



**Washington State Ferries  
Long Range Plan Policy Advisory Group Meeting #2  
September 21, 2017  
Century Square Building | 1501 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, Seattle  
Alki Room  
12:30 – 2:30 p.m.**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Welcome**

Stephanie Cirkovich, Washington State Ferries (WSF) Community Services and Planning Director, welcomed the group to the second WSF 2040 Long Range Plan Policy Advisory Group (PAG) meeting. Stephanie facilitated introductions and thanked the group for participating in the PAG and announced WSF is in the process of hiring a consultant to develop the Long Range Plan; a detailed work plan will be shared at the next PAG meeting.

Laura LaBissoniere Miller, facilitator, reviewed the meeting agenda and objectives, which included confirming roles and responsibilities, providing background data on WSF existing conditions, and evaluating WSF strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Laura reviewed roles and responsibilities for the PAG and the WSF project team. PAG members received a copy of the Policy, Executive, and Technical Advisory Group rosters in their packets. Based on feedback at the first advisory group meetings, WSF invited more freight and business representatives to participate in the PAG. The role of the PAG is to provide strategic advice on how to prioritize needs; represent group's or communities' interests and concerns; help disseminate plan updates and public involvement opportunities to key audiences; review and provide feedback on draft plan elements; collaboratively engage with other PAG members; and assist in building and maintaining support for the plan.

The WSF project team will provide background materials, data, and public input; respond to questions and requests quickly and thoroughly; attend PAG meetings to answer questions and inform discussion; consider and address PAG input when developing the plan; and report back to PAG members on how the project team considered and addressed input in the final plan. PAG members did not provide any questions or comments on the roles and responsibilities.

**Existing Conditions**

Ray Deardorf, WSF Senior Planning Manager, presented existing conditions of the ferry system, including the fleet and terminals, and reviewed 2013 origin and destination survey data.

The group provided the following feedback on the state of the terminals:

- Walt Elliott, Kingston FAC, suggested that WSF apply for federal grants dedicated to projects that improve seismic vulnerability.
- Niles Seifert, U.S. Coast Guard, asked if the seismic analysis considered use of Washington State Ferries' terminals for military or other ships in an emergency event. Military ships could be

used for a variety of purposes during an emergency, and damaged terminals may be usable for different types of vessels.

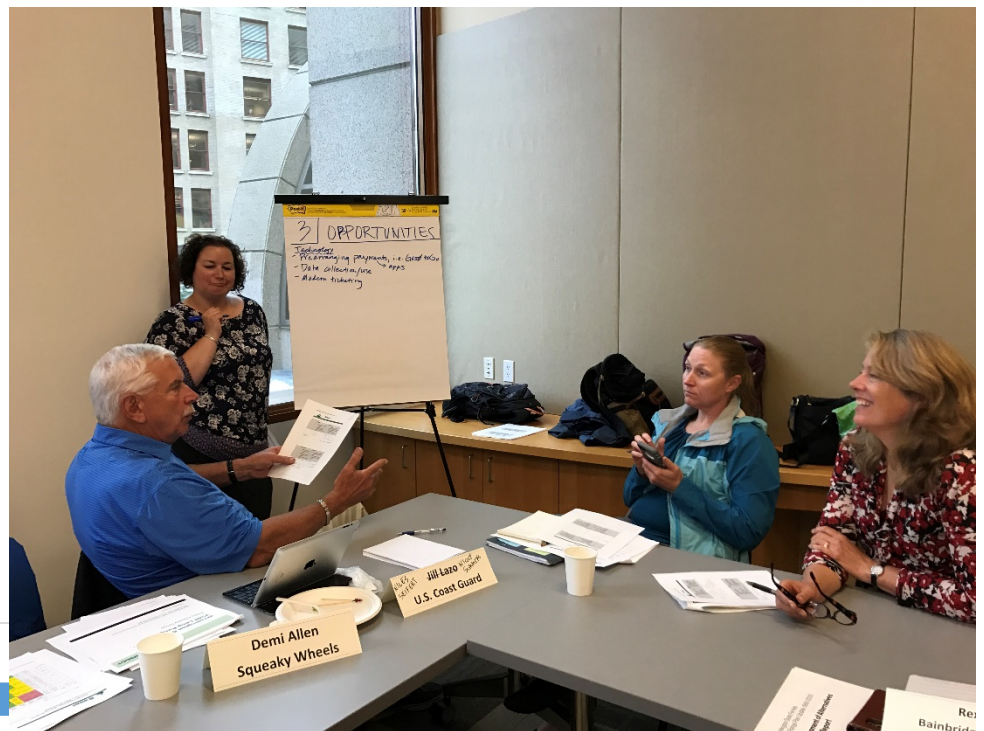
PAG members shared the following input on origin and destination survey results:

- Blake Trask, Cascade Bicycle Club, asked if WSF applies for federal funding reserved for projects that promote transit access. This 2011 legislation provides funding for projects near transit; within one mile for walking and three miles for biking.
  - Ray responded yes, the Mukilteo Multimodal project is an example of a project with this type of funding.
- Walt Elliott pointed out that the data did not break down median income of the community compared to the rider. Walt commented, ferry riders tend to be in the higher income classification and it would be helpful to know if people with lower incomes are living near ferry terminals.
- Walt Elliott asked if WSF used Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) land use data in their forecasting model. Ray confirmed that WSF uses a variety of forecasting data including PSRC forecasts and projections from local jurisdictions.

### Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Exercise

Stephanie introduced the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) exercise. Stephanie explained the results of the SWOT analysis will help set the vision for the plan. Stephanie asked participants to represent the perspectives of their communities and diverse riders who use WSF services.

Laura provided instructions for the SWOT analysis and invited participants to complete an individual worksheet. Next, participants divided into small groups for focused discussions about each of the SWOT categories. Lastly, participants used dot stickers to rank their top five strengths, weaknesses,



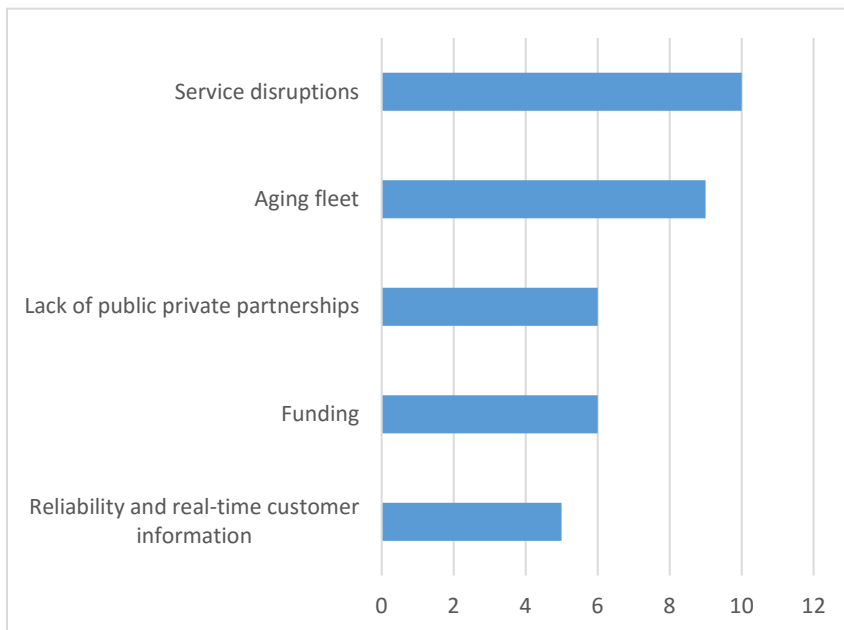
opportunities, and threats.

The following section summarizes the results of the SWOT analysis.

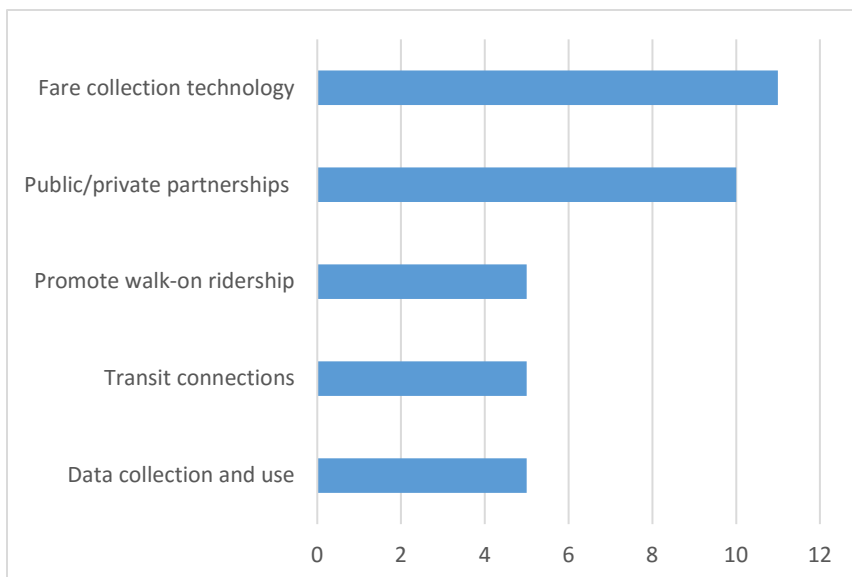
### Strengths

PAG members indicated WSF's top five strengths are: offering a picturesque experience; maintaining an impressive safety record; providing dedicated staff and crew; the convenient location of terminals; and the reservation system. Other strengths included brand recognition, reliability, and amenities on the ferries such as food and wine.

### Weaknesses



PAG members identified the following top five weaknesses: service disruptions; an aging fleet; reliance on legislative funding; lack of partnering with the private industry; and reliability. Additional weaknesses included personal security in the case of a threat or emergency; seismic resilience; terminal conditions; vehicle queues; transit connections, maintenance funding, and amenities such as lack of bike parking and signage.

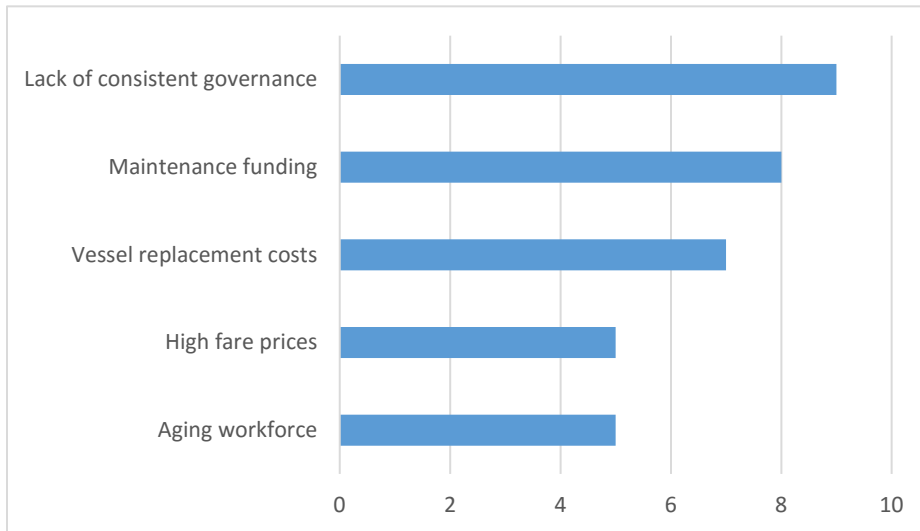


### Opportunities

PAG members cited the following top five opportunities: public/private partnerships; improving technology for ticketing and data collection; transit connections; and promoting walk on riders with pedestrian friendly

infrastructure and amenities. Additional opportunities included improvements to reservation booking; partnerships with tourism groups and state or national parks; and using advanced technologies.

## Threats



PAG members shared the following top five threats: lack of long term consistent governance; chronic underfunding of ferry life cycle maintenance; high vessel replacement costs; the aging workforce; and high cost of fares to riders. Additional threats included climate change; an increase in terminal area congestion; aging vessels; and increasing overhead costs.

## Additional Questions and Comments

Participants provided the following additional question and comments.

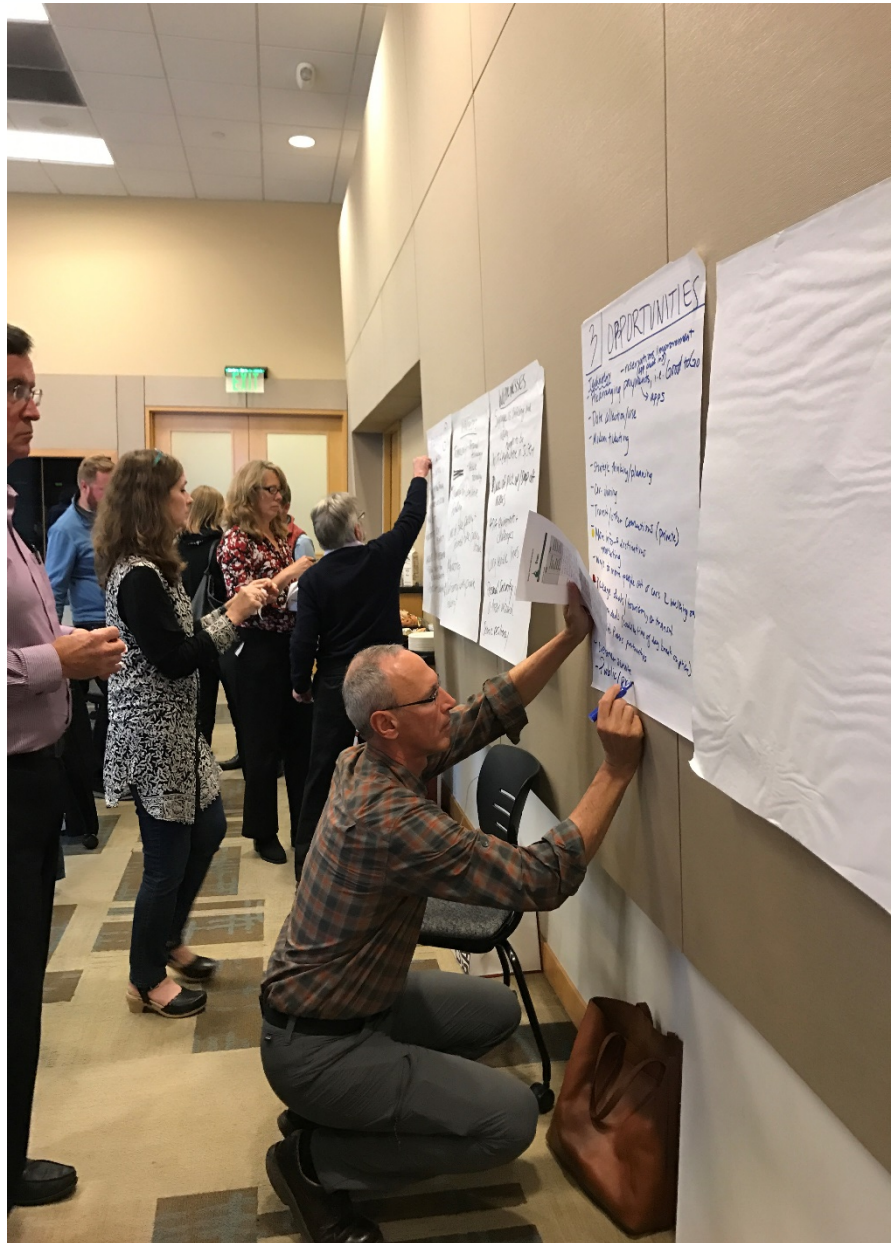
- A couple of participants requested meeting agendas and materials in advance.
- Dave Hoogerwerf, Clinton FAC, requested an outline or table of contents for the final document.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

Each group provided a brief report out, highlighting their top strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Laura explained WSF will compile the feedback and circulate the meeting summary for review. The results of the SWOT analysis will also be shared with the consultant team hired to develop the plan.



Ray reviewed next steps including finalizing the scope of the plan and hiring a consultant team to develop the plan. The next PAG meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 16, but may be delayed if the consultant is not onboard by November. Agenda topics for the next meeting will include reviewing preliminary ridership forecast data and the consultant's work plan. The project team thanked the group for their time and contributions to the discussion.



## Attendance:

### Meeting Attendees:

- Demi Allen, Squeaky Wheels
- Dan Coon, AAA Washington
- Jim Corenman, San Juan County FAC
- Walt Elliott, Kingston FAC
- Jacqueline Gruber, Downtown Seattle Association
- Dave Hoogerwerf, Clinton FAC
- Deborah Hopkins Buchanan, San Juan Islands Visitor's Bureau
- Rex Oliver, Bainbridge Chamber of Commerce
- Paul Parker, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Geri Poor, Port of Seattle
- Niles Seifert, U.S. Coast Guard
- Nicole Summers, U.S. Coast Guard
- Blake Trask, Cascade Bicycle Club
- Bryce Yadon, Futurewise

### Participating by phone:

- Andrew Hamilton, Southworth FAC

### Project Team:

- Carmen Bendixen, Washington State Ferries
- Stephanie Cirkovich, Washington State Ferries
- Ray Deardorf, Washington State Ferries
- Hadley Rodero, Washington State Ferries
- Laura LaBissoniere Miller, PRR
- Sam DeMars-Hanson, PRR



Washington State Ferries



## Appendix

### A. PAG SWOT Activity Flip Chart Comments



# Strengths

①

ROUTES ARE PICTURESQUE ●●●●●●●●

↳ EXPERIENCE

MAJOR WA ATTRACTION ●●

RELIABILITY (WHEN IT WORKS) ●●●

RESERVATIONS ●●●●●

BRAND RECOGNITION, ICONIC ●●●

STAFF, BOAT CREWS ●●●●●

OUR ADVOCATES, FERRY-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

PROGRESSIVE LEADERSHIP ●

MONOPOLY ON SERVICE ●

LOCALS STAFFING TERMINALS

ASSETS - TERMINALS, LOCATIONS ●●●●●





# STRENGTHS CONT'D

KNOWLEDGE BASE, EXPERIENCE  
OPERATING FERRIES ●●

EFFICIENT MODE OF TRANSPORT ●●●

CONNECTIONS TO OTHER MODES ●

NEWER FERRIES ●

RIDERSHIP - SENSE OF COMMUNITY

AMENITIES - FOOD SERVICE (WENE!) ●●●

UNIQUE FORM OF TRANSPORT ●

Connected To State Highways ●

Safety Record ●●●●●

STATE FUNDING - CAPITAL

COST TO TOURISTS



# WEAKNESSES

• Signage is confusing and lacking.

WiFi ← <sup>needs to be</sup> everywhere in system

• ~~•~~ Lack of pick up / drop off areas

ADA requirements + challenges

• Long vehicle lines

• Personal Security if there's a threat onboard

• Seismic resiliency  
<sub>Emergency</sub>  
Terminal Condition





# Weaknesses

• TECHNOLOGY - Personal technology  
~~ELECTRIC~~ - Vehicle technology

• Reliance on Legislative funding

• Lack of bike parking + Secured bike parking onboard

• Marketing

• Lack of Partnering with private industry



# Weaknesses ②

Maintenance funding

● TRANSIT CONNECTIONS

● SERVICE DISRUPTIONS

● FINDING THE FERRY TERMINAL

GALLEY HOURS + FOOD SELECTION

● AGING FLEET

● PREDICTABILITY / DELAYS / RELIABILITY

REAL-TIME INFORMATION

● CHALLENGES WITH RESERVATIONS

- Telling tourists how to book a reservation

- Process seems convoluted

● - VSL #5





# 3 | OPPORTUNITIES

- Technology
  - reservations improvement (app check in?)
- Prearranging payments, i.e. Good to Go → apps
- Data collection/use
- Modern ticketing
- Strategic thinking/planning
  - Car-sharing
- Transit/other connections (private)
  - More info → destinations
    - marketing / partnerships at research groups
- Ways to move people out of cars & walking on
  - Package deals/tourism, or transit
- Walk on deals (could be time of day break on price)
  - St/Nat. Parks partnerships
- customer service / friendly staff
- Public/private partnerships





- collaboration with POFs to meet service gaps/continuity/emerg planning
- Service life extension Program for vessels ●
- Reservations (continue expand) ●
- Tacoma LNG facility ●
- Recruit from Pool of Ex navy in area ●



1980#

Restroom

Threats 4



VESSEL REPLACEMENT COSTS

TOO HIGH - NO FEDERAL \$  
JEOPARDIZES REPLACEMENT



CHRONIC UNDER FUNDING OF WSF  
LIFE CYCLE MAINTENANCE

FUEL → GOING FROM DIESEL TO LNG  
COSTS TO UPGRADE/CONVERT



CLIMATE CHANGE

- SEA LEVEL

- STORMS

- MAINT COSTS



AGING WORKFORCE / SUCCESSION  
RECAPITALIZE WORKFORCE



## 4) THREATS

- ADDITIONAL COSTS WHEN BOATS ARE PURCHASED ONE AT A TIME
- HIGH COST <sub>v</sub> TO CUSTOMERS / RIDER OF FARES
- INCREASING OVERHEAD COSTS
- LEGISLATURE LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN EFFICIENCY
- AGING VESSELS THREATENS RELIABILITY
- EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY COULD MAKE SYSTEM OBSOLETE





# ④ THREATS



## LACK OF LONG TERM

### CONSISTENT GOVERNANCE

- IMPACTS SHIP PURCHASE

● ● - CHANGING GOVERNMENTS =  
CHANGING PRIORITIES  
- PUA REPORT FINDING

● ● INCREASING TERMINAL AREA  
CONGESTION - IMPACTS  
● TO COMMUNITIES  
- AIR QUALITY

● ● PARKING (LACK OF)

● MULTIPLE TRANSIT PARTNERS -  
INCONSISTENT

CHALLENGE TO ACCOMMODATING  
POPULATION GROWTH  
INFLEXIBILITY TO MGMT CHANGING  
TRAVEL PATTERNS