

# 2023 Long Range Plan

## PROGRESS REPORT



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# Introduction

Once a decade, Washington State Ferries (WSF) revises and renews its 20-year Long Range Plan (LRP) within the parameters of several legislative, executive, budgetary, administrative, and public policy considerations. Over the succeeding several years, the LRP serves as a roadmap for capital and operating investments, adaptive management strategies, and more.

WSF submitted its 2040 LRP to the legislature in January 2019. Unlike previous plans, WSF committed to frequently updating the LRP and to revisiting the plan's recommendations more often than once every decade. To help fulfill that commitment, in 2022, the WSF 2040 Long Range Plan Progress Report documented the achievements and challenges of implementing the LRP during the COVID pandemic, as well as documenting the status of LRP recommendations and projects. This 2023 Long Range Plan Progress Report is an update on progress toward implementing the 2040 LRP.

In the pandemic and post-pandemic era, WSF's focus has been on restoring service to full legislatively funded levels systemwide. WSF is developing a Service Contingency Plan, which will be complete by January 2024, outlining a framework for providing service considering ongoing vessel availability and workforce constraints. This plan will replace WSF's Service Restoration Plan, originally published in 2022, which focused more on a restoration of service post-covid rather than an ongoing approach to service until new vessels are constructed and workforce levels stabilize. The constraints outlined in both plans have affected WSF's ability to invest resources into other LRP recommendations and projects.



Figure 1: Long Range Plan themes

During the LRP development process in 2017-2018, the public and stakeholders identified reliable service as a top priority for the plan. WSF used that input to form the first of the four themes of the LRP: Reliable Service, Customer Experience, Manage Growth, and Sustainability and resilience (see Figure 1 at left). Having done the analysis and made recommendations related to service at the time of the LRP, WSF has been better able to identify and respond to challenges.

One recent development toward reliable service, specifically the vessel construction program, is the legislative change to allow WSF to expand its new vessel build program out of state. Since

WSF owns the design of the new Hybrid Electric Olympic Class (HEOC) vessels, multiple shipbuilders could be constructing new vessels simultaneously. See the status table below for details on the vessel construction program.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT?

The purpose of this document is to:

- Provide an overview of the LRP milestones achieved in 2023;
- Track the actions, tasks, projects, or studies that need to be taken to fulfill the recommendations of the LRP;
- Serve as an internal record of how the LRP has been implemented thus far.

The 2022 Progress Report documented progress on near-term (0-2 years from plan publication in 2019) and medium-term (3-7 years) recommendations, but this 2023 Progress Report also includes the long-term recommendations. These long-term items were recommended for implementation 8-20 years from plan publication in 2019. This document will serve as a benchmark, so that various WSF teams will be able to track their progress on LRP implementation.

# 2023 and Beyond: Status Report

This section shows the status of all near-, medium- and long-term tasks and projects from the LRP. There is a mix of not-yet-in-progress and in progress projects, and with varying reasons behind the status. It is encouraging that so many tasks and projects, especially high impact ones such as workforce development efforts, are underway; however, many of these are multi-year efforts and thus will not be complete by next year’s progress report.

**Red** = Not yet in progress

**Yellow** = In progress

**Green** = Completed

## RELIABLE SERVICE

Task/Project from LRP	2023 Status update	Progress Trend
Fleet- add 16 new vessels before 2040	<p>WSF’s best estimate of the current delivery schedule for new vessels: 3 vessels in 2027-29, 4 vessels in 2029-31, 2 vessels in 2031-33, 5 vessels in 2033-35, 2 vessels in 2035-37, for a total of 16 new vessels.</p> <p>WSF is considering the suitability of the hybrid-electric Olympic class (HEOC) for both the 124-vehicle vessel and the new 144-vehicle vessel programs as well (to avoid further delays associated with new design development).</p>	Yellow
Fleet- Convert the current Jumbo Mark II Class vessels to electric-hybrid propulsion in 2021-23 and all-electric operation in 2022.	<p>The legislature allocated funding for the conversion of M/V Tacoma and M/V Wenatchee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract awarded for these two conversions.</li> <li>• Construction began on M/V Wenatchee in Sept. 2023.</li> <li>• WSF will pursue new funding for M/V Puyallup.</li> </ul>	Yellow
Receive funding for the remaining four HEOC vessels to continue effort to green the WSF fleet and improve service reliability; Move Ahead Washington legislation included funding for four HEOC vessels.	<p>This year the legislature changed state law to allow WSF to expand its new vessel build program out of state, which we believe will help us get new vessels more quickly. WSF’s new build team is working to adjust the process to the new legislative direction and we expect a “Request to Bid” to go out in the spring, with a contract to build the first of five new vessels signed by Summer 2024.</p>	Yellow
Review recommendations and design requirements for the next class of vessels to replace the aging Issaquah Class and meet the needs and demands of the Triangle route	<p>Internal discussions are ongoing on the suitability of the HEOC design for the Triangle route. A funding request is pending for formal pre-design studies for this next vessel class.</p>	Yellow

## RELIABLE SERVICE

Task/Project from LRP	2023 Status update	Progress Trend
Anacortes- new terminal building	WSF is requesting funding to start the planning and scoping effort over the next year, so that in the 2025 Legislative session WSF can secure funds for final design and construction.	Red
Bainbridge Island- replace overhead loading	Construction began Summer 2022 and will be complete in early Spring 2024.	Yellow
Clinton- overhead loading and park and ride lot improvements	The Clinton overhead loading project is starting the design effort this biennium (2023-25) once the work order set-up has been completed.  Park and ride lot improvements have been deemed not necessary and the project is not going forward.	Yellow
Coupeville/Keystone Harbor – Safety and navigation study, informs vessel and terminal needs	No funding has been identified for this effort.	Red
Eagle Harbor tie-up slip conversion	The Slip F conversion included in the project is now complete.	Green
Edmonds terminal improvements to address operational constraints	Funding is not scheduled until the 2029-31 biennium, and WSF has not designated the funding for a specific task yet.	Red
Edmonds terminal – Improvements and alternatives study, informed by reservation study (2021-23)	WSF is in talks with the City of Edmonds about the adjacent marsh property that will be transferred to the state. BNSF announced plans to double track the rail line along the Edmonds waterfront. Construction on that project is set to begin in 2024. This additional rail capacity could complicate efforts to improve operations at the existing Edmonds terminal.	Red
Fauntleroy terminal preservation project: kick off the environmental review process	The Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study, in consultation with FHWA, is due for completion in 2025. WSF will begin the NEPA/SEPA environmental review step in 2025-27. Design and Construction will begin in the 2027-29 biennium.	Yellow
Friday Harbor- add overhead loading and second slip conversion	Not yet underway	Red

**RELIABLE SERVICE**

Task/Project from LRP	2023 Status update	Progress Trend
Lopez Island- terminal enhancements to accommodate reservations	WSF plans to request funding for an initial planning and study effort of reservation viability.	Yellow
Southworth - Add a second slip to increase operational efficiencies, and accommodate Kitsap Transit passenger-only service that started in 2020	WSF has completed Phase 1 of a multiphase project, which includes transit improvements on the upland part of the terminal, replacing the trestle, and building a drive-on tie-up slip.	Yellow
Terminal preservation projects across the system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anacortes</li> <li>• Bainbridge Island</li> <li>• Bremerton</li> <li>• Clinton</li> <li>• Coupeville</li> <li>• Eagle Harbor*</li> <li>• Fauntleroy</li> <li>• Friday Harbor</li> <li>• Kingston*</li> <li>• Orcas Island</li> <li>• Point Defiance</li> <li>• Seattle</li> <li>• Southworth</li> <li>• Tahlequah</li> <li>• Vashon</li> </ul>	All elements of preservation projects are still on track and budgeted within the 2040 LRP horizon, with exceptions for those locations with asterisks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eagle Harbor: Slip E wingwall moved outside 2040 LRP horizon.</li> <li>• Kingston: Slip 3 Timber Dolphin replacement, Slip 1 and 2 VTS moved outside 2040 LRP horizon.</li> </ul>	Yellow

## RELIABLE SERVICE

Task/Project from LRP	2023 Status update	Progress Trend
<p>Workforce Development Plan (WDP), with emphasis on issues of maritime industry</p>	<p>The WDP is complete, but WSF has also obtained funding to establish several workforce programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Mate Scholarship: Creates a scholarship program for 10 candidates to become licensed deck officers (mates).</li> <li>• AB to Mate Program: Provides a streamlined and improved process for unlicensed deckhands to get their Mate's license.</li> <li>• Engine Room Wiper Program: Allows WSF to hire and develop entry level engine room staff as Wipers.</li> <li>• Operations Project Management Office: Creates an Operations Project Management Office at WSF with dedicated personnel whose work looks beyond each day's operation of the fleet and focus on workforce development projects solving workforce challenges, and other operations efficiencies and ideas.</li> <li>• Additional Human Resources Support: Funds additional staffing for the WSF Human Resource Office to support increased needs for recruitment, hiring and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.</li> <li>• Workforce Ombuds: Funds a workforce ombudsman to serves as a point of contact for people experiencing difficulties at work, a supplement to formal channels for reaching those who have the authority to act, and a unique resource for expanding management's insights into the company's work life and culture.</li> <li>• Reimbursement of Lodging and TWIC Card costs: Allows WSF to secure housing for workforce training sessions and to pay in advance for the costs of transportation worker identification credentials, merchant mariner credentials, and medical examinations for incoming ferry system employees and trainees.</li> <li>• Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility 2nd Shift: Enhances service reliability of WSF vessels by establishing a second shift of maintenance and repair personnel at the state's Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility on Bainbridge Island.</li> <li>• Eagle Harbor Apprenticeships: Funds six additional apprenticeship positions in the marine trades at WSF's Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility.</li> <li>• Workforce Consultant: Funds consultant resources to assist WSF to implement the workforce plan recommended by the Legislature's Joint Transportation Committee's 2022 study.</li> <li>• Funding for addressing workforce development issues, including cultural issues, at WSF (SB 5550): Allows WSF to implement the recommendations of the Joint Transportation Committee study on workforce planning, completed in December 2022.</li> <li>• Crew Transportation to Friday Harbor (<i>funding to be requested in the 2024 Supplemental</i>): The crew shuttle allows oncoming crew to get to Friday Harbor at the correct relieving time and brings back the leaving crew to the mainland, helping ensure on-time performance of the San Juan Islands Interisland route.</li> </ul>	<p>Yellow</p>



## RELIABLE SERVICE

Task/Project from LRP	2023 Status update	Progress Trend
Technology: Automated queue detection	WSF was awarded a \$5 million grant plus matching funds of \$5 million for a total of \$10 million to focus on automated queue detection over three biennia. A Cooperative Agreement was signed in June 2023 with DOT/FHWA and WSF has kicked-off the project. The project was funded \$250K in 2023-25 to develop a concept of operation with a planned pilot in the 2025-27 biennium.	Yellow
Technology: Automatic vehicle length detection	Not yet underway	Red
Technology: Automatic vehicle passenger counting system	Not yet underway; WSF will evaluate the technology solutions for Automated queue detection (see above) to see if that technology can accomplish vehicle passenger counting as well.	Red
Technology: Common schedule database upgrade	WSF was funded \$1 million in 2023-25 to replace the existing schedule database. Requirements analysis has begun, which will lead into a market study in Spring 2024 to identify what solutions are available.	Red

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Task/Project from LRP	2023 Status update	Progress Trend
Technology: Electronic signage at terminals	<p>WSF is planning electronic signage for two purposes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Part of Queue Detection – as part of the development of the concept of operations WSF will identify the best places to disseminate travel wait times.</li> <li>2. Departure/Arrival Info at Terminals – WSF has begun deploying new signage at our new terminals – Mukilteo and Colman – that provides fare information and departure/arrival information.</li> </ol>	Yellow
Technology: Real-time parking availability	Not yet underway	Red
Technology: Fund and implement a new fare collection system to provide operational efficiencies and meet customer preferences and demand	<p>Next Gen ORCA's first phase was implemented in May 2022. The ORCA agencies are still working towards Full System Acceptance of the first phase. Once completed, the ORCA agencies will begin phase two with a \$27 million budget. Benefits for WSF riders include a virtual ORCA card stored on their phone, integrated kiosks at terminals that allow customers to manage both Wave2Go and ORCA, and eventual expansion of multimodal option using the ORCA card.</p> <p>For WSF's primary ticketing system, a prior market evaluation concluded that there is no off-the-shelf ticketing and reservation system that meets WSF's operational needs without significant customization. Therefore, WSF submitted a decision package in the 2023-25 biennium to replace the reservation system and modernize our overall system with new components like a mobile application and CRM solution. The first phase was funded in the 2023-25 biennium which will be focused on replacing the reservation system. The two other phases are in future biennia.</p>	Yellow
Technology: Multi-platform email alert system to automate the delivery of service alerts across multiple channels, such as the website, text alerts, email, social media and electronic signs	Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software to improve overall communication is part of phase 2 of the ticketing and reservation modernization project.	Red
Tariff review – To include study of incentives enabled by new fare collection system	Once a new fare collection system has been identified (see above), WSF will reassess possible incentives.	Red

## MANAGE GROWTH

Task/Project from LRP	2023 Status update	Progress Trend
Add service hours on Port Townsend/Coupeville route to enhance peak season capacity on this reservations route	WSF added an additional late evening round-trip on Sundays during the shoulder and summer seasons to provide additional service. Unable to add service due to vessel and crew limitations.	Red
Expansion of vehicle reservations – pre-design/ community efforts: -Edmonds/Kingston -Mukilteo/Clinton -Lopez and Shaw islands (eastbound)	Not yet underway	Red
Lay the groundwork for a 2021 Good To Go! pilot program to make travel more convenient for customers and reduce congestion at tollbooths	This work is underway as part of Fauntleroy terminal project; <i>Good To Go!</i> is included in Fauntleroy project alternatives; study due to be complete in Spring 2024.  Additionally, phase 3 of the ticketing and reservation modernization project includes funding for piloting and deploying <i>Good To Go!</i> systemwide.	Yellow
Mobility on-demand and other “first and last mile” analysis – Ongoing review of opportunities and partnerships, to be updated biennially	A 2022 legislative proviso requested a study to identify and recommend cost-effective strategies to maximize walk-on passenger ridership of the Anacortes/San Juan Islands route. The report will be delivered to the legislature in December 2023.	Red
Study parking options at/ near WSF terminals to enable easier door-to-door trips for customers	Parking study of all WSF terminals not yet underway.  WSF will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for parking management vendors in 2024; in that RFP, WSF will include possible technology solutions, mobility options, and other changes to parking management. Potential options will be in line with results from walk-on passenger study, mentioned above.	Red

## SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Task/Project from LRP	2023 Status update	Progress Trend
Terminal electrification – Study to refine cost estimates and develop implementation plans	<p>The Terminal Electrification effort is underway. WSF hired a General Engineering Consultant who is currently scoping, planning, and evaluating options for powering up Seattle and Bainbridge Island terminals.</p> <p>Terminal pre-design efforts are ongoing, including development of terminal electrical design standards, selection of a common vessel charging system, and predesign studies for Seattle and Bainbridge terminals, and the associated utility improvements. Construction for Seattle and Bainbridge terminal electrification will begin in 2025.</p>	Yellow

# Conclusion

This progress report, along with the Service Contingency Plan, outlines the status of all 2040 LRP recommendations since the plan's release in January 2019. As noted above, this document can serve as a tool for WSF teams in tracking their progress in implementing the LRP. By noting the projects and other tasks that have not advanced as far as WSF had described in 2019, this document can also help WSF executives and other policy-makers decide where future resources can be focused.

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