

**Washington State Ferries  
Long Range Plan Policy Advisory Group Meeting #4  
March 15, 2018  
Century Square | 1501 Fourth Avenue, Seattle  
Alki Conference Room  
12:30 – 2:30 p.m.**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Welcome**

Stephanie Cirkovich, Washington State Ferries (WSF) Community Services and Planning Director, facilitated introductions and welcomed the group to the fourth WSF 2040 Long Range Plan Policy Advisory Group (PAG) meeting.

Laura LaBissoniere Miller, meeting facilitator, reviewed the meeting agenda and objectives, which included previewing upcoming public open house materials, learning about and providing input on key plan elements, and viewing updated ridership forecast results.

**Open House Preview**

Hadley Rodero, WSF Strategic Communications Manager, gave an overview of the spring open houses, including open house goals, format, and materials. Hadley also reviewed the notification plan and poster and encouraged PAG members to help spread the word to their stakeholder groups. The team provided hard copies of the poster for PAG members to distribute and sent an electronic version following the meeting.

PAG members provided the following feedback on the open house plan and next round of open houses.

Walt Elliott, Kingston FAC, suggested advertising open houses on the display screens on. Hadley added WSF will also share open house materials aboard ferries as the team commutes to the open houses.

Jim Corenman, San Juan County FAC, proposed extending the length of the open house in Friday Harbor so more residents could attend. Hadley responded WSF scheduled the open houses based on FAC feedback and is holding an online open house in addition to the in-person open houses to encourage participation.

**Small Group Discussions**

Laura provided a brief introduction and overview of the small group activity. Participants will learn about and discuss key plan elements, including ferry service, vessels, terminals, and level of service (LOS) standards and performance metrics. The goal of the exercise was to gather input on key plan elements and help inform plan development and open house materials.

Ray Deardorf, WSF Senior Planning Manager gave an overview of ferry service and Stephanie facilitated the discussion. The group provided the following input on their key priorities and concerns as WSF plans



to accommodate growing ridership, considering how future technology could improve the ferry system, and what external constraints may affect WSF's ability to accommodate growth.

PAG members identified the following as their top priorities and concerns:

- Service and lack of capacity
  - Additional vanpool or connection service
  - More frequent sailings – need more slips at toll booths
  - Demand is not being met most times of the year
  - Alaskan Way is constrained
  - Consider route-by-route needs
  - Coordinate with transit
  - Provide more parking at mainland terminals
- Reservations
  - Consider priority loading instead of reservations
  - Commercial reservations are important
- New fare collection system
  - Automated fare collection/measure by foot
  - Pay by phone
  - Integrate other payment
- Improve technology
  - Better real time information
  - On-time email alerts
  - Capture data and identify WSF riders

Andy Bennett, KPFF, gave an overview of how the plan will evaluate terminals and Laura facilitated the discussion. The group was asked to identify their key interests and concerns for the terminal(s) in their community, including potential changes to the way customers access ferry terminals and considerations for people who have disabilities, are bicyclists, or are walk-on customers.

Key interests and concerns for terminals included:

- Focus on user experience:
  - Design terminals as community gathering spaces. The groups suggested working with local jurisdictions to encourage land use policy that promotes transit oriented development and leads to partnerships with developers and businesses to include housing, amenities, and restaurants. The group encouraged WSF to look to BC Ferries and the Bremerton terminal as examples of terminals that include such amenities.
  - Consider terminals and ferries as a destination and focus on improving customer experience. One idea for amenities was providing carts for passengers to carry heavy loads.
- Address disconnect between WSF and WSDOT to provide seamless door-to-door connections.
  - Work with WSDOT to ease congestion near terminals.
  - Partner with transit organizations to improve access to transit.
- Terminal access
  - Provide transit drop off space.
  - Consider needs of people with disabilities in terminal design.
  - Provide bicycle access and amenities.
  - Include overhead passenger loading for walk-on passengers.
  - Include rideshare hubs at terminals.
- Accommodating growth



- Provide multiple slips at each terminal, especially Fauntleroy and San Juan Island.
- Consider unique needs of rural vs. urban terminals. Terminals in rural communities need to accommodate vehicles while more urban terminals should focus on passenger access.
- Provide additional parking at terminals, including overnight parking.
- Use reservations to reduce queue length.
- Incentivize better use of space.
- Structure fare collection based on vehicle length.
- Technology
  - Use automatic car loading to reduce staffing.
  - Automate ticketing to improve efficiency of loading.
  - Think proactively about effects of electric and autonomous vehicles.
  - Passenger data would benefit tourism business and local jurisdictions planning efforts.
- Explore public private partnerships to fund:
  - Terminal improvements
  - Amenities
  - Development
- Seismic improvements
  - Plan for resiliency and redundancy at terminals to prepare for emergency events.
  - Consider recommendations from Cascadia Rising.

Mike Anderson, KPFF, gave an overview of how the plan will evaluate vessels and Hadley facilitated the discussion. The group was asked to think about what priorities WSF should consider when looking at the ferry fleet over the next 20 years, including investments in maintenance and new vessels.

Some of the key considerations and priorities discussed were:

- Vessel design
  - Stress the urgency of this issue
    - Vessels are needed now, don't spend time on "frills"
    - Standardize vessel design to save money
  - More mid-size vessels that fit most terminals
  - Modify Build in WA to require local shipyards to present competitive bids
  - Consider variants on 144 design
- Seismic resiliency is important
- Maintenance
  - Lease vessels to fill in when needed
  - Do maintenance at night
  - Preserve existing boats and system functionality
  - Reliability should be highest priority
- Amenities
  - Make ferries more of a dining destination
  - Look at airport amenities and BC Ferries for how to improve amenities/comfort
  - Add flexible use amenities such as flip-out bike racks

Kristen Kissinger, KPFF, gave an overview of level of service (LOS) and performance and Carmen Bendixen, WSF Senior Transportation Planner, facilitated the discussion. The group was asked to identify key priorities for measuring performance and level of service standards.

Important considerations and factors discussed were:

- Adjust fare structure to manage demand
- Develop a toolkit for management strategies



- Use data to inform decision making
  - What do we need to inform operational decisions?
  - Measuring peak time is not an accurate measurement
  - Utilize partnerships to share data
- Measure on-time performance
  - Evaluate on-time performance in relationship to user experience
  - Use technology to measure wait time
  - Wait times need to be measured
- Consider one-way trip vs. two-way trip and relationship on LOS calculations
- Measure un-met demand (those trips that are lost online because reservations were full)
  - Add “my time is not available” button for reservations
- Add passengers to LOS standard
- Consider deferred maintenance

See Appendix A: Flip Chart Photos for all of the flip chart notes taken during the meeting.

## Debrief

Ray asked if anyone had feedback on the small group discussion.

- Tom Thiersch, Port Townsend FAC, said it would help to have two separate rooms to reduce noise levels.
- Blake Trask, Cascade Bicycle Club, said it would have been great to have more directed questions to prompt discussion.
- Geri Poor, Port of Seattle, said providing questions in advance would help PAG members prepare for the conversations.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

Ray reviewed next steps and timeline. The next PAG meeting is scheduled for May 17. Agenda topics will include reviewing open house comments and previewing the legislative progress report. The project team thanked the group for their time and contributions to the discussion. The group adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

## Attendance:

### Meeting Attendees:

- Demi Allen, Squeaky Wheels
- Jim Corenman, San Juan County FAC
- Walt Elliott, Kingston FAC
- Andrew Hamilton, Southworth FAC
- Deborah Hopkins Buchanan, San Juan Islands Visitor's Bureau
- Josephine Jefferson, Swinomish Tribal Community
- Jill Lazo, U.S. Coast Guard
- Paul Parker, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Geri Poor, Port of Seattle
- Tom Thiersch, Port Townsend FAC
- Blake Trask, Cascade Bicycle Club

### Participating by phone:

- Chris Herman, Washington Ports



Project Team:

- Carmen Bendixen, Washington State Ferries
- Stephanie Cirkovich, Washington State Ferries
- Ray Deardorf, Washington State Ferries
- Colin McCann, Washington State Ferries
- Charles Prestrud, Washington State Ferries
- Hadley Rodero, Washington State Ferries
- John Vezina, Washington State Ferries
- Mike Anderson, KPFF
- Andy Bennett, KPFF
- Kristen Kissinger, KPFF
- Laura LaBissoniere Miller, PRR
- Samantha DeMars-Hanson, PRR



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## **Appendix A: Flip Chart Images**



Level of Service Standard and Performance Measures

Perf. Measures

- Fares as a tool for Demand Management
- Not an accurate measure (peak)
- toolkit for management strategies
- what is the data we have? How to use it
  - what do we need to inform op. decisions
- one-way trip vs. two way and its relationship on LOS calc.
- How to measure un-met demand (lost online b/c RSVPs FULL) - existing capabilities of website tracking
- Add Passengers To LOS Standard
- "my time is not available" button for RSVPs
- RSVP's as a limitation on flexibility
- How long is your wait?

\*Q: details of length of trip & relationship to LOS

• reliability vs capacity metric & how its communicated

• partnership in sharing data

• easy to get on



\* % boat full does not measure  
customer experience (wait time)  
— technology to support

\* lost user

\* deferred maintenance

\* vessel <sup>Deficiencies</sup> ~~maintenance~~ instances  
as a metric

\* marine casualties  
(engine failure / propulsion loss, etc)

\* on-time performance vs. user  
experience

→ difference by route

→ capacity lost

→ range

→ arrival



Terminals

Terminals - PAG

Disconnect between WSF + WSDOT  
congestion around terminals

Beyond toll booth

Fauntleroy - More slips for dual slips  
Overnight parking

Bidshare ~~is~~ hubs at terminals  
Terminal reliability/redundancy

Two slips should be mandatory

reservations to reduce queue

Automated ticket booth

↳ consider fare + counting

Document procedures for loading



Terminal restaurants → revenue  
retail, toilets  
\$ carts to help people carry  
heavy loads

transit drop off

mobility/accessibility

Bike access →

Overhead loading for walk-ons

automate car loading to reduce  
staffing.

Public Private Partnership

- terminal improvements
- amenities
- development

WSP-Traffic mgmt.  
dedicated parking



# Tribal Partners

to help people use  
 the system  
 Overhead loading  
 automatic or leading to reduce  
 crossing  
 Public-Private Partnership  
 National Transportation  
 Security Administration  
 Department of Transportation



# Terminals

PAG

User experience - seems like its  
not focus

terminals are places

↳ placemaking

↳ restaurants

↓ Bremerton example. Attractive place.

Think about new tech. land use

terminal as community focal point

↳ ferries

Bainbridge → people go to experience  
ferry.

more slips in San Juan's capacity  
rider ship growing



Oper. slip used for maint.

Seismic - will plan  
recommend seismic upgrades.

Cascadia rising should recommend  
terminal's seismic improvements.

Fare collection - vehicle length (tech)  
↳ more equitable

How will you determine likely  
impact of autonomous vehicles?  
urban vs. rural

terminal data - Sft wants to  
know who is using ferry

Calacing - Incentive better use of space  
ferry → one space + parking for rare  
events





Service

SERVICE

HIGHWAY SYSTEM NO LOADS  
CAN MEET PEAK, WHY  
SHOULDN'T WSF FOLLOW SUIT

BACKLOG - LACK OF CAPACITY

PASS-ONLY-  
LOCAL? WSF?  
COMB? DEMAND NOT BEING MET, MORE  
TIMES OF THE YEAR

WAIT TIMES NEED TO BE MEASURED

COMMERCIALS - DELAYS

PARTNERSHIPS- LACK OF METRICS FOR WAIT TIMES

FRONTLOADING TERMINAL  
S'WORTH GROWTH

RESERVATIONS

- COMMERCIAL IS IMPORTANT
- PRIORITY LOADING INSTEAD?

PAYMENT BY PHONE, REAL TIME INFO  
BETTER REAL TIME INFO  
DELAYED EMAIL ALERTS

ADDITIONAL  
CONTROL ON  
CONNECTING  
SERVICES

TECH SOLUTIONS

LARGER BOAT NEED URBAN TERMINAL  
CONSTRAINED ALASKAN WAY  
PEAK HOUR FARES AN ECONOMIC ISSUE

COMMUTERS CAN'T SHIFT HOUR  
MORE PARKING ON MAINLAND TERMINALS



WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES?

CURRENTLY - VEHICLES CONSTRAINED

FUTURE - PASSENGER CONSTRAINT

COORDINATE W/ TRANSIT

MORE CAPACITY

GOALS OF RESERVATIONS

PUT RESERVATIONS ON GD/HING -

PRE DESIGN STUDY COMPLETION 2010

WHAT DID RES DO FOR  
ANAC + P.T.?

CAPTURING DATA (LISA'S ANALYSIS)

WHO ARE OUR RIDERS?

AUTOMATED FARE COLLECTION / MEASURING BY FOOT

NEW FARE COLLECTION SYSTEM

INTEGRATE OTHER PAYMENT

SAV TRAVEL -

NOT REALISTIC NOT TO HAVE CARS

SURROUNDING COUNTRIES RURAL TOO

2 SEASON SCHEDULE BUT ~~FOR~~ FOR TRANSIT

MORE FREQUENT SAILINGS - NEED MORE SLIPS & TOLL DESIGN

"ON THE SHALF" BREAKDOWN SCHEDULE FOR S.J.'s

SMART PHONE TECH AT TERMINALS

WHAT WILL WORK WELL VARIES BY ROUTE  
PLAN NEEDS TO CUSTOMIZE BY ROUTE



Vessels

# Vessels

- Standardizing to save \$\$
- flexible use - like flip out bike racks
- Why should vessels be a topic for Public involvement?

Consider variants on 144 design



- Urgency → Need new vessels now / Don't spend time on "frills"
- Reliability should be highest
- Priority: Moving people
- Preserve existing <sup>System functionality</sup> boats
- Seismic resiliency
- Customer want ADS / Don't care about new technology
- More mid size vessels that fit most terminals



- Be clear about Correlation of Maintenance w/ reliability
- Lease vessels to fill in
- LRP should brainstorm "What if" → Should we consider other rates?
- Do Maintenance @ Night
- Make ferries more of a dining destination



- Look @ BC Ferries
  - 'Salish'
  - Dog walk
  - Business Class
- Look at airport amenities (nursing areas, etc)
- Modify Build in WA to require local shipyards to present competitive bids
- Consider variants on 144 design



Washington State Ferries



## **Appendix B: FAC Meeting 4 Input**

## WAS Long Range Planning Team

At the Policy and Technical Advisory Group Meetings #4 on March 15, 2018 participants were asked for considerations that should be included in planning for Performance Metrics and Service Standards; Terminals; Ferry Service and Vessels.

The Executive Council of Ferry Advisory Committees have reviewed this combined and below is our official input on the considerations developed at the meeting. This list is in addition to our input sent in at the beginning of the process and does not include input that individual FACs may have that is specific to their individual routes.

### **Performance Metrics and Level of Service Standards**

#### **High Priority**

- LOS standards are needed that measure rider wait times and the number of riders who decide use alternate transportation because of the wait on a route (e.g. drive around). Boat waits should be measured as well as how many potential riders decide not to ride the ferry because of the wait.
- Current % of "full" boats doesn't work – if only 1 space is empty, the boat isn't technically "full". Doesn't measure actual utilization of fleet. The percent boat full measures a different aspect of ferry decision making that boat waits.
- Consider technology that accurately measures wait times and systems to make that and sailing times available to rides.
- There should be a measure of the number of vehicles who don't travel because reservations are full for the time that they need to travel. Consider button on the reservations web page, those who go then leave the website without making a reservation, questions in the FROG survey
- There needs to be a metric that tracks/projects deferred maintenance and its impact on service reliability. This should include tracking marine casualties (engine failure/propulsion loss, etc.) The on-time performance and percent sailings metrics does not do not appear to equate to user experience. There needs to be a metric that measures, by route, the service capacity lost. Current averages don't reflect the experience of routes at the extremes.
- Peak pricing as a demand management strategy should be re-evaluated.
- Adaptive management LOS doesn't look at how the "peak traffic is spread over the day and over the month. There also needs to be a way of measuring those who's travel is limited to the peaks e.g. commuters (w/o Transit) and commercial riders.
- LOS standards need separate consideration where service is linked with provisions of the Growth Management Act. Island County- standards affect business
- Legislative reporting of performance metrics should be by route to highlight issues. Otherwise there should be a comment that addressed route variances.

#### **Medium priority**

- To assess performance metrics, we should look at what data's already being collected and what metrics are needed for decisions.
- There needs to be a LOS standard for walk on passengers for those routes with significant numbers of walk-on riders.
- There needs measure service availability to freight/commercial traffic
- There is a lack of data that measures the availability and reliability of ferry/transit connections. Inter-Modal data should be tracked by route to assess transit availability, this includes how on time performance and off-load time impacts transit connections. This is part of the "door to door"

planning approach.

- Measure is needed of the efficacy of partnerships with other agencies e.g. transit,
- Opportunities for data collection to inform decision making
- Measures are needed that assess the effect of overloading on roadways and congestion. This includes wait times, back-ups, and time to clear overloads

### **Low priority**

- Demand management implementation should be derived from data. The assumptions on peak demand times does not apply to many routes.
- Passenger/bike capacity and utilization metrics should be tracked

## **Terminals**

### **High Priority**

- WSF and WSDOT should have an integrated plan to address ferry traffic congestion around terminals where expanded capacity is needed. Both vehicle and passenger, the adequacy of terminals to handle it needs to also be evaluated.
- Reservations should be planned to reduce backups and queues at terminals
- Planning should look into expanding overhead loading at terminals without it
- Edmonds-Kingston terminal upgrade/replacement needs to be addressed due to combined effects of traffic, parking needs, and Edmonds intersections.
- Mukilteo parking needs to be addressed along with the lack of access to regional transit
- Fauntleroy is too small and restricted to handle ferry traffic. Solutions need to be considered
- Look at ways to eliminate delays from processing cars at toll booths. Drive thru systems that count passengers may be a possibility
- The use of automated ticket booths should be looked into to improve efficiency. Systems should be considered for measuring vehicle length to enable implementation of more specific length based fares. Automation for holding lot traffic e.g. light systems should be looked into.
- At most terminals integration of Bus access needs to be better as well as kiss and ride
- Shelter comfort, bike parking and bike wayfinding should be addressed.
- Consider the impact of real estate development at terminal (Bremerton, Bainbridge, Mukilteo)
- Seismic considerations should include a priority for completion where ferries are the only transportation link other than air/bridge.
- Consider real time info sharing with transit systems and related signs to improve efficiency of connections.
- Planning should include the availability of parking including overnight parking at all terminals
- Planning should address the growth of Rideshare and Carshare programs at terminals
- Planning should consider where single slip terminals can be expanded to two slips for redundancy. Where there is a single slip terminal planning should address having redundancy in the systems that handle vessel and cars

### **Medium priority**

- There should be a plan to upgrade the quality and capacity of terminal facilities at older terminals. This includes accessibility, toilet facilities and waiting areas.
- Planning should look into public private partnerships for amenities such as restaurants, and retail
- Planning should look at improving bicycle access so as to minimize mutual interference with vehicles
- Planning should consider how autonomous vehicles would be loaded/unloaded. Charging stations for EVs at terminals may be needed. There appears to be lack of a plan for emergencies

particularly those with only one ramp.

- Freight growth needs be assessed and factored into planning.
- Terminal information systems should enable riders to decide which ferry to take.
- Consider electric vehicle charging near terminals
- Consider overhead passenger load at all terminals

### **Low Priority**

- Consider the future handling of autonomous vehicles

## **Ferry Service**

### **High Priority**

- WSF needs to resume expanding the reservations system starting with commercial reservations.
- Planning should focus on, leading demand growth.
- The impact of overloading (wait times) on commercial traffic needs to be measured.
- Consideration should be given for WSDOT to take role in increasing Vanpool availability for cross Sound traffic
- Demand management strategies need to address the impact that they may have on local economies, commercial users and workers who cannot change travel times. Data in who are WSF riders and how various groups may be impacted should be used in considering strategies. Strategies for urban and rural routes need to be separately evaluated and considered
- Continue to improve/develop real-time service info for riders that is integrated with transit information
- Need to have better and real time coordination with transit partners with complex schedules
- Need economic impact studies of what happens if service/fares is reduced/increased

### **Medium Priority**

- Increasing incentives and efficiencies for high vehicle occupancy

### **Low Priority**

- Improvement is needed in the timeliness and accuracy of ferry loading information.

## **Vessels**

### **High Priority**

- The current fleet age and need for replacement at 60 years should be the top priority in planning vessel acquisition. 60 year standard should be reevaluated in light of operational experience. Where 60 year life span is used evaluate maintenance funding to ensure vessels reach 60 years and strategies if that funding isn't available
- Maintenance funding and optimum fleet size needed to ensure service reliability should be analyzed and addressed in the plan. This may include extending the life spans of existing boats.
- Customers are satisfied with current vessels so technology change considerations should be secondary to sustaining reliable basic service.
- Planning should consider the long term financial savings, operational flexibility, safety and other benefits of a fleet of standardized boats that fit most terminals. e.g. continuing 144 car ferry production or variant thereof. There should be an evaluation of benefits of standardization to provide more flexibility, reliability, and maintenance availability. Determine optimum size ferry
- The plan should address the backlog of overdue maintenance over the planning period and its correlation with service reliability.
- Consideration should be given to relaxing build-in-WA requirements and other constraints to enable a building schedule that matches the need for boat replacements and keeps costs within national norms. Allowing bidding from outside of state would provide competition to current near-monopoly situation, use of yards with more capacity, and would allow federal grant \$ to be used

to build boats

- Economic impact study of what impacts are when ferry service is reduced (due to break downs)
- Consider a state-owned drydock (with incentives for private industry to do this for the State)

### **Medium Priority**

- Consider smaller vessels to enable more frequent service (e.g. replacing two 200 car ferries with three smaller ferries.
- Provide wi-fi on all vessels
- Consider total impact of new technology such as electric ferries (i.e. if they're slower, are more cars idling and waiting in the queue, lower or greater maintenance costs)