-up zones at terminals.
- Regulatory/environmental complexities: No major permitting challenges are anticipated.
- Staffing and acquisition implications may include:
  - **Taxi/rideshare:** Would require the purchase of a fleet of vehicles, hiring drivers, management and maintenance staff.

- **Medical transportation programs:** Volunteer vehicles already owned but would require system implementation.
- Implementation timeline: Likely less than one year to implement and could build on existing services.

## Capital improvements

Potential capital projects identified to support walk-on/roll-on ridership include improvements to passenger waiting areas and spaces to support multimodal connections.

### Terminals

#### All Islands

- Maintain existing or expand designated pick-up/drop-off zone for shuttles or rideshare.

#### Friday Harbor

- Pedestrian walkway improvements to support ease of passenger movement and minimize impacts to dwell time. Potential options include:
  - Overhead loading pedestrian walkway.
  - Additional or expanded walkway to provide separated pedestrian pathway.

#### Orcas

- Improved/expanded waiting area.
- Note that while overhead loading would make the walkway easier, walk-on passenger demand is not anticipated to require this improvement.

#### Anacortes

- Improved passenger waiting area.
- Improved signage between parking areas, transit waiting areas and terminal.
- Provide fully enclosed, temperature-controlled transit shelters at passenger waiting areas.

**Table 4-7: Overview of potential terminal improvement strategies**

Potential model	Description of model	Targeted user groups	Targeted terminals
Waiting area improvements	Increase the size, comfort and amenities of terminal waiting areas and associated transit shelters (if separate from terminal).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Island residents</li> <li>● Visitors</li> </ul>	The need for improved and/or larger waiting areas has been identified for the Anacortes and Orcas Island terminals
Multimodal connections	Future terminal project planning to incorporate space and infrastructure to support multimodal transportation strategies, including transit/shuttle stops, pick-up/drop-off curb space, and charging/docking space for bikes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Island residents</li> <li>● Visitors</li> </ul>	All terminals

**Potential impact:** Capital improvements at terminals to enhance the walk-on/roll-on passenger experience and improve the ease of connecting to other transportation modes would likely

encourage more walk-on/roll-on ridership. Additionally, improvements may be needed once transportation strategies are implemented to accommodate increased volumes of walk-on/roll-on passengers.

#### **WSF/WSDOT implementation considerations:**

- Regulatory/environmental complexities: Terminal projects would likely require an environmental permitting process.
- Implementation timeline: Long-term.

## **Parking**

Potential capital improvements related to parking at the Anacortes terminal include improving or expanding existing parking or additional parking located away from the terminal.

**Table 4-8: Overview of potential parking improvements strategy**

Potential Models	Description of Models	Potential application/ user groups	Targeted Walk-on/roll-on Challenges
Safety and Security	Improvements such as added lighting on pathways between parking lots and the terminal, and security cameras in lots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island residents</li> <li>• Visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anacortes</li> </ul>
Parking at Terminals	Increase available long-term and short-term parking near the terminal. Reduce parking costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island residents</li> <li>• Visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anacortes</li> </ul>
Satellite Parking	Provide year-round or seasonal satellite parking, including shuttle to terminal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island residents</li> <li>• Visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anacortes</li> <li>• San Juan (already exists)</li> </ul>
Annual Parking	Explore designated space for Island resident annual parking needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anacortes</li> </ul>

**Potential impact:** Increasing the availability of parking spaces is expected to result in increased walk-on/roll-on ridership. However, parking at the Anacortes terminal reaches capacity only a few peak days throughout the year, so increased parking availability could be underutilized most of the year. Satellite parking, while it is an option, is less effective than proximity parking as it requires some form of supplementary shuttle.

#### **WSF/WSDOT implementation considerations:**

- Regulatory/environmental complexities: Potential minor permitting and possible zoning challenges.
- Acquisition implications: Would require purchase, lease or construction of parking spaces.
- Operational requirements:
  - **Short-term parking:** For short-term parking to be effective, it needs to be near the terminal, thus requiring added spaces or an elevated parking structure.
  - **Satellite parking:** Satellite parking will require associated shuttle services to be effective, in addition to added spaces or an elevated parking structure.

- **Annual parking:** Dedicated space for annual parking will aid island residents who are interested in keeping a car on the mainland side; however, there are challenges with the amount of space to dedicate, as seasonal fluctuations in ridership and parking demand lead to potential capacity issues for visitors to the islands in the summer season.
- **Implementation timeline:** Dedicated annual parking for residents could be implemented in the short term but would require further analysis to understand its impacts in the summer months. Expanded parking would likely take less than three years to implement once funded. Space would need to be identified.

## Current Planned Projects

### Anacortes Terminal Rebuild Project

Reconstruction of the roughly 60-year-old Anacortes terminal building was called for in the 2025-2027 biennium in the 2040 WSF Long Range Plan. While funding has been requested, the project has not yet been programmed in a state budget.

The 2023-2025 Capital Improvement and Preservation Program budget programmed \$23.5 million to be used to complete preliminary engineering and construction of the Anacortes Terminal Building Replacement project.

The project will improve the Anacortes Ferry Terminal by replacing the existing terminal building with a 16,300-square-foot facility and construction of site improvements as available funding allows. Additional site improvements will be made to improve the facility such as partially correcting site circulation and access through the addition of an HOV lane and other mobility and safety improvements to existing channelization and pavement markings, increasing pedestrian and walk-on passenger safety and access through construction of a sidewalk leading to the ferry terminal along SR 20 Spur, parking improvements to better serve existing and updated facilities, and other betterments to improve energy efficiency.

### Island Terminal Projects

The 2040 WSF Long Range Plan also called for several island terminal projects in the medium term (dependent on funding) — including expansion of the vehicle holding area at the Lopez Island terminal to accommodate implementation of vehicle reservations— and construction of overhead pedestrian loading at Friday Harbor along with conversion of the tie-up only slip to an operational slip that allows vehicles to drive on the ferry.

## Operational strategies

Potential operational strategies would focus on enhancing the experience of walk-on/roll-on passengers or directly addressing one of the transportation challenges they face as they move through the terminals or vessels.

## Marketing and transportation information

To encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation, it is essential to implement effective marketing strategies that cater to both island residents and visitors. Promotional materials can be distributed in various locations, including on ferries and at tourist information centers and community events. By increasing the visibility of alternative transportation options, WSF can encourage residents

and visitors alike to consider the option of walking on (rather than driving on) the ferries, with the goal of making all prospective riders aware of the available services and potential benefits of those services.

Operational improvements focused on parking would aim to address challenges with the current parking at the Anacortes terminal identified through public and stakeholder outreach, including uncertainty around parking availability. Parking at the Anacortes terminal only reaches capacity on peak summer travel days, with seven total occurrences in 2022. As such, the recommended parking improvements focus on encouraging increased utilization of existing parking capacity.

**Table 4-9: Target ridership of marketing and transportation information**

Potential model	Description of model	Targeted user groups	Targeted terminals
On-board improvements	Designate a marked, wider pedestrian pathway between elevator/stairs and the front of the vessel for walk-on/roll-on loading/unloading.  Consider future improvements/expansion of secure, weather-proof bicycle storage on the vessel, especially in the summer season.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Island residents</li> <li>Visitors</li> </ul>	All
Marketing of transportation options	Increase the availability of information and ease of finding walk-on/roll-on trip planning information. Upon implementation of enhanced transportation options, market those options to targeted groups.  <b>Example: Kitsap Transit’s Fast Ferry route information webpage includes blog posts “A Day in Bremerton” and “A Day in Kingston” with example itineraries for day trips completed using the pedestrian-only ferry.<sup>7</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Island residents</li> <li>Visitors</li> </ul>	All
Wayfinding at terminals	Ease of moving on/off vessel and safety/comfort. Include marked pathway to terminal and waiting area for shuttle and rideshare uses at Anacortes terminal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Island residents</li> <li>Visitors</li> </ul>	All
Parking information at the Anacortes terminal	<u>Real-time availability:</u> Use of cameras, parking sensors or other real-time technology to communicate parking availability and encourage utilization.  <u>Travel information:</u> Provide improved traveler information on the WSF website such as maps of the parking lot layout and enhanced wayfinding at the terminal to improve user experience.  <u>Reservations:</u> Provide a system for passengers to make parking reservations online. This would allow passengers to plan their walk-on/roll-on trip ahead of time and eliminate uncertainties around parking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitors</li> </ul>	Anacortes

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.kitsaptransit.com/service/fast-ferry>

**Impact:** Strategies are anticipated to promote mode shift by providing trip planning information for car-free travel and improving user experience for walk-on/roll-on passengers.

**WSF/WSDOT implementation considerations:**

- Staffing and acquisition implications may include:
  - On-board improvements: Minor on-board improvements could be implemented at a relatively low cost, but they may result in minor loss of vehicle space.
  - Marketing of transportation options: Relatively low-cost effort, given marketing materials can all be generated in-house. Staff would develop and maintain content.
  - Parking information: Would require feasibility study, selection and implementation of a technology solution, as well as ongoing maintenance and systems coordination. The parking lot concessions operations request for proposals will be released in 2024 and should stipulate that prospective bidders offer “Smart Parking Systems” or “Active Parking Management” services in their responses.
- Implementation timeline: On-board improvements and marketing of transportation options could likely be implemented in less than one year. Parking information would likely be less than three years to implement and could be stipulated in the next contract agreement with a parking operations concessionaire, anticipated in 2024.

**Luggage and cargo Handling**

Luggage and cargo handling processes could be implemented to ensure efficient and hassle-free travel experiences for passengers. A cart rental program located at the terminals could provide a convenient and cost-effective option for travelers with baggage or luggage to move between a parked car or other transportation connection and the terminal, making some trips possible for walk-on passengers who might otherwise require a vehicle.

**Table 4-10: Target ridership for luggage and cargo**

Potential model	Description of model	Targeted user groups	Targeted terminals
Luggage handling	Implement a service/process at terminals and/or onboard vessels to make it easier for walk-on/roll-on passengers to load and unload the vessel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island residents</li> <li>• Visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All island terminals</li> </ul>
Cart rentals	Establish low/no cost cart rental program at Anacortes terminal to make it easier for walk-on/roll-on passengers to transport goods between the parking/loading area to the vessel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island residents</li> <li>• Visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All island terminals</li> </ul>

**Impact:** Adding a luggage and cargo handling process addresses a key challenge to walking on/rolling on and has the potential to make notable changes in rider patterns.

**WSF/WSDOT Implementation considerations:**

- Operational implications:

- Implementation would be controlled by WSF/WSDOT and would likely require changing the way the ferry operates. This could create potential labor challenges, including a need for additional staff.
- U.S. Coast Guard and other federal regulations prevent WSF from accepting or holding luggage/packages from passengers, so options for a bag drop/haul aboard by WSF crew as cargo is not feasible. Additionally, potential security concerns would need to be addressed if loaded carts were to be left unattended on the vessel.
- Due to the slope and length of the pathway between upper parking at Anacortes terminal, use of luggage carts would be challenging for many users.
- Staffing and acquisition implications may include:
  - Requiring the purchase of charts.
  - Establishing a location for cart stowage.
  - Developing a process for returning carts.
  - Establishing an operational process for the loading, unloading and stowage of carts on ferry.
- Implementation timeline: The implementation is controlled by WSF/WSDOT and could likely be implemented within two years. Depending on vendor availability, implementation and operation of this strategy could be contracted.

## Vessel capacity

To accommodate high ridership on specific sailings, crew members could be added to increase the maximum passenger capacity.

**Table 4-11: Vessel capacity**

Potential model	Description of model	Targeted user groups	Targeted terminals
Increased vessel capacity	Added crew to increase maximum passenger capacity on sailings with high ridership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All island terminals</li> </ul>

**Impact:** By increasing vessel capacity with more crew, the ferry could take on additional passengers. However, since the vessels are not consistently at capacity, the value of this change is limited.

### WSF/WSDOT implementation Considerations:

- Operational implications: It is within the WSF/WSDOT capability. However, existing labor shortages may represent an impediment. This strategy would add operating/labor costs, so additional funding would be required.
- Implementation timeline: Could be accomplished relatively rapidly through WSF-level policy decision.

## Policy

### Fare policy

As identified during community engagement, reducing passenger and bike fares in relation to vehicle fares could incentivize ferry riders to walk or roll onto the ferry instead of using their

personal vehicles. While survey responses identified lowering walk-on/roll-on fares as a potential strategy, historical WSF ridership data shows reducing walk-on/roll-on fare levels in relation to vehicle fares has not had a measurable impact in the past. For example, from 2013 through 2019, the commission adopted differential fare increases, with vehicle fares typically increasing by 0.5% more than passenger fares. Throughout this time, the ratio of passenger to vehicle trips stayed relatively steady – in 2013 44.7% of total ridership was from vehicle trips and 55.3% was from passenger trips, compared to 43.8% vehicle trips and 56.2% passenger trips in 2019.

Any adjustments to fare levels and fare policy are the responsibility of the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC). The WSTC completed a fare setting process for the 2023/2025 budget cycle, setting fare levels and general fare increases effective Oct. 1, 2023, through Sept. 30, 2025. Differential fare setting implies different fares between passengers and vehicles. This model was evaluated in the last two tariff cycles but faced public opposition and was deemed by the WSTC to unfairly place a larger financial burden on vehicle users to cover a larger portion of the system’s revenue requirements. Any potential future adjustments to fare policy aimed at reducing walk-on/roll-on fares would need a thorough evaluation of equity considerations and the impacts on fare revenue across all WSF routes, as fare levels and fare increases are applied on a system-wide basis.

**Table 4-12: Walk-on/roll-on challenges**

Potential Models	Description of Model	User Groups	Targeted Walk-on/Roll-on Challenges
Fare policy	Reduced passenger and bike fares to incentivize walk-on/roll-on ridership. Analysis would be needed to understand the revenue impacts of potential fare policy adjustments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All</li> </ul>
Reduced parking costs	Reducing the cost of parking (year-round or only in the off-peak season) to make walk-on/roll-on travel more cost-competitive with drive-on travel, especially for longer trips. Analysis would be needed to understand the revenue impacts of potential parking cost adjustments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All</li> </ul>



## Chapter 5. Scenarios for implementation

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The Study evaluated the strategies for their potential to support the transportation needs of specific user groups, as summarized below:

### Island residents

Key transportation needs for San Juan Island residents traveling to Anacortes and other mainland destinations include the need to transport groceries and other goods on and off the ferry. Additionally, island residents often travel to medical appointments or to air travel in Bellingham or SeaTac, therefore the timing of connections is key. The strategies identified to address these challenges include the following:

- **Shuttles:** Fixed route shuttle and/or transit connections between the Anacortes terminal and key destinations including downtown Anacortes, March's Point, and the Mount Vernon commercial core and Amtrak station.
- **Shuttles:** On-demand shuttle service in the Anacortes area, including connections to Skagit Transit bus routes at March's Point.
- **Policy:** Reduce parking costs at the Anacortes terminal or provide discounted long-term parking passes and increase awareness of existing long-term pass options. This would support island residents who may wish to leave a car on the mainland side so they can walk on to the ferry.

### Aging population

A large portion of island residents and visitors are over age 65. Many users in this group require the use of mobility devices and have difficulty walking long distances, navigating steep slopes or stairs, or carrying groceries and other luggage. Additionally, senior island residents who do not drive may require connections to medical or other appointments on the mainland. Strategies which may serve to address these challenges include:

- **Transportation service:** Medical transportation service on the islands to connect island residents between their home and the island terminal provided in partnership with community organizations or other agencies.
- **Shuttles:** On-demand shuttle service in the Anacortes area, including connections to Skagit Transit bus routes at March's Point.

### Island visitors

Visitors, the majority of whom travel in the summer months of June through August, are likely to travel with luggage or recreational equipment. Except for the Town of Friday Harbor, most accommodations and attractions are located away from the terminals, requiring on-island transportation. Limited transportation options exist on the Anacortes side of the route, meaning that alternatives to driving to the Anacortes terminal may be inconvenient or time consuming.

- **Trip planning information:** Travel planning information on the WSF Anacortes and San Juan Islands terminal webpages, real-time parking availability, and enhanced wayfinding at the terminal.

- **Shuttles:** Fixed route or on-demand shuttle service on San Juan Island (between Friday Harbor and main attractions around the island), on Orcas Island (between the ferry terminal and Eastsound) or on Lopez Island (between the ferry terminal and Lopez Village).

The Study recommends WSF implement a coordinated set of strategies which provide increased support for walk-on/roll-on passengers on both sides of the route for a targeted user group. While any of the identified transportation strategies will support a variety of users, the Study found that providing strategies targeted at supporting a specific user group and their typical transportation needs will be most effective. Targeted user groups may be prioritized based on policy, funding opportunities, or likely impact to vessel capacity maximization.

Three potential scenarios for strategy implementation are outlined below. While revisions to fare policy or parking costs are not included in any of the scenarios below, they would likely have an impact on ridership.

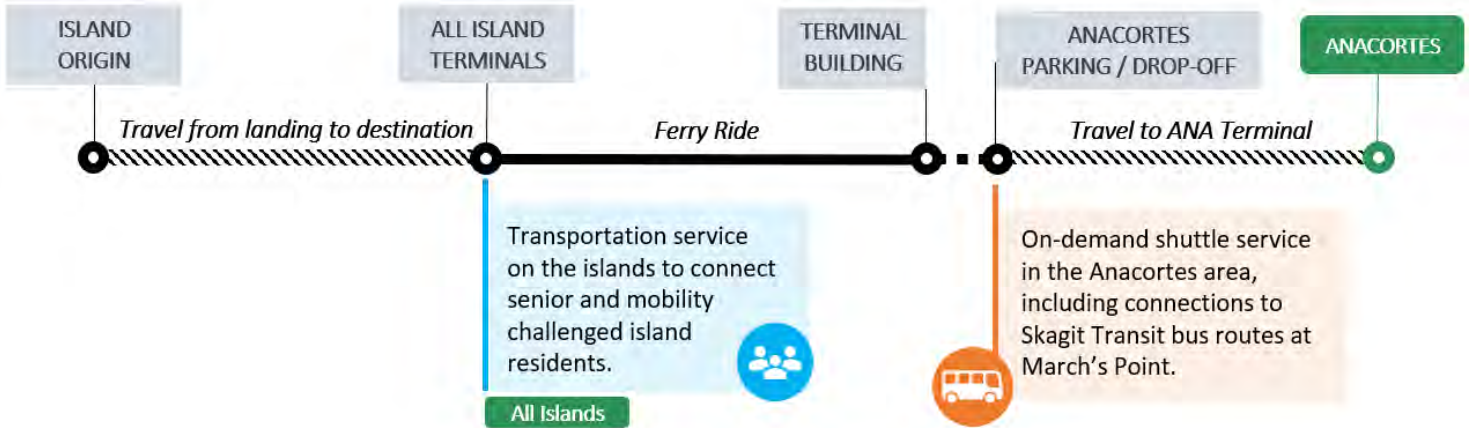
### **WSDOT Involvement and Funding Levels**

WSDOT's level of involvement in strategy implementation may impact the costs contributed by WSDOT and the likelihood of strategy success. Partnership options in order of WSDOT resource dedication include:

- **Staff/Administration Support.** Use WSDOT expertise and resources to facilitate or participate in coordinated implementation of two or more strategies on both ends of the route.
- **Partner on Grant Applications and Budget Requests.** Utilize WSDOT expertise and resources to identify and strengthen funding requests.
- **Provide Funding Support.** WSDOT to provide partial funding to support local community groups or private businesses with existing resources to implement/operate strategies.






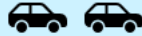
## Scenario 1 - Focus on supporting year-round transportation options for island residents through partnerships

- + Mode-shift from drive-on vehicles to multi-passenger shuttles.
- + Transportation options for mobility challenged and senior populations.
- + Leverage, support and partner with local agencies and community groups.



**User group focus:** Mobility challenged island residents  
Senior populations island residents

**Seasonal focus:** Year-round

Strategy	Resources needed *	Impacts
 <b>ON-DEMAND SHUTTLE</b>	<u>Assumed fleet size:</u> 2 shuttles <u>Capital Cost:</u> \$60,000-120,000/vehicle <u>Operating Cost:</u> \$290 /hour	   9 car spaces replaced 6.3% Of car deck space made available.
 <b>MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES</b>	<u>Assumed fleet size:</u> 2 vans <u>Capital Cost:</u> \$60,000-75,000 /vehicle <u>Operating Cost:</u> \$80 /hour + Volunteer drivers to provide service or other.	 2 car spaces replaced 1.4% Of car deck space made available.

**Total transportation strategy capacity:**  
 11 cars replaced by alternate modes  
 7.7% \*\* of deck space made available

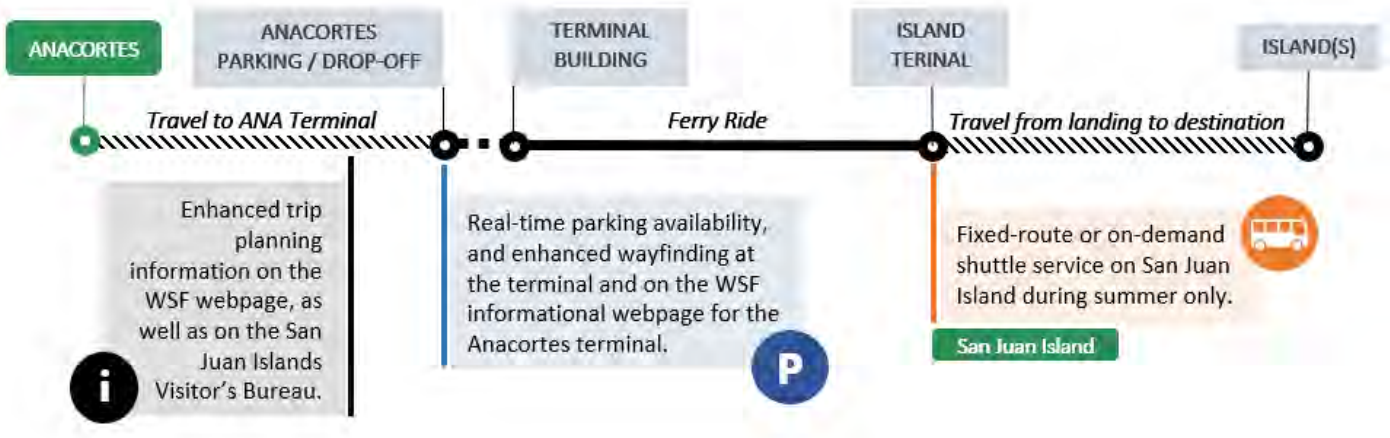
Notes:  
 \*Level of cost to WSDOT depends on type of partnership and level of funding commitment.  
 \*\*Percentage impacts calculated based on 144-vehicle capacity ferry.

## **WSDOT implementation considerations**



- **Local partnership opportunities:**
  - On-island community organizations to support and enhance existing on-island services.
  - Skagit Transit, as the agency explores implementation of an on-demand shuttle in the Anacortes area and future funding opportunities.
  - Coordination with businesses at stop sites may be necessary to establish drop off and pick up zones and implement signage.
- **Ferry operations and schedule coordination:**
  - Shuttle and passenger movements will need to be coordinated with the ferry schedule.

## Scenario 2 – Encourage visitors to walk or roll-on during peak summer months

- + Improve connectivity for walk-on/roll-on passengers visiting San Juan Island.
- + Synchronize with ferry schedule and utilize information systems to promote use.



**User group focus:** Visitor  
**Seasonal focus:** Summer

Strategy	Resources needed *	Impacts
 <b>FIXED-ROUTE/ ON-DEMAND SHUTTLE ON SJI</b>	<u>Assumed fleet size:</u> 2 shuttles <u>Capital Cost:</u> \$60,000-120,000/vehicle <u>Operating Cost:</u> \$290/hour	 9 car spaces replaced 6.3% Of car deck space made available.
<b>SUPPORTIVE OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS</b>	+ Active parking management strategies + WSF staff time for webpage updates and coordination with agency and other partners for travel information	Encourage and support use of transportation strategies

**Total transportation strategy capacity:**  
 9 cars replaced by alternate modes  
 6.3%\*\* of deck space made available

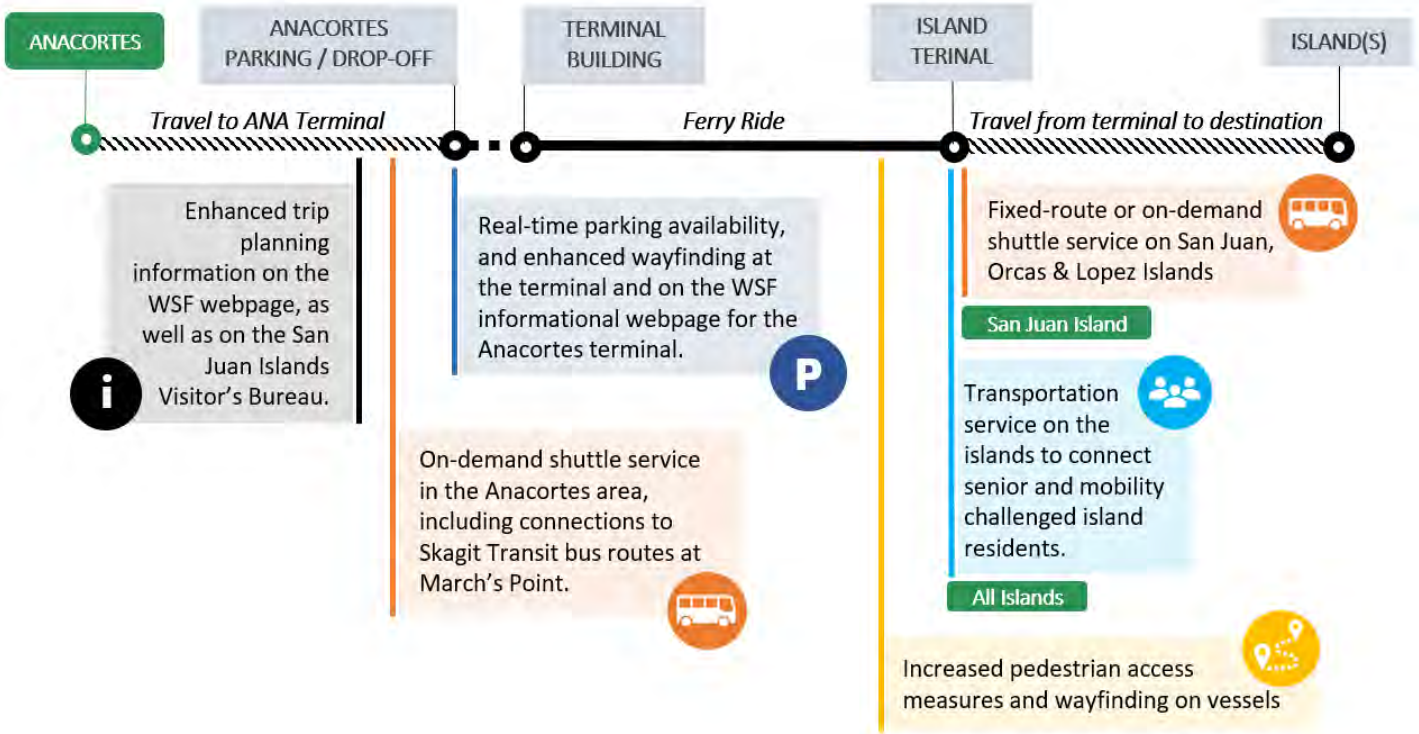
*Notes:*  
 \*Level of cost to WSDOT depends on type of partnership and level of funding commitment.  
 \*\*Percentage impacts calculated based on 144-vehicle capacity ferry.

### **WSDOT implementation considerations**

- **Local partnership opportunities:**
  - WSF can use in-house resources to enhance wayfinding at the terminal and on the WSF informational webpage for the Anacortes terminal.
- **Ferry operations and schedule coordination:**
  - Shuttle and passenger movements will need to be coordinated with the ferry schedule.
  - Assess feasibility of active parking management strategies at Anacortes terminal.






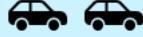
## Scenario 3 - Regional coordination of year-round transportation options for island residents and visitors through partnerships

- + Mode-shift from drive-on vehicles to multi-passenger shuttles.
- + Transportation options for mobility challenged and senior populations.
- + Leverage, support and partner with local agencies and community groups.
- + Improve connectivity for walk-on/roll-on passengers visiting San Juan Island.
- + Synchronize with ferry schedule and utilize information systems to promote use.



**User group focus** Island residents and visitors  
Mobility challenged and senior populations

**Seasonal focus** Year-round and targeted summer service

Strategy	Resources needed *	Impacts
 <b>ON-DEMAND SHUTTLE</b>	<u>Assumed fleet size:</u> 2 shuttles <u>Capital Cost:</u> \$60,000-120,000/vehicle <u>Operating Cost:</u> \$290/hour	 9 car spaces replaced 6.3% Of car deck space made available.
 <b>FIXED-ROUTE/ ON-DEMAND SHUTTLE ON SJI</b>	<u>Assumed fleet size:</u> 2 shuttles <u>Capital Cost:</u> \$60,000-120,000/vehicle <u>Operating Cost:</u> \$290/hour	 9 car spaces replaced 6.3% Of car deck space made available.
 <b>MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES</b>	<u>Assumed fleet size:</u> 2 vans <u>Capital Cost:</u> \$60,000-75,000/vehicle <u>Operating Cost:</u> \$80/hour + Volunteer drivers to provide service or other.	 2 car spaces replaced 1.4% Of car deck space made available.



Strategy	Resources needed *	Impacts
<b>SUPPORTIVE OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Active parking management strategies</li> <li>+ WSF staff time for webpage updates and coordination with agency and other partners for travel information</li> <li>+ Reduced vehicle capacity to hold more space for passenger movement and queuing at the front of the vessel</li> </ul>	Encourage and support use of transportation strategies

**Total transportation strategy capacity:**  
 20 cars replaced by alternate modes  
 14% \*\* of deck space made available

*Notes:*

*\*Level of cost to WSDOT depends on type of partnership and level of funding commitment.*

*\*\*Percentage impacts calculated based on 144-vehicle capacity ferry*

**WSDOT implementation considerations**

- **Local partnership opportunities:**
  - On-island community organizations – support and enhance existing on-island services.
  - Skagit Transit – explore implementation of an on-demand shuttle in the Anacortes area and future funding opportunities.
  - Coordination with businesses at stop sites may be necessary to establish drop off and pick up zones and implement signage.
- **Ferry operations and schedule coordination:**
  - Shuttle and passenger movements will need to be coordinated with the ferry schedule.
  - Assess feasibility of active parking management strategies at Anacortes terminal.



# Chapter 6. Costs and funding opportunities

## Costs

The costs to WSDOT for implementation and ongoing operation of potential strategies depend on the use of potential partnerships and grant funding opportunities. WSF's main and foreseeable focus is on providing reliable ferry service to the San Juan Islands, so strategies that require WSDOT personnel resources are unlikely to be implemented in the near term.

Potential partnership options are outlined below in order of WSDOT resource dedication:

- **Staff/administration support:** Use WSDOT expertise and resources to facilitate or participate in planning efforts and coordinated implementation of two or more strategies on both ends of the route.
- **Partner on grant applications and budget requests:** Utilize WSDOT expertise and resources to identify and strengthen funding requests.
- **Provide funding support:** Provide partial funding from existing resources to support local community groups or private businesses to implement/operate strategies.

Example rough order of magnitude costs used to assess the implementation and operation costs of transportation strategies are outlined in the table below.

**Table 6-1: Rough order of magnitude costs<sup>8</sup>**

Strategy	Capital costs	Operations costs
Shuttles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vehicle cost: \$60,000-120,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating cost: \$145/hour</li> </ul>
Transit/bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vehicle cost: \$460,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating cost: \$160/hour</li> </ul>
Senior transportation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADA-accessible van cost: \$60,000-75,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$39.49/hour</li> <li>• Potential use of volunteer driver</li> </ul>
Bike rental at terminals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation cost per bike: \$3,000</li> <li>• Station: \$30,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating cost: \$400,000-500,000 per year</li> </ul>

## Funding opportunities

As an alternative to direct funding of transportation strategies for walk-on/roll-on riders, WSF can seek funding opportunities or partner with other agencies or community organizations to support funding requests and grant applications.

<sup>8</sup> Cost ranges informed by 2021 FTA National Transit Database and recent local agency projects

Potential funding opportunities for walk-on/roll-on maximization strategies include state and local transportation funding and federal and state grants. Funding sources may be available for projects that achieve specific outcomes like reducing emissions, increasing transportation options for an underserved area, or providing transportation connections for island residents that meet age or income requirements or need assistance reaching medical appointments. Additional opportunities may be available through partnerships with private entities or non-profit organizations.

The following sections provide a summary of potential funding opportunities for walk-on/roll-on transportation strategies that WSDOT may pursue directly or in coordination with a partnering agency.

## Federal funding

**Federal Transit Authority (FTA) Section 5310** – Enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities

- **Purpose:** Assist in meeting the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities where current services are insufficient.
- **Eligible recipients:** Local and state governments, private nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation.

**FTA Section 5311** – Formula grants for rural areas

- **Purpose:** Provide capital, planning and operating assistance to support public transportation in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000, where many residents often rely on public transit to reach their destinations.
- **Eligible recipients:** Local and state government, transportation district commissions, public service corporations and private non-profit organizations.

**U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)** – Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

- **Purpose:** Provide funding for road, rail, transit, and port projects to achieve national objectives and have a significant local or regional impact.
- **Eligible recipients:** Any public entity, including municipalities, counties, port authorities, tribal governments, MPOs or others.

**U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)** – Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program

- **Purpose:** Provide funding for transportation projects and programs to help meet the Clean Air Act (CAA) requirements.
- **Eligible activities:** Transit improvements, travel demand management strategies, traffic flow improvements, public fleet conversions to cleaner fuels, projects to improve incident and emergency response or improve mobility, expanded authority for transit operations, and support for installation of facilities serving electric or natural gas fueled vehicles.
- **Eligible recipients:** State departments of transportation, local governments and transit agencies. In Washington, funding is distributed to public agencies through Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), which currently do not include the area in which the

Anacortes/San Juan Islands route is located. The five MPOs representing maintenance areas include:

- Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)
- Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC)
- Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC)
- Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG)
- Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC)

#### **USDOT – Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP)**

- **Purpose:** Provide funding to preserve and improve the conditions and performance of any Federal-aid highway, bridge and tunnel projects on any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects, including intercity bus terminals.
- **Eligible recipients:** States and localities.

#### **U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – Transportation alternatives set-aside funds**

- **Purpose:** Provide funding for transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, safe routes to school and other transportation-related activities.
- **Eligible recipients:** Federal Land Management Agencies, Tribal Governments and State.

#### **Federal Lands and Tribal Transportation Program**

- **Purpose:** Provide funding for transportation projects serving federal lands and tribal areas. Potential projects serving the San Juan Islands National Monument, located across the San Juan Islands, could be eligible.
- **Eligible recipients:** State or Tribe.

#### **FTA Section 5304 – Statewide and non-metropolitan transportation planning**

- **Purpose:** Facilitate statewide transportation planning. This grant recognizes the importance of addressing the transportation needs of all regions within the state (including non-metropolitan areas).
- **Eligible recipients:** State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

#### **FTA Section 5339 – Grants for buses and bus facilities programs**

- **Purpose:** Provide funding to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities including technological changes or innovations to modify low or no emission.
- **Eligible recipients:** The following entities are eligible to receive Section 5339 capital funding for fixed-route bus service, including operators providing services open to a segment of the general public, as defined by age, disability, or low income:
  - State agencies
  - Local governmental agencies and their divisions
  - Private nonprofit organizations
  - Transit agencies
  - Tribal governments

## State Funding

### WSDOT Consolidated Grant program

- **Purpose:** Provide funding for public transportation improvements within and between rural communities, transportation services between cities, purchases of new buses and equipment and public transportation services to seniors and people with disabilities.
- **Eligible recipients:** Nonprofits, tribes, public transit agencies and local agencies in Washington.

### WSDOT First Mile/Last Mile Connections grants

- **Purpose:** Assist projects that help people connect with fixed-route public transportation services, including buses, ferries, rail, water taxis, tribal transit and rideshares.
- **Eligible recipients:** Cities, counties, ports and public transit agencies in Washington.

### WSDOT Regional Mobility Grant

- **Purpose:** Support local efforts to improve connectivity between counties and regional population centers as well as to reduce transportation delays. This program includes four eligible project types: vehicle and equipment purchases, capital construction, operations, and transportation demand management.
- **Eligible recipients:** Cities, counties, ports and public transit agencies in Washington.

### WSDOT Paratransit/Special Needs and Rural Mobility Grant

Paratransit/Special Needs and Rural Mobility competitive grants cannot be applied for independently. WSDOT awards these grants as part of the Consolidated Grant program.

- **Purpose of Paratransit/Special Needs Grant:** Assist nonprofits to sustain and expand transportation services to people with disabilities, including seniors and children.
- **Purpose of Rural Mobility Grant:** Assist tribes, nonprofits and transit agencies to sustain and expand public transportation services to rural areas of the state. Funds can also be used to purchase vehicles and equipment to support these public transportation services.
- **Eligible recipients:** Cities, counties, ports and public transit agencies in Washington.

### WSDOT Zero-Emissions Access Program (ZAP)

- **Purpose:** Provide funding for zero-emission carshare pilot programs in underserved and low-to moderate-income communities.
- **Eligible recipients:** Nonprofit organizations or local governments in Washington. Local governments include cities, counties, housing authorities, ports and public transit agencies.

# Chapter 7. Implementation recommendations

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The Study was guided by the following goals:

- Engage with route-dependent communities and key stakeholders.
- Identify cost-effective near- and long-term strategies to maximize walk-on/roll-on ridership informed by that engagement.
- Determine potential public funding sources.

Through engagement with route-dependent communities and key stakeholders, strategies to maximize walk-on/roll-on ridership were identified. To encourage increased walk-on/roll-on ridership on the Anacortes/San Juan Islands route over the near- and long-terms, the following next steps are recommended for WSDOT.

## **Near-Term (One to Three Years): Focus on implementation of steps within WSDOT control, or through partnership with existing operators**

**Continue to focus staff and crew resources on providing reliable ferry service:** As WSF continues to progress through its Service Restoration effort, the division is focusing resources on recruiting, hiring and retaining employees to fill key positions to operate ferries. Reliable service will strengthen user confidence and make transit connections that do exist more achievable and reliable.

**Support island residents:** Promote to island residents that a discounted annual parking pass at the Anacortes terminal is available to those that have the option of leaving a car parked on the mainland. Additionally, explore options to provide a reduced-cost pass for seniors. Conduct outreach with San Juan County staff to understand existing needs and potential next steps for expansion of medical transportation services.

Support implementation of car share rentals at the terminal by providing dedicated curb and/or parking spaces. Investigate feasibility of offering short-term or seasonal *Property Use Agreements* with area businesses who can offer rentals to customers.

- **Estimated potential cost: \$544 per space annually** (Estimated potential revenue impact based on total FY2022 revenue to WSF operating fund generated by Anacortes parking divided by number of spaces. Parking revenue loss would impact WSF's operating fund.)

**Support island visitors:** Explore options for contracting with an existing private operator to provide expanded shuttle service on San Juan Island.

- **Estimated potential cost: \$65,000 per year** (Estimated operating cost for eight-hour service days, four days per week, for 14 weeks during the summer. Hourly cost from *2021 FTA National Transit Database* and may vary for service on San Juan Islands. The estimate does not include start-up or other costs. Vehicle purchase or lease may be an additional cost if not provided by vendor.)

**Maximize use of Anacortes parking:** In the next request for proposals for parking lot concessions operations, which is anticipated to be released in 2024, stipulate that, in their responses, bidders offer “Smart Parking Systems” or “Active Parking Management” services.

- **Potential cost:** To be determined.

**Improve customer information:** Provide additional, current information on the WSF Anacortes and San Juan Island terminal webpages including links to transportation options, information related to parking availability and other trip planning information to support and encourage greater walk-on/roll-on ridership. Partner with the San Juan Islands Visitor’s Bureau, Department of Commerce and other state agencies to maintain accuracy of information. Provide enhanced wayfinding at terminals and on vessels to direct users to multimodal connections.

- **Potential cost:** This strategy uses existing WSDOT/WSF staff which will require allocation of additional staff time. There are minimal costs associated with improved signage at terminals and on vessels.

**Transit shuttle (Collaborate with transit partners and local agencies):** Collaborate on planning studies and support grant applications and funding requests for transportation connections to Anacortes and island terminals. Potential partners for collaboration include the North Sound Transportation Alliance, Skagit Transit, San Juan County, Island County, Town of Friday Harbor, San Juan Islands Visitor’s Bureau, and island communities, organizations and businesses.

- **Potential cost:** This strategy uses existing WSDOT/WSF staff which will require allocation of additional staff time.

Specific near-term opportunities recommended for WSDOT involvement to support implementation of transportation strategies include the following current planning efforts:

**Skagit Transit Microtransit Study:** Beginning in 2023, Skagit Transit is studying potential implementation of on-demand micro transit shuttle service on Fidalgo Island, including the Anacortes ferry terminal. WSF involvement should inform feasibility assessment and support future implementation of connections to the Anacortes terminal.

**Friday Harbor Comprehensive Plan:** The 2024 comprehensive planning effort will review potential operational revisions or capital improvements to pedestrian loading/unloading infrastructure at the Friday Harbor terminal as well as operational revisions to vehicle traffic and pedestrian pathways. WSF involvement should inform ferry operational requirements, including current and future capacity needs.

## **Long-Term: Support opportunities for future implementation of transportation strategies**

**Coordinate strategies with future capital projects:** Incorporate strategies to maximize vessel capacity and increase walk-on/roll-on ridership into future terminal projects like the Anacortes terminal rebuild and Friday Harbor pedestrian loading.

**Collaborate with transit partners and local agencies:** Seek and create opportunities to collaborate on planning studies and support grant applications and funding requests for transportation connections to Anacortes and island terminals. Potential partners for collaboration include the North Sound Transportation Alliance, Skagit Transit, San Juan Islands Visitor’s Bureau, and island communities, organizations, and businesses.

# **Appendix A Outreach and engagement summary**



# Anacortes to San Juan Islands Walk-on Ridership Maximization Study

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DECEMBER 2023

Appendix A

Outreach and Engagement Summary



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## Background

Washington State Ferries (WSF) Anacortes/San Juan Islands route provides much needed connection between the mainland and San Juan, Orcas, Shaw, and Lopez islands. The space for cars fills quickly, especially during the summer months, creating capacity challenges, but there is frequently plenty of room for more walk-on passengers. As the region continues to grow, demand for the Anacortes/San Juan Islands ferry route will increase.

The San Juan Islands Walk-On Passenger Ridership Maximization Study was directed by the Washington State Legislature to identify strategies that make it easier and encourage more people to walk on the ferries to and from the San Juan Islands. A key component of the study was community and stakeholder engagement centered around seeking input on barriers that prevent people from walking on/rolling on the ferry and strategies to encourage more riders to walk on/roll on the ferry.

## Overview

### Goals

WSF's goals for community engagement during the San Juan Islands Walk-On Passenger Ridership Maximization Study were to:

- Identify cost-effective strategies to maximize walk-on passenger ridership of the Anacortes – San Juan ferry routes.
- Engage with a wide range of riders who use and depend on the Anacortes – San Juan Island ferry routes, especially those who have been historically underserved.
- Provide multiple opportunities for public input; demonstrate how community input is considered and how it will influence final recommendations.
- Ensure public understanding of, and transparency around, the need for maximizing walk-on ferry ridership, and the challenges and constraints involved in making it easier to walk on the ferry.
- Engage with representatives from WSDOT/WSF staff, San Juan County Council, Anacortes and Anacortes/San Juan Islands Schedule Update Task Force, San Juan Economic Development Council, City of Anacortes, City of Friday Harbor, Skagit Transit, Skagit RTPO, Eastsound, Lopez Village and transit-dependent populations.

### Methods

WSF shared information about the study, gathered input on the barriers to walking on the ferry and sought feedback on potential strategies to increase walk-on ferry use the following ways:

- A three-week public online survey that launched on the same day as summer reservations (April 25, 2023) and garnered nearly 700 responses and over 330 written comments.
- Listening sessions with key stakeholders from 15 jurisdictions, agencies, and organizations to discuss the feasibility of potential strategies.

- Site visits and interviews with WSF vessel and terminal employees to identify challenges and solutions.
- Briefings and meetings with the San Juan County Council and the San Juan Island Ferry Advisory Committee to promote the online survey, share Study updates and discuss preliminary findings. The team also met with WSDOT’s Public Transportation Division to share information about the study and discuss engagement strategies for transit-dependent populations.



## Key themes

Input gathered during the community engagement process focused on the following categories:

- Barriers that prevent people from walking/rolling on the ferry.
- Individual strategies to encourage more riders to walk on/roll on the ferry.
- How strategies might be implemented.

## Barriers

The following themes emerged from survey results and other early engagement.

- **Lack of multimodal connections to departing terminal and from destination terminal:** Study participants frequently reported that they do not walk onto the ferry because of the lack of connections and poorly aligned schedules between the ferry and connecting modes of transportation, such as buses, shuttles and non-motorized options.
- **Difficult to transport baggage:** Participants traveling in both directions reported that they often need to transport items that are not easily carried by one person, including groceries, luggage for multiple day visits and/or recreational equipment.
- **Unreliable ferry service:** Participants said that the ferry service is unpredictable with frequent delays or canceled sailings. When this happens, many respondents said they prefer to have their vehicle to wait in (especially in the winter months when colder

weather necessitates waiting in terminals with limited amenities) or to leave if there is a long delay or cancellation.

- **Amount, location and cost of parking:** Parking challenges were more frequently identified by people starting their trip in Anacortes. Participants said parking in Anacortes is insufficient, is too expensive, and some lots are too far away from the terminal. Riders, especially those starting their trip in Anacortes, noted that bringing their vehicle on the ferry is cheaper than leaving it parked for multiple days.

## Suggested strategies

Study participants identified several strategies to encourage more riders to walk on/roll on the ferry:

- **Expand multimodal connectivity:** Many participants said multimodal connections, such as shuttle/bus services and expanded non-motorized facilities, should be a top priority, especially on the islands.
- **Develop affordable, long-term parking solutions:** Participants expressed interest in less expensive and secure parking options. They noted that in some instances, particularly in Anacortes, parking costs more than driving onto the ferry, suggesting if parking for an extended period was the lower cost option, people would be encouraged to walk on.
- **Create baggage support services:** Participants shared several ideas for supporting passengers with baggage including providing a safe holding area to drop off luggage near the terminal, providing carts for travelers to use, bag check service and improved ramps for getting items on and off the ferry.
- **Increase information related to parking and transportation options:** Many participants suggested that WSF should expand how information about transportation options is shared. Specific suggestions included developing an easily accessible digital package of transportation information for island visitors, promoting multimodal transportation options via the mobile app, providing enhanced signage in terminals and on boats and creating specific subscriber options for WSF rider alerts islanders and residents.
- **Improve terminal accessibility and waiting areas:** Many people expressed the need to improve accessibility at the terminals to make boarding and disembarking easier for people with mobility issues. Participants also expressed the desire for larger terminal waiting areas for walk-on passengers.

## Strategy considerations and implementation

During the listening sessions, participants shared their suggestions and priorities for strategy implementation.

- **Focus strategies on a subset of riders and the summer months:** Most participants suggested that strategies will be easier to implement and more effective if they are focused on a subset of riders, such as older residents and visitors or summer visitors. Participants also noted that strategies should be island-specific and prioritize locations/islands where existing connections are lacking.

- **Apply a holistic approach to strategies:** Participants stressed that a strategy will only be effective if it is implemented together with other strategies to solve several barriers. Participants encouraged WSF to prioritize cross-jurisdictional collaboration and partnership opportunities to accomplish a holistic approach.
- **Prioritize cross-jurisdictional collaboration and partnerships:** To accomplish a holistic approach, participants encouraged WSF to prioritize cross-jurisdictional collaboration and partnership opportunities. Specific suggestions for collaboration included:
  - Expanded multimodal trail connections in the City of Anacortes and on San Juan Island
  - Skagit Transit’s pilot program investigating micro transit options.
  - Partnerships with island venues and accommodations to offer shuttle operations for guests.
- **Improved information:** Participants highlighted the need for transit connection schedule and route information to be expanded, season-specific and regularly updated for consistency and accuracy.

## Survey summary

Early in the study, WSF hosted an online survey to gather input from Anacortes/San Juan Islands ferry route users. The online survey sought to:

- Understand how people use the Anacortes/San Juan Islands ferry routes.
- Gather information on users’ transportation needs and priorities.
- Determine the barriers that prevent people from walking on.
- Identify strategies to increase walk-on passenger ridership on the Anacortes/San Juan Islands ferry routes.

The survey was open from April 25 through May 16, 2023, and launched on the same day as summer reservations. WSF promoted the survey through rider alerts and reservation confirmation emails.

Nearly 700 people responded to the survey and provided over 330 comments. The following section presents key findings from the survey, including survey use and activity, the barriers preventing people from walking on and the strategies that would encourage more people to walk on.

## Survey results

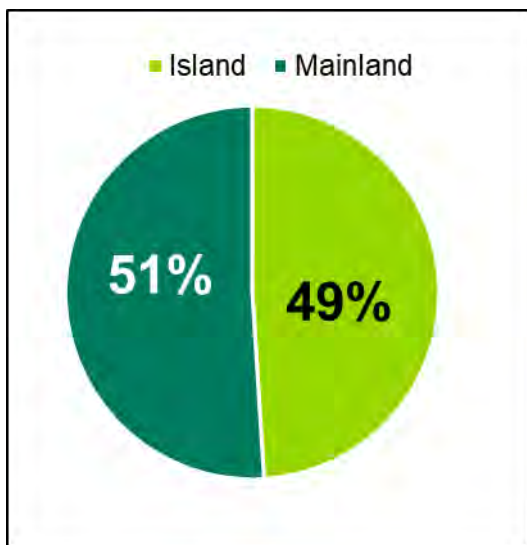
- **713 surveys** were submitted (690 unique respondents\*).

*\* The number of surveys and respondents is different because respondents starting in Anacortes were given the option to fill out the survey in response to their trips to more than one island.*

The distribution of typical travel direction and island origin/destination for all respondents is shown below:



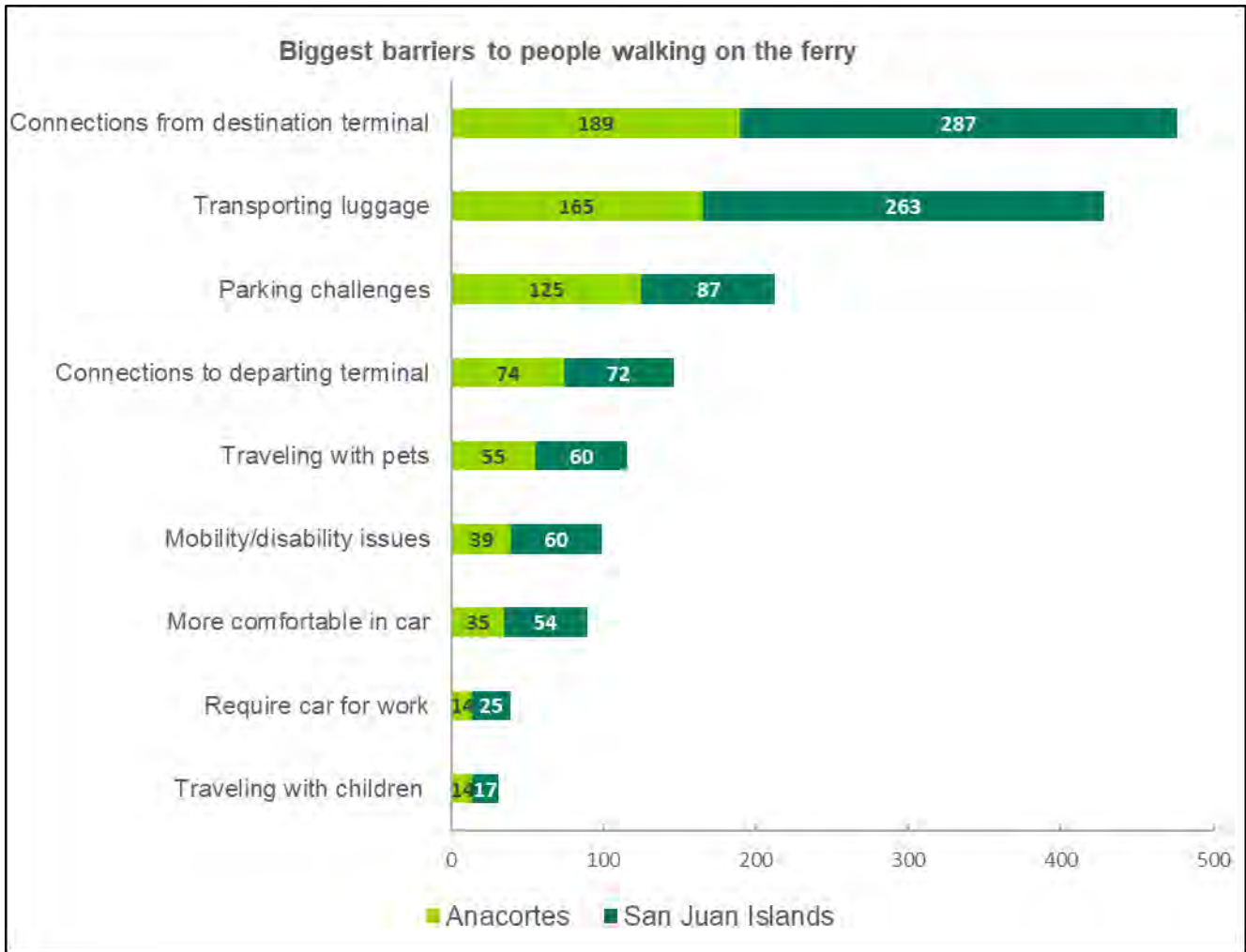
- **362 (51 percent) respondents begin their trip in Anacortes and go to:**
  - San Juan: 170 (47 percent)
  - Orcas: 97 (26 percent)
  - Lopez: 61 (17.1 percent)
  - Shaw: 34 (9.4 percent)
- **351 (49 percent) respondents begin their trip on one of the San Juan Islands:**
  - San Juan: 132 (37.6 percent)
  - Orcas: 120 (34.2 percent)
  - Lopez: 76 (21.7 percent)
  - Shaw: 23 (6.6 percent)



- **Most respondents are over the age of 54.** Over 50 percent of people who provided their age are over 54 years old, and 44 percent are over 64. This is consistent with current demographic data for the islands.

## Barriers

The survey results identified several common barriers that deter people from walking onto the ferry instead of driving. The following barriers are consistent for respondents regardless of where they start their trip (one of the San Juan Islands or Anacortes). They are based on responses to questions about why ferry users do not currently walk onto the ferry and what their luggage and cargo needs are when they ride the ferry, as well as responses provided in written comments. Some themes were more prominent for direction traveled and/or island. Those results are also noted below.



**Lack of multimodal connections to departing terminal and from destination terminal**

The most frequently reported reason respondents said they do not walk onto the ferry is the lack of connections and inconsistent schedule alignment between the ferry and connecting modes of transportation, such as buses, shuttles and non-motorized options. This applies to people traveling in both directions.

- Travel starting on one of the islands:** Respondents who start their trip on one of the islands said they typically go to the mainland to run errands or go to appointments. Respondents also noted they often need to travel to multiple destinations, sometimes in different cities. Many respondents said they need to get to places on the mainland that are outside of Skagit County, such as Everett, Seattle and SeaTac Airport. Many respondents mentioned existing transit options do not run frequently enough for their needs, are not aligned with the ferry schedules and/or do not connect directly to their destinations on the mainland. Respondents traveling from the islands were also more likely to find it challenging to connect from their homes to their island terminal.

  - “[...] There are very few ways for islanders to avoid the need for a vehicle to efficiently get to multiple destinations and also carry significant volume and weight of groceries, supplies, etc. back to the islands.”*

- “[...] *Skagit Transit requires a bus connection to get from the Anacortes ferry terminal to the hospital or medical services along Commercial Avenue [...] this would remarkably increase ridership on the ferry and the bus system, and the bus schedule should match with the ferry schedule when possible.*”
- **Travel starting in Anacortes:** For respondents starting their trip in Anacortes, the most commonly reported reason for not walking on the ferry is lack of connections to their destinations on the islands. Respondents said they need their vehicles to get around once they are on the islands. It was also noted that getting to Anacortes without a vehicle is difficult, and if riders need to drive their vehicle to Anacortes, it is easiest just to drive on the ferry.
  - *“The thing that is most missing is transportation on the islands once you get there”*
  - *“[The] most obvious [challenge] is connections to the San Juan Islands from Seattle. I’m not going to take 3 hours of buses and connections to get to Anacortes then to walk on. But if I could [get] from Seattle with my dog, plus some dog/bike shuttles on island we would never take the stressful drive to the Anacortes ferry again.”*

#### **Difficult to transport baggage:**

Participants traveling in both directions reported that they often need to transport items that are not easily carried by one person, including groceries, luggage for a multiple-day visit and/or recreational equipment. Respondents reported that it would be too difficult to carry their needed baggage on and off the ferry and wondered where they would store it while on the ferry. Many people also do not walk on the ferry because they travel with pets which are not allowed in passenger cabins.

- *“It's hard to carry [...] large things when you are a walk-on.”*
- *“Too difficult when you have to carry groceries or have any mobility impairment.”*
- *“Pets end up being the deal breaker to go car free.”*

#### **Unreliable ferry service:**

Respondents said that the ferry service is unpredictable with frequent delays or canceled sailings. This was noted by respondents traveling in both directions. When this happens, many respondents said they prefer to have their vehicle to wait in (especially in the winter months when terminal amenities are sparse) or to leave if there is a long delay or cancellation.

- *“The ferry system is very unpredictable (late ferries/canceled ferries due to low staff), so taking your own car is the only way to ensure your transportation. Buses and shared rides won't wait just because the ferry is late or canceled.”*

#### **Parking challenges and cost:**

Parking challenges were more frequently identified by people starting their trip in Anacortes. Respondents said there isn't enough parking in Anacortes, it's too expensive, and some is too far away from the terminal. Riders, especially those starting their trip in Anacortes, noted that bringing their vehicle on the ferry is cheaper than leaving it parked for multiple days. Others

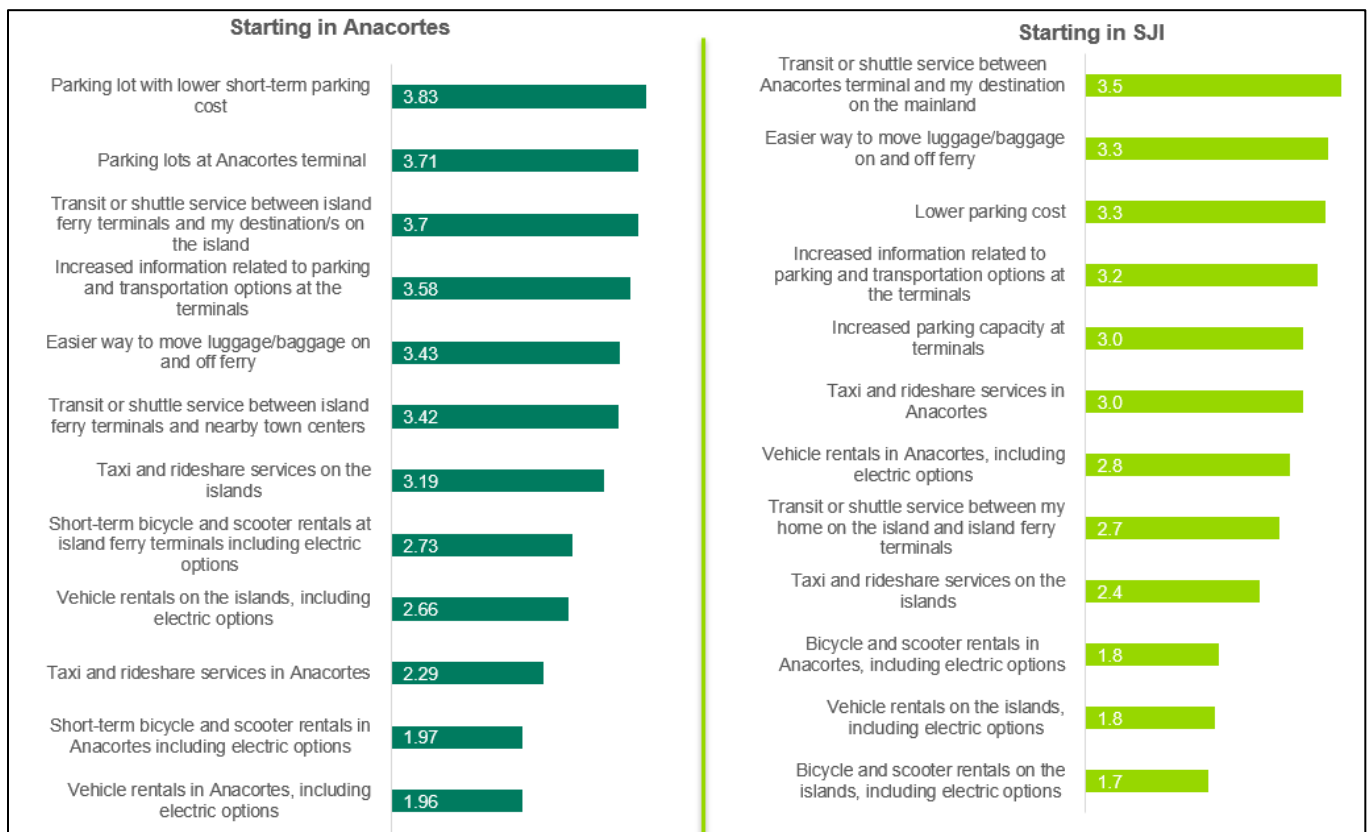
noted that getting to the terminal from the upper parking lot is difficult, especially if they have a lot of luggage.

- *“Effectively, WSF has made parking and walking on the most expensive way to come to the island.”*

### Strategies

The survey results revealed several strategies that would encourage people to walk onto the ferry instead of driving. The strategies described in this section are listed in order of importance and are based on the noted existing barriers (described above), how respondents currently walk onto the ferry, what strategies respondents would most likely use if it was available and information gathered from written comments. The strategies are similar for respondents regardless of where they start their trip. The strategies were sometimes more prominent for the direction traveled and/or island. Those distinctions are noted below.

In one survey question, respondents were asked how likely they would be to use the proposed strategies. They were prompted to rank their preferred strategies on a scale of 1 (very unlikely to use) to 5 (very likely to use). The results of that question are displayed below for each direction with their average score.



### Improve multimodal connectivity:

Respondents would be most likely to use a transit or shuttle service between the terminals and their destinations on the islands and the mainland and emphasized that timing needs to be synced with the ferry schedule. Respondents, particularly those traveling to Anacortes, also highlighted the need to expand non-motorized facilities for people walking, biking, or rolling.

- “[...] *Better timing coordination between the ferry schedule and other transportation options would provide more reliable and convenient travel connections for both residents and visitors.*”
- **Travel starting in Anacortes:** More than the other islands, respondents traveling to Orcas and San Juan Island expressed a desire for additional transportation options to connect to destinations on the islands. Respondents traveling to San Juan Island specifically highlighted the need for more frequent and reliable bus service.
  - *“Easier bus service routes”* (San Juan Island)
  - *“Shuttle to Grandmas Cove or other recreational spots with a pet and items for the day.”* (San Juan Island)
  - *“Need better transportation from ferry to destinations on Orcas.”*
  - *“Orcas is more spread out. It is harder to get to all the destinations by walking or public transit.”*
- **Travel starting on one of the islands:** Respondents highlighted the need for improved facilities for people walking and bicycling in Anacortes, including protected or dedicated lanes for non-motorized travelers.
- Participants cited safety concerns for walking or cycling from the Anacortes terminal. Many participants expressed support for the City of Anacortes to complete the Guemes Channel Trail to fully connect non-motorized travelers from the terminal to the center of Anacortes.
  - *“Need to prioritize the safety and accessibility of walking/bike traffic to and from terminals.”*
  - *“Ideally, I think there should be out-of-traffic bike/walking paths from downtown Anacortes to Ship Harbor.”*

#### **Develop affordable, secure long-term parking solutions:**

Survey respondents typically drive and park near the terminal when they walk on the ferry. Respondents traveling in both directions highlighted the need for more available, secure and affordable parking near the terminals.

- *“[...] Lower parking costs and an increase in available parking spaces would be highly beneficial, especially during peak seasons, ensuring that both residents and visitors have adequate parking options.”*
- *“Affordable, accessible parking in Anacortes is a must.”*
- *“[Lopez Terminal] lot is not safe to leave [a] car there.”*
- *“Damage and theft pretty much deter me from using the parking [at Anacortes], especially the upper lot.”*
- *“Better security [at Orcas] terminal parking.”*

#### **Create baggage support services:**

Participants traveling in both directions indicated they would be more likely to walk on the ferry if it was easier to move their belongings on and off the ferry, including from the parking

area, and if they had a place to store it onboard. Suggestions included providing a safe holding area to drop off luggage near the terminal, carts for travelers to use or a service for checking their baggage before boarding the ferry. Survey respondents also suggested that a luggage support service that connects to shuttle and transit services would be helpful.

- *"[...] Provide luggage hold area so people can drop off stuff and then go and park. A place for your stuff once you're on the ferry."*
- *"Having some form of cart to carry multiple bags and/or heavy things from where parked to Anacortes terminal --sometimes a long way depending on how full the lots are."*
- *"Canadian ferries have check baggage and baggage handling as an option. This is delivered to a convenient pick up."*
- *"Provide luggage hold area so people can drop off stuff and then go and park."*
- *"Perhaps a drop off station in Anacortes where large carts are available to load good[s] onto and a staging area in Friday Harbor to drive to once on [the] island to pick up goods."*

#### **Provide an indoor space for people traveling with pets:**

Respondents mentioned the need for an indoor space for people traveling with pets.

- *"An area on the passenger deck where leashed pets can be kept within your seating area could help..."*

#### **Increase online information related to parking and transportation options at ferry terminals:**

Respondents indicated that more information about parking and transportation options would be very useful and might encourage more walk-on riders.

- *"[...] Providing more information on the WSF site so that they can educate themselves on alternatives before making a reservation that might encourage them to walk on."*

#### **Make improvements to terminal waiting areas:**

Respondents highlighted the need for larger and improved terminal waiting areas for walk-on passengers when terminal buildings are replaced.

- *"Something to do at the terminals while waiting (gift shop, comfortable seating, short easy walking trails, nice little restaurant with good food)."*
- *"The terminal at Anacortes is a dump! Disgusting, cold, impossible to use in bad weather."*
- *"The terminals for waiting at both Anacortes [and Orcas] are small, decrepit, disgusting and not a place I care to wait. Make it nice and I'll change."*
- *"Improve waiting areas on San Juan Island and Anacortes; add some outdoor covered areas (San Juan has a small, covered area that could be expanded)."*
- *"Covered waiting area and better signage for walk-on passengers."*

## Key stakeholder meetings and discussions summary

In March 2023, the study team conducted site visits with WSF vessel captains, vessel deckhands, terminal staff and business owners on San Juan and Orcas Island to identify and understand observed challenges and opportunities of walk-on ridership.

These discussions centered around:

- Identifying opportunities or challenges to increasing walk-on ridership.
- Understanding the typical walk-on passengers.
- Understanding how peak ridership should factor into the evaluation of strategies.
- Exploring how differences in ridership, on-time performance and operations at each island could impact the feasibility of potential strategies.
- Evaluating possible multimodal traffic challenges around the island terminals during vessel loading/unloading that could impact the feasibility of strategies.
- Identifying other stakeholders WSF should engage with.

In April and May 2023, the project team attended existing meetings to engage with San Juan County Council and San Juan Island Ferry Advisory Committee to share information about the study and promote the online survey. The team also met with WSDOT's Public Transportation Division to share information about the study and discuss how to engage transit-dependent populations.

## Key themes

- **Balance walk-on and bike passenger needs with operational considerations:** Crew noted space constraints at the front of the vessel where walk-on passengers queue between vehicles to unload at the islands, and discussed the tradeoff of creating more space and wider walkways is to reduce the vehicle capacity of the vessel.
- **Consider terminal space needs of strategies:** Terminal staff discussed the limited pedestrian and curb space at terminals, the need to minimize pedestrian/vehicle traffic conflicts, and specific challenges for pedestrians at each terminal.

## Listening sessions summary

WSF conducted five listening sessions from July to October with key stakeholder groups. Each session was tailored to the stakeholder group, taking into consideration their familiarity with the study and the interests they represent.

During the sessions, the project team:

- Provided information about the study.
- Shared WSF's approach to community engagement and what was heard in the survey.
- Gathered input on the preliminary list of strategies and evaluation criteria.

On November 7, 2023, WSF shared the draft study with listening session invitees and Schedule Update Task Force Committee members for review and comment. The comment period was open until November 21. During the comment period, on November 8, 2023, WSF



hosted an online meeting for listening session invitees to share comments and ask questions about the draft study. On November 15, 2023, WSF joined the Schedule Task Force Committee meeting to gather feedback on the draft report.

Listening session invitees were also able to share comments via email.

20 people attended the online meeting. 50 comments were received total from the meeting and via email. Applicable comments were incorporated in the final report.

Listening session participants represented over 15 jurisdictions, agencies, businesses and organizations, including:

Listening session group	Participant affiliation
Mainland planning and transportation service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Anacortes</li> <li>• Anacortes Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Anacortes Ferry Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Skagit Transit</li> <li>• Whatcom Council of Governments</li> </ul>
San Juan County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• San Juan County staff</li> </ul>
Government/Advisory bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• San Juan County Council members</li> <li>• City of Anacortes</li> </ul>
Visitor Destinations/ Attractions & Retail/Service Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friday Harbor businesses</li> <li>• San Juan Island Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Orcas Island Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• San Juan Islands Visitor Bureau</li> </ul>
Anacortes/San Juan Islands Schedule Update Task Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anacortes and San Juan Islands Ferry Advisory Committee members</li> <li>• Lopez, Shaw, Orcas and San Juan Island residents</li> <li>• San Juan Visitors Bureau</li> <li>• Transit Dependent Communities (all members of SJI Committee)</li> <li>• Island residents</li> <li>• Medical representative</li> <li>• School District representative</li> <li>• Island Business Owners</li> </ul>

## Key themes

Several key themes emerged during the listening sessions around specific strategies and considerations as outlined below.

### Multimodal connections on the islands:

Participants cautioned that there is no means to get around the islands if people were to walk onto the ferry, stressing the need to prioritize multimodal connections on the islands. Specific strategies and considerations expressed included:

- Consider the micro-transit model to provide on-demand shuttle service to avoid the challenge of syncing transit and ferry schedules.

- Prioritize connections that consider island residents with mobility issues to help them get to appointments on the mainland without needing their own cars.
- Expand the trail network for people walking and biking.
- Improve connections on the islands to increase car capacity for residents of the island who require vehicles on the mainland for making multiple trips that cannot be easily connected by public transportation options.

**Accessibility at terminals:**

Many people expressed the need to improve accessibility at the terminals to make boarding and deboarding easier for people with mobility issues or those traveling with a lot of luggage. Specific strategies and considerations expressed included:

- Improve ramps on and off the boats for people with mobility issues.
- Consider mobility issues for strategies like shuttles and luggage service.

**Affordable and secure parking:**

Participants suggested lower parking costs and improved security in parking lots would encourage more walk-ons. Specific strategies and considerations expressed included:

- Parking improvements should focus on the Anacortes Terminal. The 2018 San Juan Island Tourism Study identified that 50 percent of travelers coming from the mainland are friends/family of island residents, so they will have someone to pick them up and get around once on the island.
- In some instances, particularly in Anacortes, parking costs more than driving onto the ferry, suggesting if parking for an extended period was the lower cost option, people would be encouraged to walk on.

**Improved information:**

Many participants suggested that WSF should expand how information about transportation options is shared. Participants encouraged WSF to regularly update schedule and route information for consistency and accuracy and to be season specific. Specific strategies and considerations expressed included:

- Develop an easily accessible digital package of transportation information for island visitors.
- Promote multimodal transportation options via the mobile app and with onsite signage at terminals and on boats.
- Develop wayfinding signage along existing multimodal connections.
- Create specific subscriber options for WSF rider alerts for islanders and residents.

**Focused strategies:**

Most participants suggested that strategies will be easier to implement and more effective if they are focused on a subset of riders. Participants also noted that strategies should be island- and season-specific. Specific strategies and considerations expressed included:

- Target tourists/visitors on the islands. WSF may find the most effective outcomes by narrowing in on this subset.

- Consider strategies that will target the growing population of senior citizens on islands whose ability to get around without a car is hindered.
- Focus strategies on the summer months when islands are most inundated with visitors and the ferry reservation system is most at capacity.

**Holistic approach:**

Participants stressed that WSF must take a holistic approach to solving barriers, cautioning that a strategy will only be effective if it is implemented together with other strategies to solve several barriers. Specific strategies and considerations expressed included:

- As more multimodal transportation options are implemented, information needs to be updated and distributed to inform people of their options.
- Connections and other strategies will only work if people are able to physically get on and off the ferries. Luggage and accessibility support will need to be offered in conjunction with better connections.

**Cross-jurisdictional collaboration:**

To accomplish a holistic approach, participants encouraged WSF to prioritize cross-jurisdictional collaboration and partnership opportunities. Specific strategies and considerations expressed included:

- Collaborate with leaders to create a well-developed plan for the State Legislature that demonstrates cross-jurisdictional support and buy-in.
- Identify shared funding opportunities to expand multimodal trail connections in the City of Anacortes and on San Juan Island.
- Engage with Skagit Transit Skagit Transit’s pilot program investigating micro transit options.
- Identify partnership opportunities with accommodations and venues on the islands to implement shuttle services for their visitors.
- Prioritize support opportunities for transportation strategies in San Juan County where there is no RTPO.