

Dec. 19, 2008

This week:

- Draft Long-Range Plan Released for Public Comment

Draft Long-Range Plan Released for Public Comment

I want to take this opportunity to talk to you specifically about the draft long-range plan because of its implications for the future of the state's marine transportation system. Today, we are releasing the draft long-range plan that we have been working on very hard for the past several months.

We are at a historic point in Puget Sound marine transportation. Demand for ferry service is projected to increase as populations in ferry-served communities grow, but the system is constrained by tight financial resources, limited vehicle carrying capacities during peak periods, and aging vessels and terminals.

WSDOT Ferries Division (WSF) staff has worked collaboratively with the Washington State Legislature and Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) to address the long-term sustainability of the ferry system in the development of the WSF draft long-range plan. The draft plan is based on 2007 legislation and will guide future WSF service and investment decision through 2030. The draft plan was made available today, Friday, Dec. 19 for your review and comment. The most convenient way to view the draft long-range plan is on our Web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/planning/ESHB2358.

The draft plan puts forward two options for your consideration:

- **Plan A.** This option assumes that the State will continue in its current role as owner, operator, and principal funder of ferry services in the Puget Sound region. Current level of service remains with operational strategies implemented over time and several new vessels coming online. This plan contains a significant budget shortfall that will require new revenues.
- **Plan B.** This option recognizes that the State may not be able to provide new revenues to meet the evolving needs of all ferry customers and communities, and looks at marine transportation very differently. It proposes an alternative where the State takes responsibility for the core marine highway system and a locally-funded entity or entities would take responsibility for a new marine transit system. This option also assumes operational strategies would be implemented over time. It also contains a budget shortfall, but it is significantly smaller than Plan A.

I would like to thank everyone who has participated over the last year in the development of the draft long-range plan. We held three rounds of public meetings in 2008 – totaling 26 meetings – in locations throughout Puget Sound. It is thanks to your participation and feedback at public meetings that the development of the draft plan has been so successful.

Please join us at a series of public hearings on the draft plan at ten locations throughout Puget Sound beginning on Monday, Jan. 5. The format for each hearing is a 30-minute presentation by WSF staff followed by a 90-minute public comment period. For more information about the hearings and a listing of dates and locations, visit www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/planning/ESHB2358. You may also provide your comments by e-mailing wsfplanning@wsdot.wa.gov or writing Washington State Ferries, Attn. Joy Goldenberg, 2901 3rd Avenue, Seattle, WA 98121. We ask that comments be received by Jan. 21, 2009.

I encourage you to forward this e-mail to others who may be interested in learning about WSF's draft long-range plan. Please contact us if you would like to schedule a briefing, if you have any questions or would like more information. You can contact me directly at 206-515-3401 or e-mail DavidMoseleyUpdates@wsdot.wa.gov.

Again, thank you, and I look forward to your comments on the draft long-range plan.

Next week:

- KUOW Interview
- There will be no Weekly Update the next two weeks due to the Christmas and New Year's holidays. The next Weekly Update will publish on Friday, Jan. 5.

David Moseley's weekly updates are available on the WSDOT Ferries Division Web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/weekly.

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