

**Washington State Ferries**  
**Long Range Plan Technical and Policy Advisory Group Meeting #5**  
**May 17, 2018**  
**Century Square | 1501 Fourth Avenue, Seattle**  
**Alki Conference Room**  
**10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Welcome**

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

Laura LaBissoniere Miller, meeting facilitator, reviewed the agenda and objectives, which included summarizing the community engagement progress, providing updates about key plan elements, and discussing preliminary recommendations for route-by-route service scenarios and vessel maintenance and replacement.

**Community Engagement Update**

Hadley Rodero, WSF Strategic Communications Manager, summarized community engagement activities and presented key comment themes to date, including: service reliability, planning for growth, accessibility and multimodal connections, technology and customer experience, and sustainability and resiliency.

Benjamin Smith, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), asked for more information about route specific comments. Hadley explained WSF will share the final public involvement summary with PAG and TAG members next month, which will include route-by-route comments. She also mentioned WSF received only a few letters from agencies and organizations and encouraged the group to provide comments by May 24. In September, WSF will conduct another round of public meetings to share the draft plan and seek input.

Ray Deardorf, WSF Senior Planning Manager, reviewed the Long Range Plan timeline. WSF will submit a progress report to the Legislature by June 30. The plan will be developed this summer and released in September for a 45-day public comment period. The final plan is due to the Legislature January 1.

Ray Deardorf explained the consultant team evaluated existing conditions, best practices, and needs, and submitted draft recommendations to WSF. The following presentation reflects the consultant team's preliminary findings and recommendations to WSF for several key plan elements.

**Technology Assessment and Recommendations**

Stephanie Cirkovich introduced the technology assessment and preliminary recommendations. The team identified gaps in technology and key priorities, including reliability, efficiency, and sustainability. Stephanie outlined potential strategies for the near-term (0-5 years), mid-term (5-10 years), and long-term.

PAG and TAG members provided the following questions and comments:

- Blake Trask, Cascade Bicycle Club, asked for clarification about the near term strategy “upgrade ticketing and reservation” and its relationship to dynamic pricing. Stephanie confirmed ticket technology and pricing are closely related. Kirsten Kissinger, KPFF Project Manager, added the



team is in the process of analyzing adaptive management strategies which will also address pricing.

- David Forte, Kitsap County & Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization, expressed support for better technology.
- Brian Wood, Island County, asked about the feasibility of converting the fleet to hydroelectric power in three years. Ray clarified the team recommended converting three vessels in three years.

### Vessel Maintenance and Replacement Assessment and Recommendations

Ray Deardorf introduced the state of the ferry fleet. Vessels have not been adequately maintained due to lack of funding, prioritizing maintaining service over maintenance, and lack of relief vessels. WSF needs to build 13 new vessels and currently does not have funding to build new ferries. Ray introduced Kirsten Kissinger, KPFF Project Manager, who provided an overview of key constraints, WSF vessel ages compared to other systems' retirement age, and current retirement schedule. Kristen Kissinger presented the team's preliminary recommendations to WSF to stabilize the fleet and review key policies.

PAG and TAG participants provided the following questions and comments about vessels:

- Frank Nelson, Bremerton Ferry Advisory Committee (FAC), asked if WSF factored in the large 10-year contract Vigor was awarded with the U.S. Army to build vessels and landing craft.
- Dave Hoogerwerf, Clinton FAC, questioned WSF's ability to build 13 boats in 20 years, pointing out it currently takes seven years to build a new vessel.
- Russ Harvey, San Juan County, noted the first five boats slated for retirement are on the San Juan Islands' routes.
- Chris Hammer, City of Bainbridge Island, asked if WSF would consider additional maintenance to extend vessels' lifespan.
- Jim Corenman, San Juan County FAC, asked if maintaining service is a trade-off for maintaining vessels.
- Frank Nelson asked if WSF would consider leasing a vessel from another agency.
- Ralph Young, Coupeville FAC, asked if the process for building Olympic Class Ferries ended.
  - Matt Williamson, Elliott Bay Design Group, clarified WSF has an existing contract to build Olympic Class vessels.
- Phil Williams, City of Edmonds, asked how converting vessels to hybrid electric power would affect service.
  - Matt Williamson explained conversion would occur during the winter when more vessels are available to maintain service.

### Level of Service

Carmen Bendixen, WSF Senior Transportation Planner, provided an overview of current level of service standards and proposed changes.

PAG and TAG participants provided the following questions and comments about ferry service:

- Blake Trask asked if pricing is included in potential Tier 1 strategies to accommodate growth.
- Brian Wood commented pricing incentives may cause increased congestion if more people drive instead of taking a ferry.
- Dave Hoogerwerf asked about how WSDOT's door-to-door approach is reflected in level of service strategies. Specifically, strategies should encourage transit connections and walk-on passengers.
- Greg Beardsley, Vashon FAC, said half of the ferries traveling from Fauntleroy to Vashon are empty.



- David Forte said WSF should provide incentives to encourage walk-on passengers and not rely on partnerships.
- Blake Trask asked if WSF is currently implementing Tier 1 strategies.
- Benjamin Smith asked if WSF has ever reached Tier 2 and added vehicle capacity.
- Dave Hoogerwerf commented the current level of service standards are a service management asset and do not reflect customers experience. He added customers measure service level by the amount of time they wait for a boat.
- Blake Trask asked how WSF would manage bicycle demand with a reservation system.
  - Carmen confirmed we are recommending passenger and potentially bicycle level of service standards based on PAG and TAG feedback at the last meeting.
- Russ Harvey, San Juan County, asked if WSF would include vehicle seating in total seating capacity. He noted when it's crowded, passengers often sit in their cars.
- Frank Nelson responded to Russ' comment and said providing seating for all walk-on passengers is important.
- David Forte commented transit agencies typically measure total capacity, not seating capacity. Benjamin Smith clarified transit agencies have a time threshold for standing.
- Greg Beardsley said the map on Slide 22 should note some south Puget Sound routes experience greater vehicle congestion.

### Update on Work to date for Additional Plan Elements

Ray Deardorf explained the updates on work to-date, including preliminary work to assess seismic conditions, emergency preparedness, and sustainability.

Charles Prestrud, WSF Special Projects Manager, presented WSF's review of local and regional plans. He described key findings from policies in local plans, impacts from expected development, and transit and non-motorized connection plans.

### Small Group Discussions

Laura LaBissoniere Miller provided a brief introduction and overview of the small group discussions. The goal of the exercise was to gather input to inform plan development on route specific service scenarios and vessel maintenance and replacement recommendations.

### Route-by-route Service Scenarios

Ray introduced the preliminary operational service scenarios and explained potential strategies for each route. Laura LaBissoniere Miller facilitated the group discussion. The group provided input on their key priorities and concerns for service scenarios as WSF plans to accommodate growing ridership.

PAG and TAG members gave the following input on service scenarios:

- The group generally supported measuring level of service based on seating capacity and encouraged WSF to work closely with the Coast Guard to calculate passenger capacity.
- Relate performance metrics to Long Range Plan goals and consider the following alternatives for performance metrics: arrival instead of departure times, travel time reliability, and boat wait
- Prioritize moving people and goods more efficiently and focus on encouraging mode shift
  - Use pricing strategies to encourage non-vehicle commuting modes and offer lower fares for frequent users
  - Consider parking management strategies to encourage transit use and walk-on travel
  - Expand the vehicle reservation system to additional routes, considering route specific needs and lessons learned from existing reservations system
  - Integrate land use policies to provide seamless door-to-door service
- The group provided specific suggestions for the service scenario matrix:

- Clearly outline potential strategies and clarify Tier 1 vs. Tier 2 strategies
- Add transit connections as a strategy for all routes
- Add a column for short-term and long-term goals
- Use a bicycle icon with the “promoting mode shift” icon and clear potential strategies

### Vessel Maintenance and Replacement

Kirsten Kissinger explained the preliminary vessel retirement and replacement timelines and Hadley Rodero facilitated the conversation.

PAG/TAG members gave the following feedback:

- Both groups preferred the modified plus program.
- Ensure current program story is clear.
- Show impacts of routes to help decision makers.
- Add a line to the vessel retirement and replacement timeline for overall service reliability.
- Include cost/benefit of maintaining vessels to 60 years versus building new ones.
- Clarify and discuss what type of ferries WSF will build.
- Capture mode shift in vessel retirement and replacement timeline.
- Consider the unique needs of inter-island and multi-destination routes.
- Work with transit agencies to align ferry service with public transit service.
- Summarize the three preliminary vessel retirement and replacement timelines.

### Report out

Hadley provided a recap of both group discussions on vessel maintenance and replacement and confirmed both groups prefer the modified plus program.

David Forte commented about stabilizing the service first and enhancing maintenance by maintaining regular service. He also stated everyone supported the modified plus plan.

Laura summarized both group discussions on route-by-route service scenarios. Participants requested clarity on potential strategies, offered alternative performance metrics, and suggested additional strategies, including expanding vehicle reservations and pricing to encourage mode shift.

### Conclusion and Next Steps

Ray reviewed next steps and timeline, including developing major components of the plan ahead of the July 19 meeting.

### Attendance:

#### Meeting Attendees:

- Demi Allen, Squeaky Wheels
- Greg Beardsley, Vashon FAC
- Jim Corenman, San Juan County FAC
- Eric ffitth, Port of Seattle
- David Forte, Kitsap County & Peninsula RTPPO
- Jacqueline Gruber, Downtown Seattle Association
- Chris Hammer, City of Bainbridge Island
- Russ Harvey, San Juan County
- Chris Herman, Washington Ports
- Dave Hoogerwerf, Clinton FAC
- Jill Lazo, U.S. Coast Guard



- Ian Munce, City of Tacoma
- Frank Nelson, Bremerton FAC
- John Shambaugh, WSDOT NW Region
- Benjamin Smith, City of Seattle (SDOT)
- Blake Trask, Cascade Bicycle Club
- Richard Warren, Multimodal Planning Division, WSDOT
- Phil Williams, City of Edmonds
- Brian Wood, Island County & Island RTPO
- Ralph Young, Coupeville FAC

Participating by phone:

- Gil Cerise, PSRC
- Andrew Hamilton, Southworth FAC
- Max Henkle, Pierce Transit
- Kate Tourtellot, Community Transit
- Patrick Yearout, Ivars
- Phil H., WSDOT

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
- Andy Bennett, KPFF
- Kristen Kissinger, KPFF
- John Waterhouse, Elliott Bay Design Group
- Matt Williamson, Elliott Bay Design Group
- Eileen Touch, Elliott Bay Design Group
- Laura LaBissoniere Miller, PRR
- Gracie Geremia, PRR