

## San Juan Islands Partnership Group: Meeting #12

**Thursday, September 18, 2014 | 11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.\***  
**San Juan Island Yacht Club | 273 Front Street, Friday Harbor**

### AGENDA

Time	Topic	Lead
11:30 a.m.	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review agenda and meeting objectives</li> </ul>	George Capacci, WSF Fauna Larkin, Facilitator (BERK)
11:45 a.m.	Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May 2014 Survey Results</li> <li>Report on Summer Outreach</li> <li>Review Fall 2014 Outreach Plan</li> </ul>	Fauna Larkin, BERK
12:25 p.m.	Monitoring Misuse	Fauna Larkin
1:00 p.m.	Information Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodating Last Minute Reservations in Anacortes</li> <li>ITS Changes</li> </ul>	Brian Churchwell, WSF
1:20 p.m.	Implementation & Support Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff Training Plan</li> <li>Staff Support Plan</li> </ul>	Dwight Hutchinson
1:45 p.m.	Summary and Next Steps	Fauna Larkin
1:50 p.m.	Public Comments	Fauna Larkin
2:00 p.m.	Meeting adjourned	

#### Meeting Materials:

- May 2014 Customer Survey Analysis (Included in email packet)
- Report on Summer Outreach (Included in email packet)
- Communication Plan for Fall 2014 (Included in email packet)
- Outreach Events Planned for Fall 2014 (Included in email packet)
- Accommodating Last Minute Reservations in Anacortes (Included in email packet)
- Business Practice and Policies (Included in email packet)
- Implementation & Support Plan (Included in email packet)

\* Coincides with sailing schedule; **Departure** - 9:00am from Anacortes or interisland sailing (depart Lopez 10:00am, Shaw 10:20am, Orcas 10:40am) **Return** – 3:45pm to Anacortes or interisland sailing departing Friday Harbor at 2:15pm

**For more information, please contact:**

Marta Coursey, Director of Communications, WSF  
 marta.coursey@wsdot.wa.gov

# WSF VEHICLE RESERVATION SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION

## Analysis of May 2014 Customer Survey Results

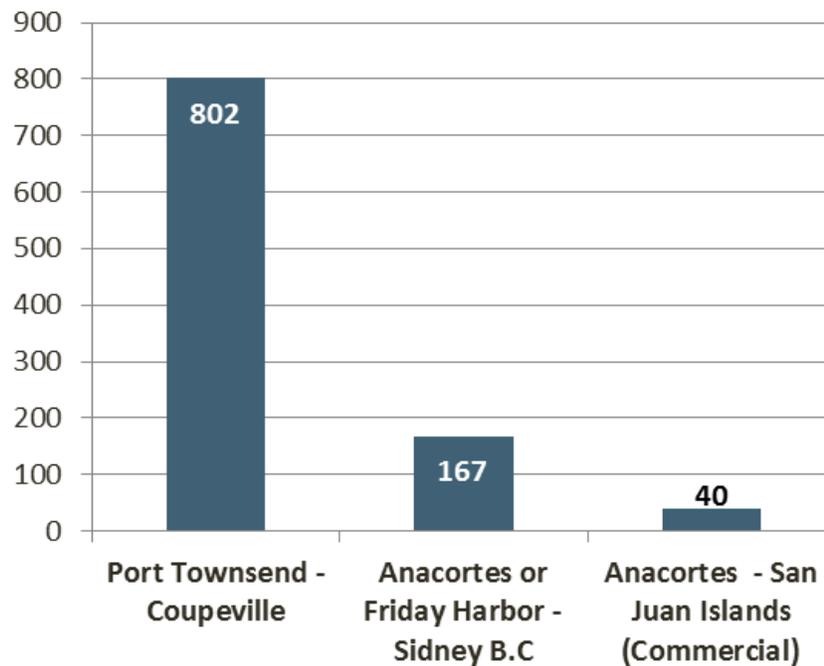
### USER SURVEY ANALYSIS

#### Overview of Survey Respondents

In total, 977 customers took the online survey. The survey request was sent to customers who made a reservation on Washington State Ferries (WSF) for travel during May 2014. In this survey, we did not ask customers who made a reservation what account type they were using.

Exhibit 1 shows the number of respondents by route. Additionally, respondents were allowed to select all routes for which they made reservations, therefore any analysis by route may have a higher number of responses than the number of respondents.

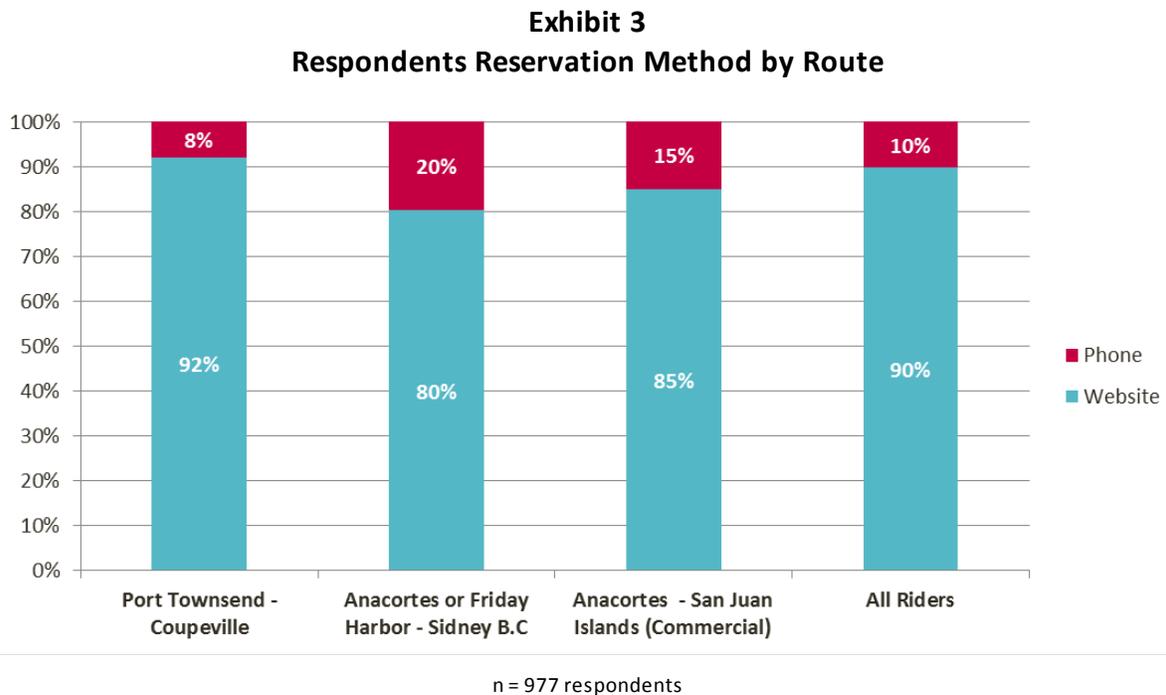
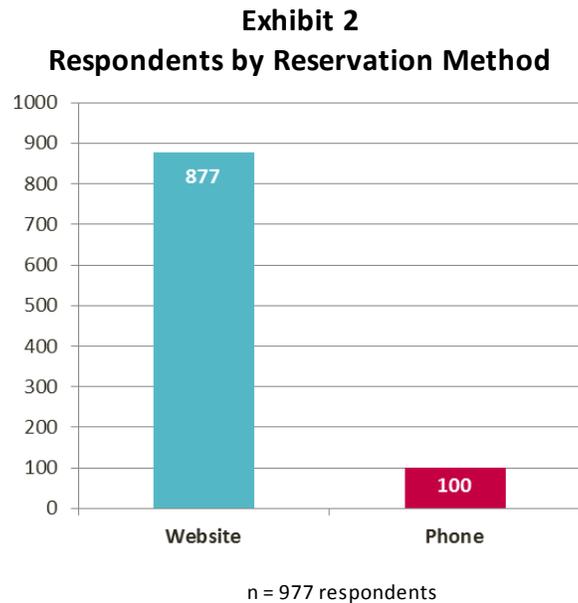
**Exhibit 1**  
**Respondents by Route**



n = 977 respondents (1,009 responses)

## Making a Reservation

Exhibit 2 shows the breakdown of responses on how customers made a reservation – either online or by phone. About 90% of respondents made a reservation online. Exhibit 3 shows the same analysis by route.



- Please Note: These responses reflect slightly higher rates of making reservations online than what is true for all customers use to make reservations.
  - Of customers who travel with reservations: 82% make reservations online on average across all routes; 82% make reservations online for the Port Townsend-Coupeville route; 81% make reservation online for the international route; and 71% of San Juan Island Commercial customers make their reservation online.

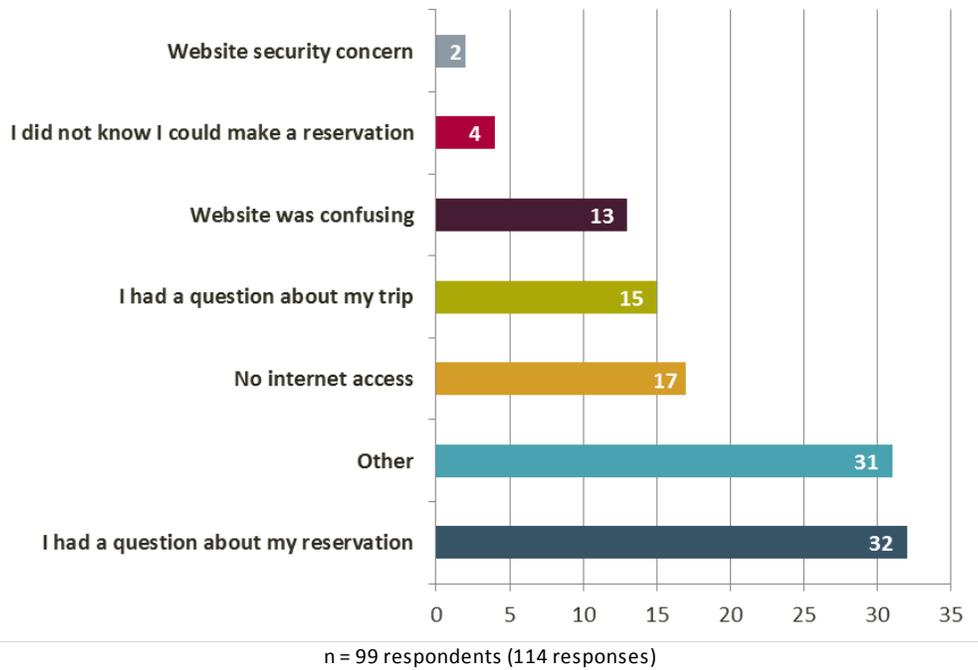
## Phone Reservations

Survey respondents who made a reservation by phone were asked to answer two questions specific to their phone reservation experience. Of the 100 survey respondents who made a phone reservation, 99 responded to the questions.

Exhibit 4 summarizes reasons why survey respondents elected to make reservations by phone instead of using the WSF website. Respondents could check more than one response.

#### Exhibit 4

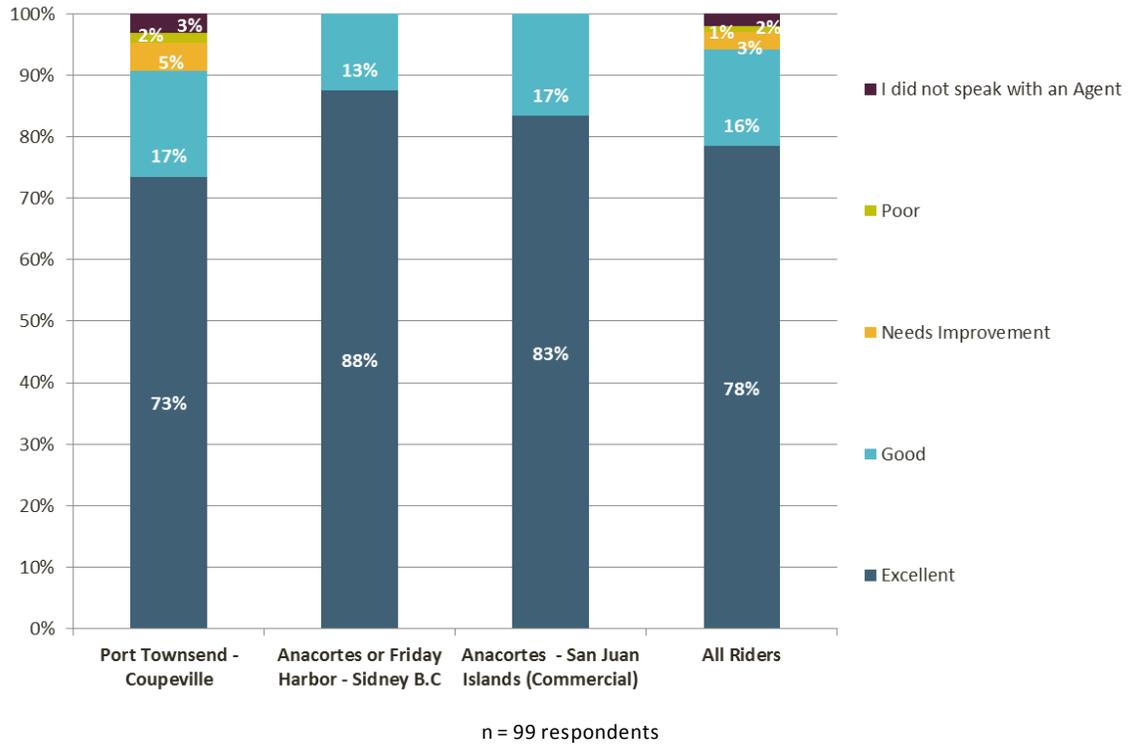
#### Reasons Customers Made Reservations by Phone



- Overall, the majority of respondents who used the phone to make a reservation did so because they had a question about their reservation (32% of total), or because they did not have internet access (17% of total).
- Of the respondents that chose Other, most noted that they just prefer to use the phone over the internet. The second most frequent comment was that the online reservation system did not work on their smart phone or tablet.
- Respondents traveling on the Anacortes-Sidney route were more likely than respondents on the Port Townsend – Coupeville route to say they had a question about their reservation (37% of Anacortes – Sidney B.C. responses versus 32% for Anacortes – San Juan Islands (business/commercial travel) and 27% for Port Townsend – Coupeville). However, there were only six respondents for the Anacortes – Sidney B.C. route who used the phone.

Exhibit 5 shows how survey respondents that spoke with a Customer Service Agent to make their reservation rated their customer service experience. 77 out of the 99 respondents (78% of total) rated the customer service as excellent.

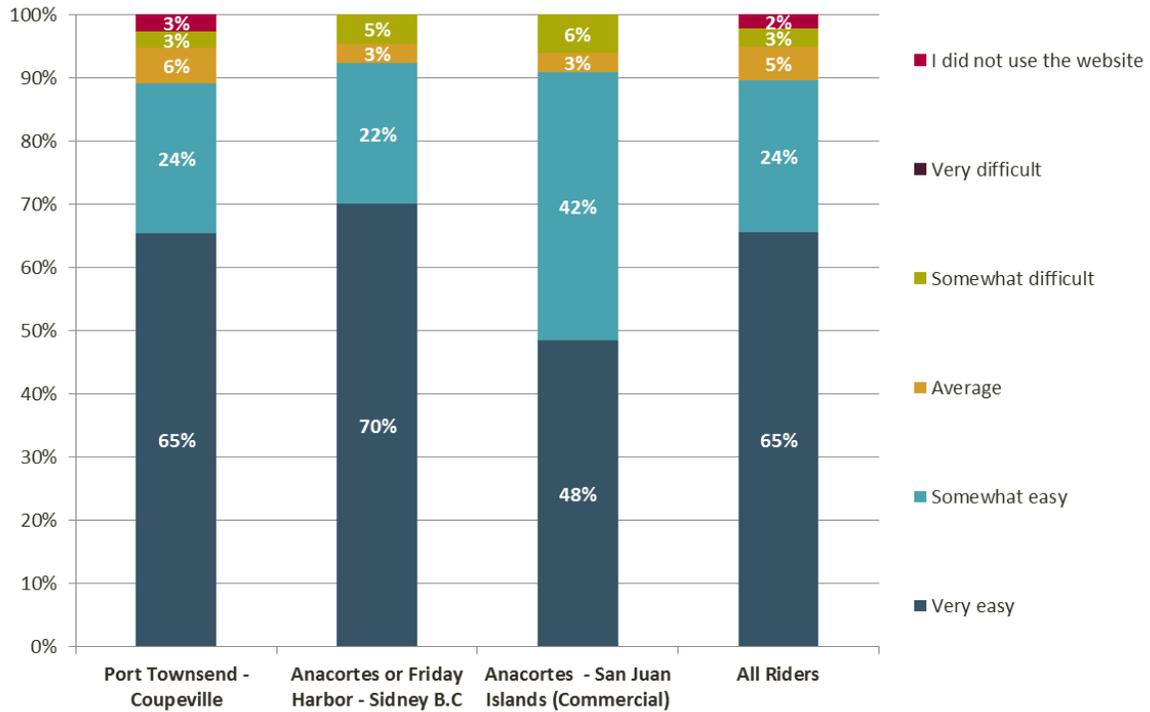
**Exhibit 5**  
**Customer Service Agent Experience by Route**



## Website Reservations

Survey respondents who made a reservation online were required to answer one question specific to their online reservation experience. 65% of all respondents said the website reservation was very easy to use.

**Exhibit 6**  
**Reservation Website Ease of Use by Route**

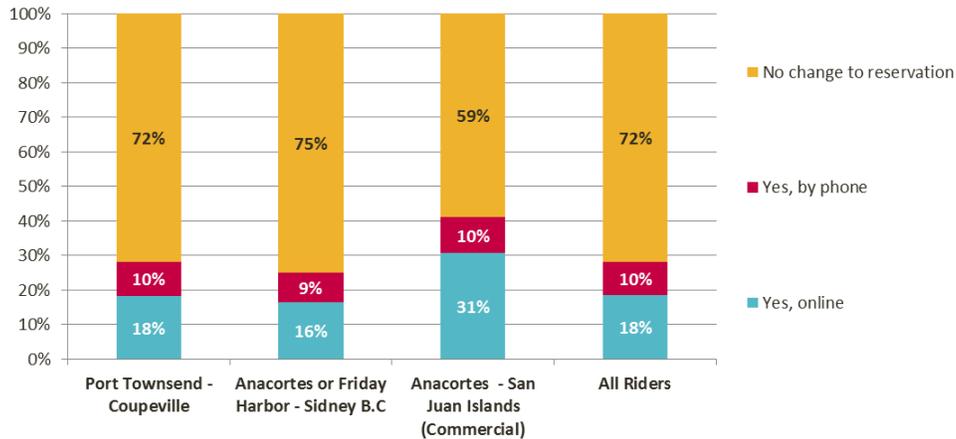


n = 902 respondents

## Changing or Canceling a Reservation

Overall, 696 respondents (about 72% of total) did not change or cancel their reservation. 275 respondents (about 29% of total) did change or cancel their reservation. Of those that made a change or cancellation, 181 respondents did so online. Exhibit 7 shows the percentage of change or cancellation method broken out by route.

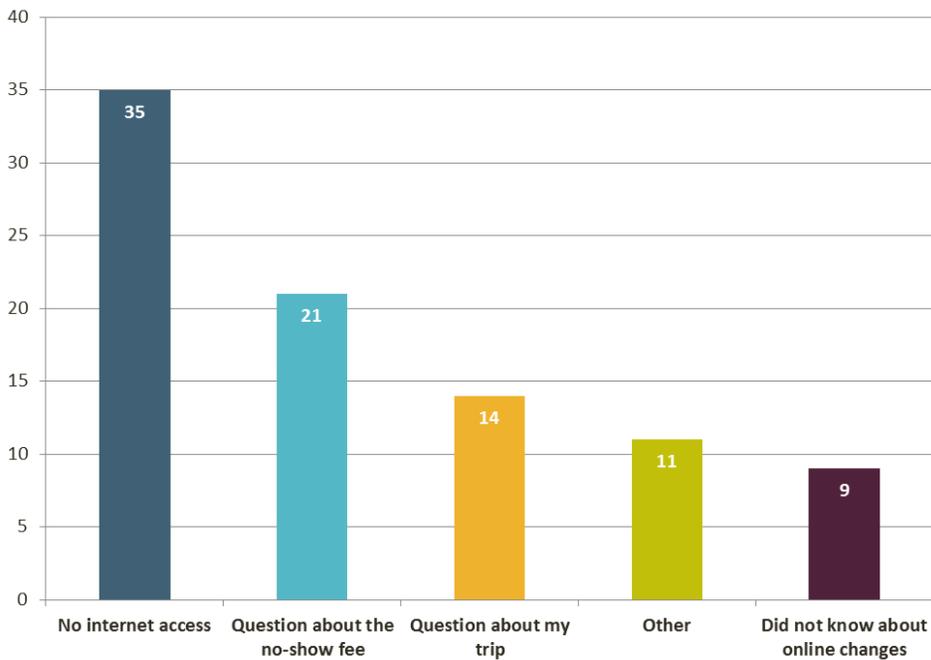
**Exhibit 7**  
**Change or Cancellation Method by Route**



n = 971 respondents (1,003 responses for route count)

The remaining 94 respondents made their change or cancellation by calling a customer service agent. Exhibit 8 summarizes the reasons why these respondents used the phone instead of the website.

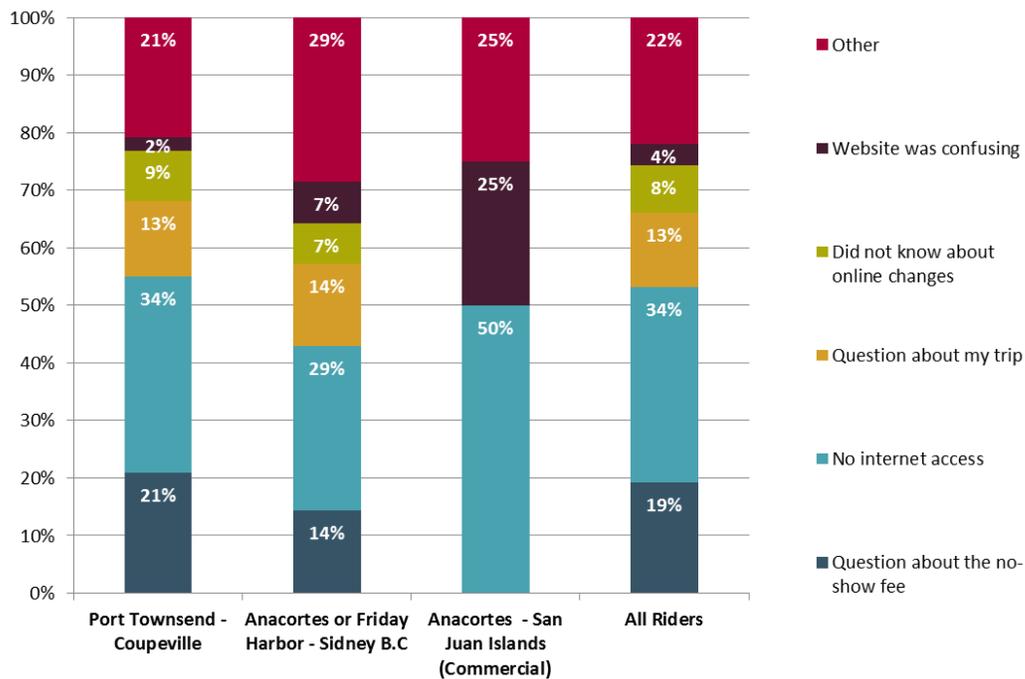
**Exhibit 8**  
**Reasons for Not Using Website to Make Changes**



n = 94 respondents (106 responses for multiple routes)

Exhibit 9 summarizes the reasons by route. Note that in the route analysis there are 94 respondents and 109 responses, due to multiple choice selections for route in Question 1). The percentages are based on the total number of responses (109).

**Exhibit 9**  
**Reasons for Not Using Website to Make Changes by Route**

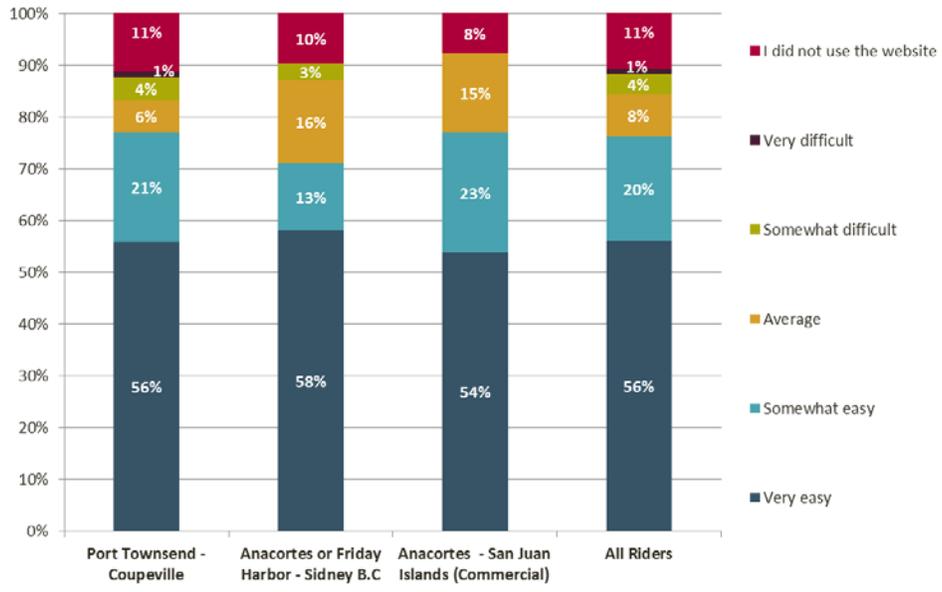


n = 94 respondents (109 responses for multiple routes)

- The most common reason for not using the website to make changes was lack of internet access.
- Among the respondents who selected Other, most noted that they did not have enough time or it was too close to the sailing time to make changes using the website. The second most frequent response was that customers preferred talking to a live person.
- Respondents traveling on the Anacortes – San Juan Islands (commercial) route were more likely than other respondents to not have internet access to make changes (50%, versus 29-34% for all other routes). However, there were also only four responses on this route, compared to 91 responses for the Port Townsend – Coupeville route and 14 responses on the Anacortes/Friday Harbor – Sidney B.C. route.

Exhibit 11 summarizes responses to the ease of use question by route.

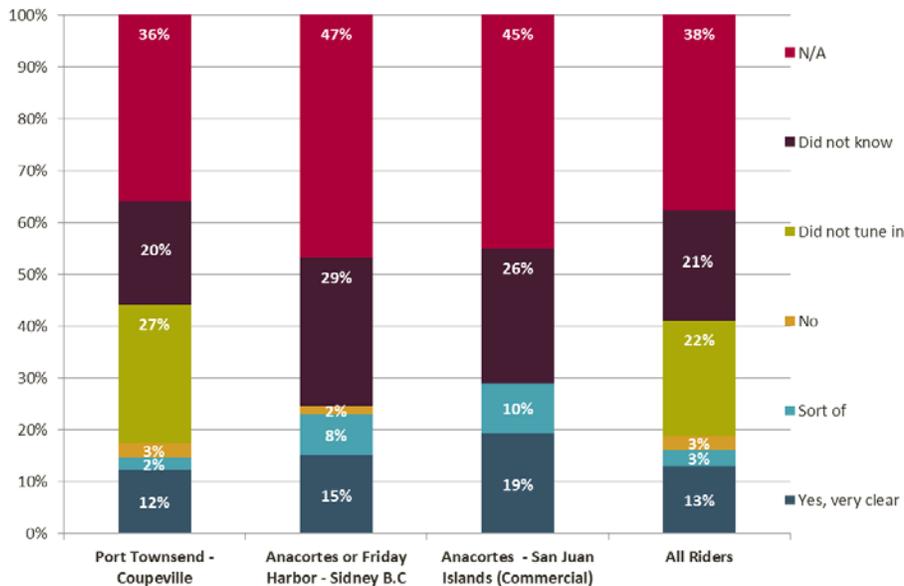
**Exhibit 10**  
**Change/Cancellation via Website Ease of Use by Route**



n = 200 respondents

Exhibit 12 shows how respondents viewed the helpfulness of the Highway Advisory Radio information. This applied to the Anacortes, Port Townsend, and Coupeville terminals only. Overall, 348 respondents (36% of total 957 respondents) chose 'N/A', followed by 241 respondents (25% of total) who although they saw the sign to tune in for ferry information, chose not to.

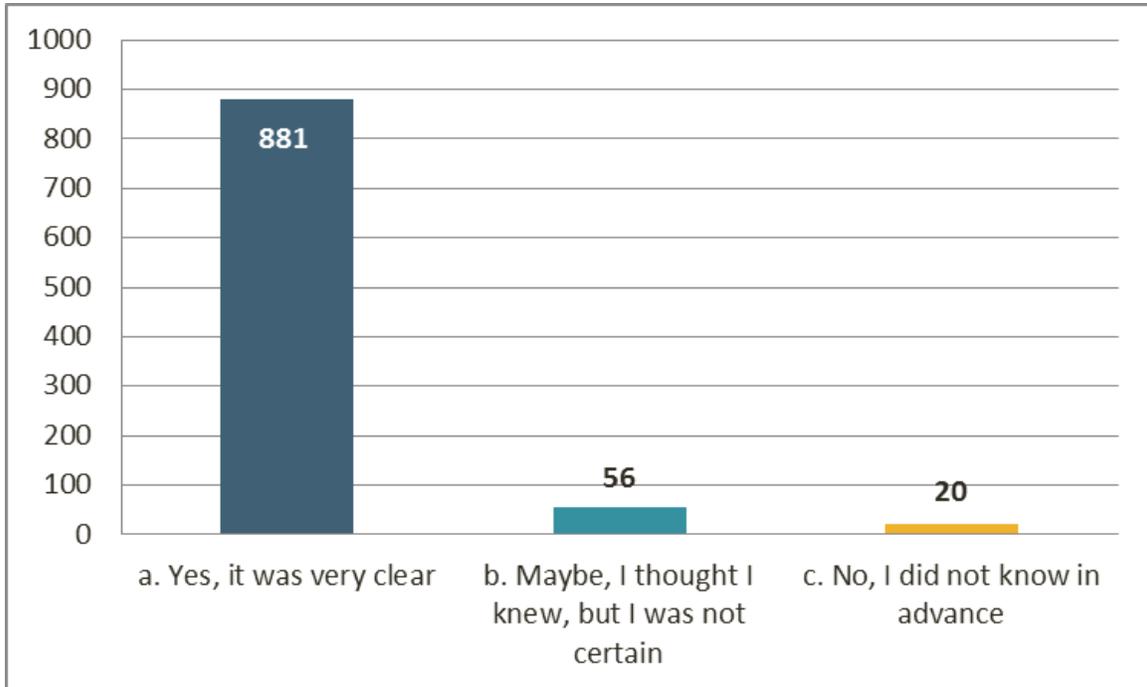
**Exhibit 11**  
**Highway Advisory Helpfulness by Route**



n = 957 respondents (946 responses)

Exhibit 13 shows the breakdown of responses to the question “Did you know when to arrive at the terminal?” 92% of respondents said yes, it was very clear when they needed to arrive.

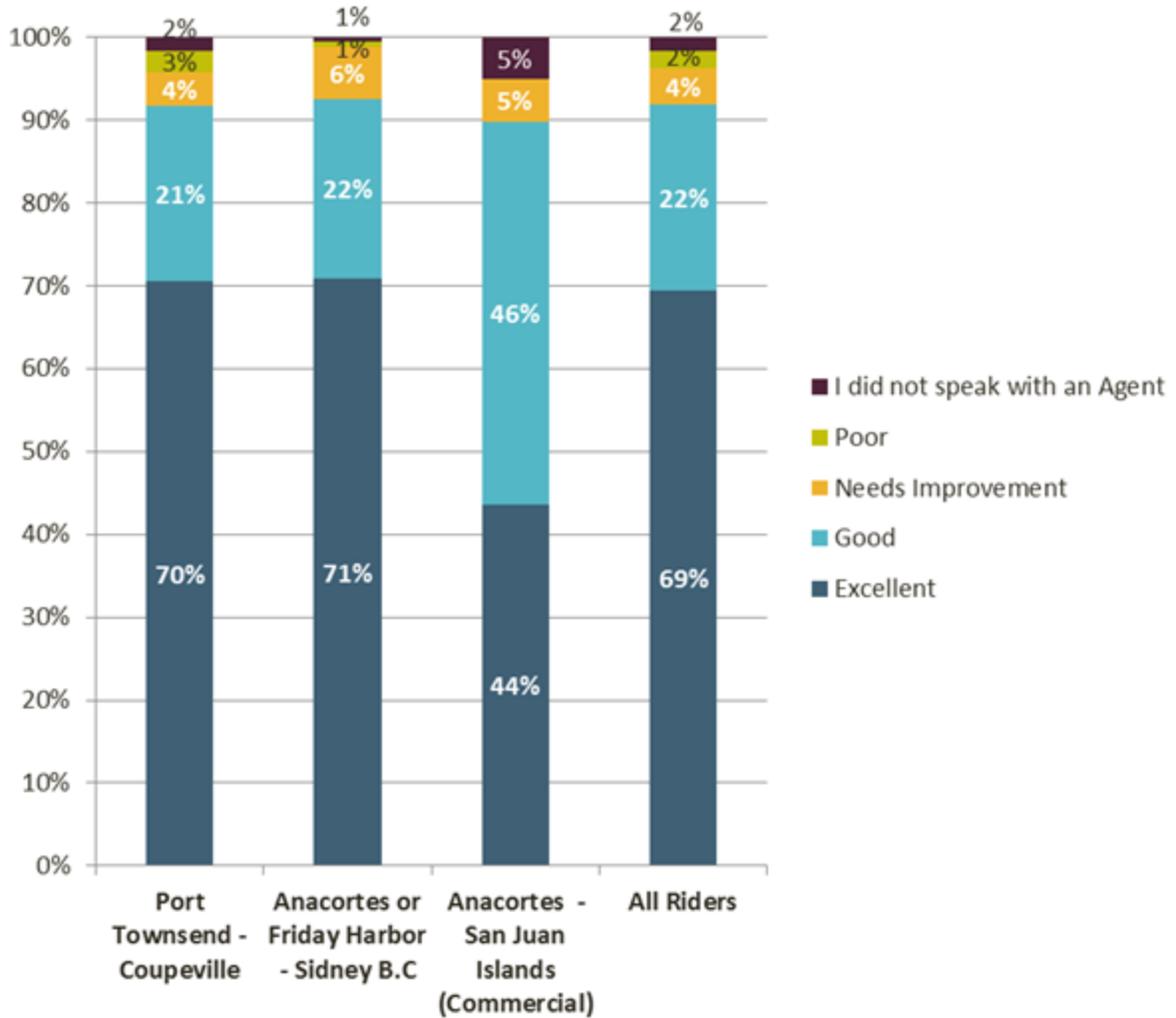
**Exhibit 12**  
**Knowledge of Terminal Arrival Time**



n = 957

Exhibit 14 shows how survey respondents rated their reservation check-in experience overall by route.

**Exhibit 13**  
**Overall Check-in Experience by Route**

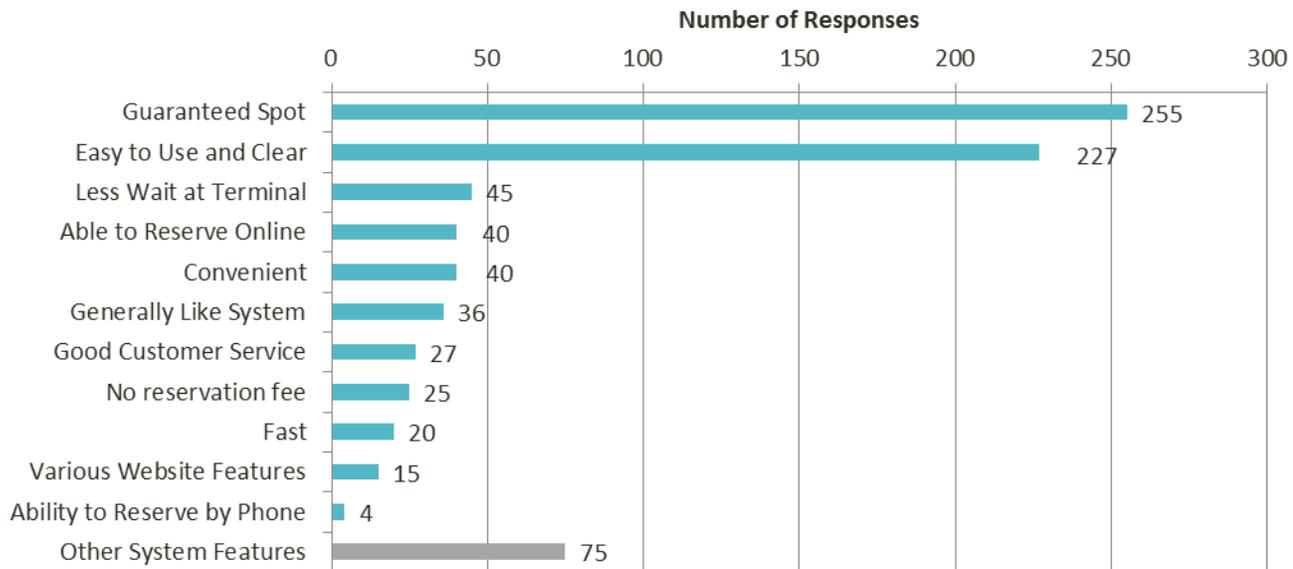


## Open-Ended Responses

This section documents the range of responses received for open-ended questions in the survey.

Exhibit 15 shows the breakdown of responses to the question “Please describe what you like best about the reservation system.” Customers provided about 850 responses to this question. Responses were reviewed and aggregated into the categories used in Exhibit 15. Some responses were counted in multiple categories.

**Exhibit 14**  
**What Respondents Like Best about the Reservation System**



The most common category of responses, “Guaranteed Spot”, refers to a variety of responses that capture respondent’s appreciation for the peace of mind and predictability that they know with their reserved spot they will be able to get on the ferry. Responses in this category include descriptions such as reliable, dependable, knowing when they will get on a ferry, peace of mind, security, predictability, and ability to plan in advance.

The second most common category, “Easy to Use and Clear”, addresses respondent’s appreciation for the ease, clarity and simplicity of the reservation process in general (not specific to online or phone reservation method).

A few other notable categories include:

- **Various Website Features**

- Website shows space availability and schedule which help customers plan their trip.
- Website account information is stored.
- Customers don’t need a password to use the reservation system as a guest.

- **Other System Features**

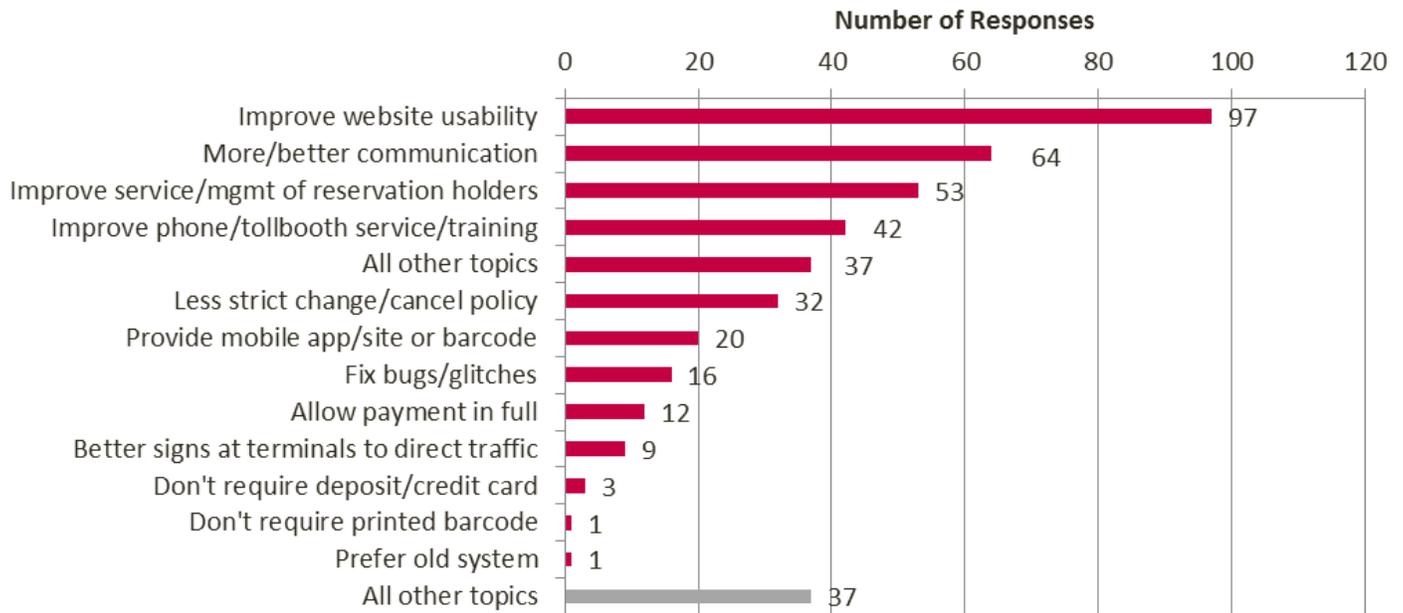
- Ability to reserve and plan in advance.
- Flexibility to change and cancel a reservation.
- Can use various methods of payment.

- **No Reservation Fee**

- Customers appreciated that the reservations are free. Many compared this to BC Ferries which charges for reservations.

Exhibit 16 shows the breakdown of responses to the question “Please describe how we can improve the reservation system. Are there any additional features you would like to see?” Customers provided more than 550 responses to this question. Responses were reviewed and aggregated into the categories shown in Exhibit 16. Some responses were counted in multiple categories.

**Exhibit 15**  
**Topic Areas Suggested For System Improvement**



The most common responses related to improving the general usability of the website and improving and increasing communication. With these broad categories there were many specific comments, the most common were:

- **Improve website usability.** Comments in this category included, among others:
  - Wanting a better, more user-friendly website.
  - Getting to the login page is difficult.
  - Improve email alerts and notifications.
  - Ability to login in to account once they have selected their reservation and want to finalize it
- **More/better communication.** Comments in this category included, among others:
  - Wanting more clarity on how much space is left for non-reserved travel on each sailing.
  - Wanting more information /direction to help determine vehicle sizes.
  - Wanting more information about when to arrive at the terminal.
  - Wanting information about what to do if arriving at the recommended time but are stuck in line.
- **Improve service/management of reservation holds.** Comments in this category included, among others:
  - Allow reservations on more routes.
  - Better placement in ferry line and at terminal for those with reservations.
  - Better placement on ferries for those with reservations.
  - Loading and unloading those with reservations first.
  - Give reservation priority to residents.
- **All other topics.** Comments in this category were extremely varied, and included but were not limited to:
  - Allow for later arrivals at the terminal for those with reservations.
  - Allow for group reservations.
  - Make reservations more expensive.

## SURVEY COMPARISON TO 2012 CUSTOMER SURVEYS

Overall, analysis of the May 2014 customer survey shows improvement in customer satisfaction and customer behavior from the July and November 2012 customer survey results.

Exhibit 17 shows that the percent of customers that said the website was easy to use increased from 84% in the November 2012 to 91% in the May 2014 survey. Correspondingly, the percent of customers who said the website was difficult to use dropped from 6% to 3%.

**Exhibit 16**  
**General Website Ease of Use by Survey Date**

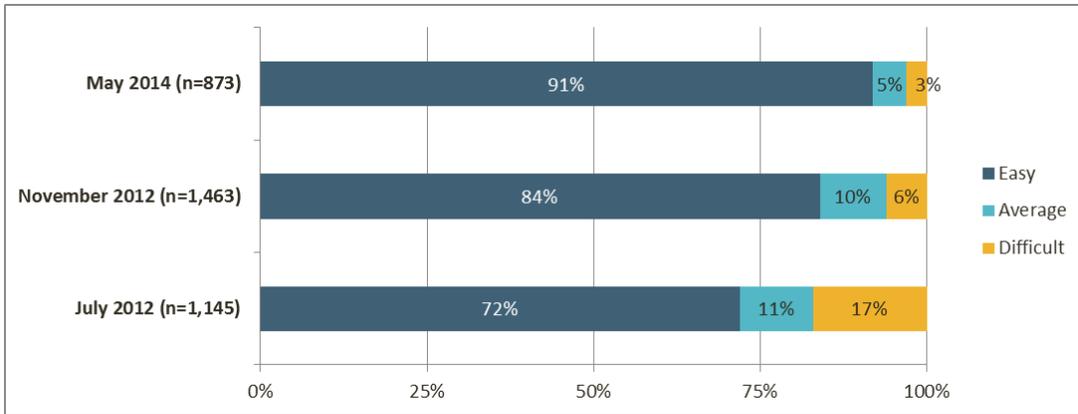


Exhibit 18 shows that the percent of customers who found the website easy to use when making a change or cancellation increased slightly from 81% in November 2012 to 85% in May 2014.

**Exhibit 17**  
**Change/Cancellation Ease of Use by Survey Date**

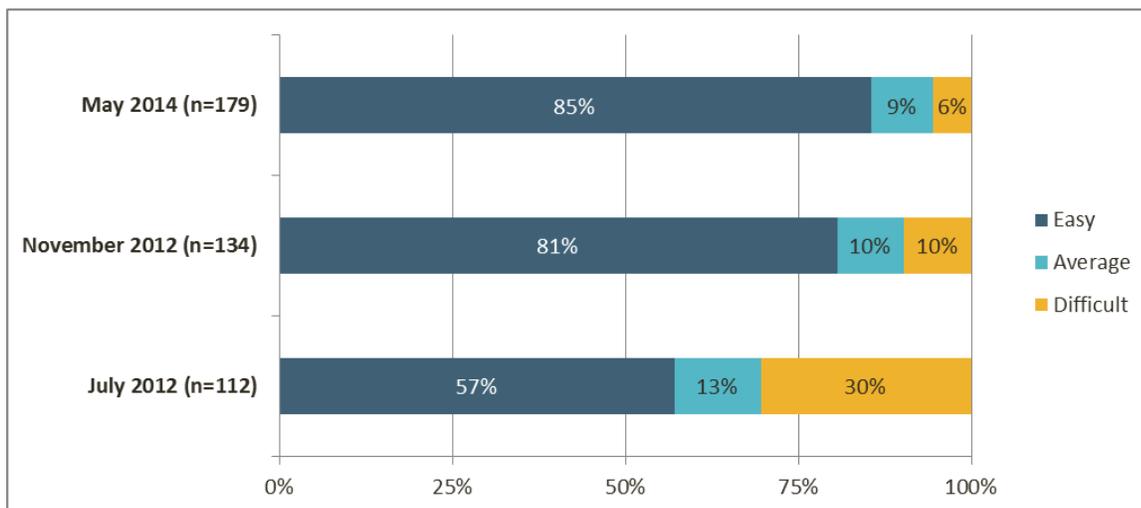
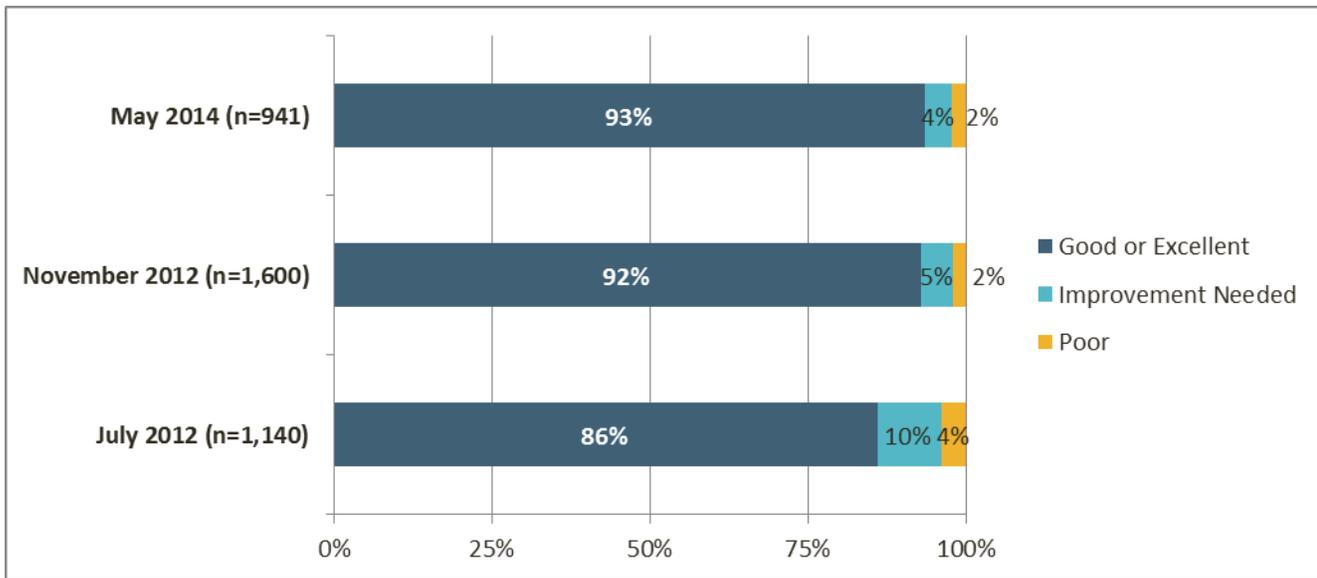


Exhibit 19 shows how customers rated their overall experience checking in at the tollbooth. The percent of respondents that stated this experience was good or excellent remained relatively the same when compared to survey results from November 2012, increasing slightly from 92% in November 2012 to 93% in May 2014.

**Exhibit 18**  
**Overall Check-in Experience at the Tollbooth by Survey Date**



## SAN JUAN ISLANDS PARTNERSHIP GROUP

### Save A Spot Summer Outreach 2014 Report

#### Introduction:

The goal of WSF's public outreach efforts during summer of 2014 (Phase 1) was to raise awareness and create a buzz among the San Juan Islands and Anacortes communities and visitors to the islands about Save A Spot, the reservation system coming to the San Juan Islands. The targeted audiences were visitors to the San Juan Islands, San Juan Island residents, hospitality/tourism industry in San Juan Islands, and WSF customers system wide. In addition to making WSF customers, island residents, island visitors and the general public aware that the Save A Spot reservations system was coming to the Anacortes-San Juan Islands route, public outreach was an opportunity for staff to respond to questions and concerns and clear-up some of the misconceptions that members of the public expressed.

#### At-A-Glance

WSF's public outreach efforts were very successful. The target audiences were reached and many people learned that Save A Spot will be available in the San Juan Islands starting January 5. Additionally, WSF staff and partnership members were able to answer many questions and clear up many concerns and misconceptions.

- **Events:** WSF staff and partnership members conducted 33 days of outreach in Anacortes, Lopez, Orcas, and San Juan Islands, presenting information about reservations at farmers markets, fairs, grocery stores, and terminals.
  - Staff spoke with approximately 2000 people, both residents and tourists, and gathered 600+ email addresses.
- **Marketing:** Materials announcing that reservations will soon be available for the San Juan Islands route included:
  - Large banners prominently displayed at Anacortes, Orcas, and Friday Harbor terminals
  - Banner in downtown Anacortes for 3 weeks
  - Message on all tollbooth receipts at all terminals
  - Posters up on all vessels on all routes and displayed at all terminals
  - Brochures placed on all vessels and all terminals that have racks
  - Videos played on vessels and terminals with video capability
- **Partnership Member Support:** Kathy Booth, Jim Corenman, Deborah Hopkins, Clark Johnson, Gordon Jonasson, Bill Pike, Margot Shaw, Jaime Stevens, John Whetten, Beverly Zapalac,
- **Staff Time:** Staff spent than 1000 hours to make the summer outreach a success, including creating materials, planning, training, traveling, and conducting outreach at events.

#### Responding to Public Questions, Concerns and Misconceptions

WSF staff spoke with many members of the public and generally received favorable responses about the coming reservations system. Even individuals who were skeptical, after speaking with WSF staff, expressed a willingness to give it a try and to see what will happen. There were some individuals who expressed a strong dislike about reservations and a belief that it would not work for them. Even after outreach, a few individuals remain unconvinced about the benefits of the system. In general, staff found that San Juan Island and Orcas Island community members (business owners, and full and part-time residents) were supportive of reservations. Community members on Lopez were, in general, unhappy about having reservations available for the San Juan Islands.

### **Top 5 Questions**

Many people WSF staff spoke with had either not heard about the reservation system coming to the San Juan Island route at all or had heard about it but didn't know any of the details. In addition to "How will it work?" WSF were asked the following questions most often (see the answer to those questions in italics):

- Is there a fee to make a reservation? Why not?  
*No. In order to encourage customers to utilize the system, there is no fee to make a reservation.*
- What is the no-show fee if I miss my reservation?  
*If you do not travel on your reserved sailing or anytime within the same service day from the same terminal, then you will be charged a no-show fee. The no-show fee is equal to 25-100% of your one-way vehicle/driver fare for the vehicle size reserved. On the San Juan Islands Routes we divide the Anacortes fare in half. (See Deposit Table for more information).*
- Will there be a mobile website or application to make a reservation?  
*Yes, there will be a mobile website for ferry reservations. However, there is no specific mobile application (app) for ferry reservations. The WSDOT app has a link to the mobile website for reservations.*
- What will prevent tourists from taking up all of the reservations way in advance of a travel date?  
*To meet the needs of all customer types (residents, tourists, and commercial vehicles) on the San Juan Islands routes, WSF will release the reservation space in multiple tiers. This will provide equal access to reservation space for customers who plan far in advance and those who make travel plans closer to the sailing date.*
- Why is there not a special program for locals?  
*Because WSF operates as Washington State marine highway, it is illegal to give preference to residents in some parts of the state over residents in other parts of the state.*

### **Top 5 Concerns**

While many customers were excited and pleased about the reservation system coming to the islands there was also some concerns expressed. Many individuals had similar concerns, the ones expressed most often included:

- Return trip uncertainty – island residents don't know when they will get out of their doctor's appointment or finish running errands in Anacortes so they worry that it may be difficult for them to make a reservation for their westbound travel.
- 3-hour lock down on reservation changes is too long from the sailing departure time—customers are concerned that they won't know 3 hours prior to their sailing if they are going to need to change their reservation.
- Having only 5% of the vessel set aside for non-reservation travel—customers wondered if that was enough space to accommodate people who arrive at the terminal without reservations.
- People with westbound reservations won't be able to make their sailing because of the line at the Anacortes Terminal—customers expressed concern that at Anacortes, the existing lines at the tollbooth are so long they won't be able to get through the to the tollbooth within 30 minutes of getting in line.
- Service Disruptions – Customers worried that WSF won't be able to manage the reservation system during a service disruption.

*WSF understands these concerns and will be monitoring data to track and identify whether these issues manifest. If they do become issues, WSF is open to changing business practices and policies to address and mitigate them.*

### **Top Misconception**

Some of the individuals that spoke with WSF staff had incorrect information about the coming reservation system. The most common misconception was that because 95% of vehicle space on every sailing will be *available* for reservations,

there will only be 5% of vessel space available for non-reserved travel all day, every day. Customers were incorrectly assuming that having reservations will increase customer travel during the busy season so significantly that all boats would be full all day and no one would be able to travel stand-by. There was a lack of understanding about the number of sailings in the early morning and later evenings that are not full, even during the summer season. Analysis shows that annual ridership utilization rate on the San Juan Islands route was 29% of capacity in 2011, 2012, and 2013. Even during the summer season utilization is only 58%. The number of vehicle trips taken would need to increase by 105,000 to reach summer schedule vessel capacity. That would be a 71% increase in the number of vehicle trips taken during the 2012 summer season (see exhibit below).

**Anacortes-San Juan Islands  
Summer 2012 (6/17/2012-9/22/2012)**

<b>Utilization Analysis</b>		
Vehicle Capacity*	253,000	
Vehicle Trips Taken*	148,000	
Percent Utilization	58%	
Remaining Vehicle Capacity*	105,000	71%

*\* All numbers are based on 20-foot vehicle equivalents*

**Lessons Learned**

Face-to-face outreach and communication is essential for improving public awareness and understanding about a new program. Going to events where potential customers will be, i.e. farmers markets, is one of the best ways to ensure WSF staff talks to many people. Additionally, customers are more receptive to information and appreciative of WSF going to them, rather than asking them to come to a WSF event. Although tremendously successful, such outreach is extremely costly, and needs to be budgeted for in the future.

**San Juan Islands VRS Communication Plan: Outreach Phase 2**  
**Phase 2 (September – December) 2014 Proposed Outreach Events**  
**Draft September 9, 2014**

**Goals:**

- Tourism/hospitality businesses know about reservations, feel comfortable helping customers make reservations (at least directing them to website).
- Residents know about reservations, feel comfortable creating accounts, and making reservations online, can go someplace in the community for help.
- Account set-up for customers with and without computer and internet access.

**Audiences:**

- Primary Audiences—San Juan Island Businesses (particularly tourism and hospitality), San Juan Island Residents.
- Secondary Audiences—WSF ferry customers.

**Proposed Fall 2014 Outreach Event Count by Location and Month**

Locations	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TBD	Total
<b>Anacortes</b>		2	1			3
Chamber of Commerce "Happy Hour"		1				1
Terminal Walk		1	1			1
<b>Friday Harbor</b>		1	2	2		5
Friday Harbor Hospitality Open House			2			2
Friday Harbor Library		1		1		1
Friday Harbor Senior Center				1		1
<b>Lopez</b>		1	1	2		4
Lopez Hospitality Open House			1			1
Lopez Library		1		1		1
Lopez Senior Center				1		1
<b>Orcas</b>		2	1	2		5
Chamber of Commerce "Happy Hour"		1				1
Orcas Hospitality Open House			1			1
Orcas Library		1		1		1
Orcas Senior Center				1		1
<b>Seattle</b>			1			1
Seattle Concierge Group			1			1
<b>Shaw</b>		1				1
Shaw Library (or community center?)		1				1
<b>Other</b>	1				1	2
SJI Partnership Meeting	1					1
WSF Community Meeting					1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>

**Save A Spot Outreach and Communication Plan Phase 2: Fall 2014**  
 Updated 9/10s/2014

Phase 2: Continuation of Program Awareness, September-December 2014: The goal of this Phase is to proactively work with customers and community resources to **prepare for** the acceptance of vehicle reservations online beginning Dec. 2.

**Audiences:**

- Hospitality/tourism industry and businesses in San Juan Islands
- San Juan Island residents, visitors to the San Juan Islands
- WSF customers system wide

Messages: Starting December 2, 2014, vehicle reservations will be accepted for winter season travel to and from the San Juan Islands for travel beginning on January 5, 2015. All ferry customers should prepare for reservations by creating an online account and understand how the reservation system will work.

**Phase 2 Outreach Activities:**

Tool	Message	Audience(s)	Delivery Method	Date(s)
<b>Marketing Materials</b>				
Preferential Load Groups Information Packet with targeted email	Provide general information on upcoming reservation system implementation, how to make an online account, FAQs	Preferential load customers, school groups, customers with livestock, home healthcare workers	Special letter for each group	Mid September
Commercial Customers Information packet with targeted email	Help commercial customers understand how to reserve, change or cancel reservations <u>online</u> , invitation to attend account sign-up events,	Commercial customers	Send email with Save A Spot information and invite	Mid September

Tool	Message	Audience(s)	Delivery Method	Date(s)
Outreach Postcards for SJI residents	Island specific information about upcoming outreach events, reservation start date	San Juan Island residents	Mail to residents	October
Outreach Postcards for Hospitality Groups	Island specific information about upcoming hospitality outreach events	Local hospitality businesses in and serving the SJIs	Mail to hospitality businesses	October
Hospitality Industry Information Packet and email (for all groups that do bookings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email outreach to hospitality groups in Anacortes, Skagit valley, Mt. Vernon, La Conner, Bellingham, Oak Harbor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local tourism businesses and industry contacts</li> </ul>	Direct mailing	October
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email hospitality groups in state, statewide travel agents, AAA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statewide tourism businesses and industry contacts</li> </ul>	Direct mailing	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email large events identified by group (i.e. Tour de Lopez)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large event member lists</li> </ul>	Direct mailing	
PDF for web / event planner insert	Produce a small handout for venues that book weddings and other events	Event planners	Mail and/or deliver handouts or brochure to wedding services and businesses	October
Customer / Resident Outreach Event Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce training packet for library and senior center staff</li> <li>Produce account sign-up materials</li> </ul>	SJI customers and residents	Hand out at outreach events	October
Hospitality Industry Outreach Event Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce Power Point Presentation for Hospitality Events</li> </ul>	Hospitality Industry	Show at Hospitality Industry outreach events	October

Tool	Message	Audience(s)	Delivery Method	Date(s)
TakeAFerry.com and WSF Website Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update WSF homepage Spotlight Ad</li> <li>Add information about creating an account</li> <li>Links to blog, online video</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>San Juan Island customers &amp; residents</li> <li>All ferry customers</li> </ul>	Online	Go live: October
Online Video: How to Make an Account	Instructional video that walks customers through account setup process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All ferry customers</li> </ul>	Online at WSF website, TakeAFerry.com (Camstudio.org has software for shooting video of computer screen)	Go live: October

Tool	Message	Audience(s)	Delivery Methods	Date(s)
<b>Special Interest Groups</b>				
San Juan Island Partnership Group Meetings	Share information about outreach activities and materials	San Juan Island Partnership Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group meeting between WSF staff and SJI Partnership Group members, invited attendees</li> </ul>	September 18
Meeting with legislators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senator Kevin Ranker</li> <li>Representative Kristine Lytton</li> <li>Representative Jeff Morris</li> </ul>		State Legislature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting between legislators and WSF staff</li> </ul>	TBD

<b>Outreach Events for Customers &amp; SJI Residents</b>				
Public Outreach Events on SJIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help customers create online accounts</li> <li>• Promote benefits for setting up an account</li> </ul>	San Juan Island residents and customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open house events will be held at libraries, senior centers and special events on the San Juan Islands. See outreach events calendar (TBD).</li> <li>• Train library and senior center staff</li> </ul>	Oct - Dec  See outreach events calendar (TBD)
<b>Outreach efforts for Hospitality Industry (statewide)</b>				
Hospitality Industry: "Reservations 101" What you need to know to help your guests	Training sessions with local tourism businesses to help them assist customers in making, changing, and cancelling reservations	Local hospitality businesses in and serving the SJIs	Open House hosted by WSF	1 per Island <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friday Harbor</li> <li>• Orcas</li> <li>• Lopez</li> </ul>
Hospitality Industry: "Reservations 101" What you need to know to help your guests	Training sessions with local tourism businesses to help them assist customers in making, changing, and cancelling reservations	Local hospitality businesses in and serving the SJIs	Chamber of Commerce meetings in Anacortes and Friday Harbor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBD (Oct)</li> </ul>
<b>Social Media</b>				
Facebook, Twitter, WSF Blog	Weekly postings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• San Juan Island customers &amp; residents</li> <li>• All ferry customers</li> </ul>	Updates posted on WSF and WSDOT Facebook and Twitter, WSF blog	Regular posts and tweets October – December 2014
Step-by-Step Blog	How-To instructions on making a reservation online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• San Juan Island customers &amp; residents</li> <li>• All ferry customers</li> </ul>	WSF blog	TBD
<b>Traditional Media</b>				

Press release	You can make reservations starting December 2 for sailings starting January 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• San Juan Island customers &amp; residents</li> <li>• General public</li> </ul>	Emailed to media contacts	December 1
Save A Spot Media Packet	Information on upcoming reservations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel media</li> <li>• Other Traditional Media</li> </ul>	Deliver to Chamber of Commerce to pass on to travel media contacts	October

## SAN JUAN ISLANDS PARTNERSHIP GROUP

### Monitoring Customer Misuse of Reservations System

#### “Gaming” the System

Washington State Ferries (WSF) recognizes that some customers may try to “game” the reservation system and use it in ways that WSF does not intend. However, policies that restrict some customers from misusing reservations may also restrict other customer from making reservations to accommodate their travel needs in an appropriate way. For example, one customer may make multiple reservations from the same terminal on the same day for a family reunion or wedding, while another customer may make multiple reservations from the same terminal on the same day in order to sell those reservations to other customers. Therefore, prior to implementing any misuse prevention policies, WSF will identify and track how much of a problem misuse is and which kinds of customers tend to do the misusing.

#### Policy on Bulk Reservations

WSF supports customers making reservations on behalf of other customers as long as those other customers are known at the time of making the reservation.

- Customers, including hotels, other tourism and hospitality organizations, and event organizers, may make reservations on behalf of a *known* customer or attendee.
- Customers *may not* make reservations in anticipation of guests or attendees. The reservation maker must know the customer’s name and vehicle size prior to making the reservation.

#### Misuse Concerns

- Customers will make bulk reservations and attempt to sell the reservations to other customers.
- Customers will make bulk reservations for potential, as yet unknown, customers.
- Customers, not knowing when they will travel, will make multiple reservations from the same terminal on the same day and then cancel last minute or just not show up for their other reserved sailings.
- Customers, not knowing the size of their vehicle will make reservations for a larger vehicle and then change to a smaller vehicle later.

#### Monitoring

WSF will monitor and track potential misuse with the following three reports.

- Weekly report listing customers who have made 10 or more reservations on the same day from the same terminal.
  - WSF will follow-up with those customer and see if the individuals are planning for an event.
- Weekly report listing customers who have made 20 or more reservations (10 or more roundtrips) for the same week on the same route.
  - WSF will track to see if the same customers do this repeatedly and follow-up with them to understand why.
- Monthly report of any customer who has changed, canceled, or missed (no-show) more than 20% of their reservations in a month.
  - WSF will follow-up with these customers to assess why this might be happening.

WSF will consider potential policy revisions or additions based on the information they learn from the monitoring reports.

## SAN JUAN ISLANDS PARTNERSHIP GROUP Last-minute Reservations in Anacortes

### Accommodating Last-minute Reservations in Anacortes

Washington State Ferries (WSF) recognizes that the Anacortes terminal is a connecting hub for the numerous residents, commercial passengers, and tourists who use the ferries to access the San Juan Islands. It is also understood that there is no option for customers to “drive around,” if they want to get home, deliver their goods or services, or enjoy a vacation in the San Juan Islands, they are reliant on the ferry system. At the same time, once reservations are available, WSF highly recommends that passengers traveling on high-demand routes plan ahead and reserve a spot on their desired sailing either online or on the phone. It is necessary to ensure options for customers who do not realize they need a reservation until they see the sign at exit 230 on I-5 and who may or may not have a cell phone or internet access.

### Options for Making Last-Minute Reservations in Anacortes

There are 3 options for making reservations once a customer is already on their way to Anacortes.

1. **By Cell Phone.** Currently, customers already on the road, traveling to Anacortes, may make reservations departing Anacortes, using a cell phone and calling WSF customer service or using the mobile application to make a reservation online
2. **At the Terminal.** Starting in April 2015, customers may make reservations for the *next* available sailing at the Anacortes terminal tollbooths.
3. **At the Anacortes Library.** A customer may go to the Anacortes Library and use the library’s computer to make a reservation online or get directed to a pay phone to call customer service for a reservation. Additionally, WSF is reaching out to the library in Anacortes to see if they would be willing to have their staff trained to assist customers who have questions about or need help with making a reservation online.

### Other Alternatives Investigated

WSF did evaluate the following options for making last minute reservations in Anacortes:

- **A Reservations Weigh Station or Kiosk.** This option would provide a weigh station or kiosk near to the signage that recommends reservations by the highway, or in the terminal. It would be an automated machine to allow customers to make reservations online.
  - Some barriers and concerns include:
    - Currently WSF does not have access to any land on Hwy 20 and would have to purchase or lease space, negotiate right of way, including small vehicle egress and ingress, and build out the space to accommodate people making reservations.
    - The features of the software, especially internet security for credit card information, would need to be constantly maintained and upgraded. Phone access for customer support would also need to be maintained.
    - On-going staffing would be needed to address vandalism and ongoing maintenance of property, as well as information technology support staff for software and customer assistance if something was not working properly.

- **Business Partnership.** This option would seek a business partner(s) in the community who would be willing to host a computer station and welcome ferry passengers to make their reservation online at their facility.
  - As a state agency, WSF is not allowed to promote a for-profit business on a highway sign or highway advisory radio, making it hard to direct people to the appropriate location to make a reservation if the partnership was with a business.
  - Other barriers and concerns include finding willing partners, assuring their incentives to participate, negotiating ownership and liability for their equipment, and assuring the necessary hours of availability.

Given the existing options for making a last minute reservations in Anacortes, WSF determined that the benefits of the kiosk or business partnership did not overcome the costly investment in a weigh station or kiosk, or the complexity of negotiating a business partnerships.

## **Monitoring**

WSF anticipates that the population who will be en-route without a phone or internet access and who arrive early enough to make the three-hour cutoff is small, and likely to decline over time as repeat passengers learn to plan ahead and make reservations and/or avoid high-demand sailings. WSF staff will periodically survey customers, who arrive at the tollbooth without a reservation—asking them why they did not make a reservation and what improvements they could make to encourage customers to make reservations in the future.

# WSF Vehicle Reservation System Implementation: Anacortes - San Juan Islands Route

## Summary of Implementation Training and Support Plan

### Customer Service Training: October/November 2014

Customer service agents answer customer calls to WSF and are responsible for responding to customer questions about reservations and often make reservations on behalf of those customers.

#### Key Change(s)

Increase in call volume:

- Currently, 18% of all reservations are made over the phone by WSF customer service agents. Initially, we expect the percentage to be higher as customers become acclimated to the new reservation system.
- It is anticipated that even more guests will use customer service assistance to get reservations for the Anacortes San Juan Island route because it can be a confusing route for first-time travelers.

Change in the nature of questions and reservation requests:

- Currently, only commercial customers traveling on Anacortes-San Juan Island route are able to make reservations online or over the phone with a WSF customer service agent.
- Starting December 2, 2014, all customers traveling on the Anacortes-San Juan Island route will be able to make reservations online or over the phone with a WSF customer service agent. This will mean a change in the types of questions and reservations requests customer service agents need to be able to respond to.

#### Training

Customer service agents will be provided an updated operations manual with the policies and procedures during their hands-on training on efficiently assisting customers with questions about travel legs and reservation availability from different terminals on the Anacortes-San Juan Island route.

#### Support

- Supervisors will be on hand to help problem solve and answer customer service agent questions.
- *Additional customer service agents will be on the phones than prior seasons to help answer the expected increase in calls to minimize the impact on the customer wait time.*

### Operations Training\*

Trainings for operations staff will depend on the terminal and the staff position. At Anacortes terminal, the Ticket Sellers, Staging Booth Attendants and Traffic Attendants will receive training in two parts; part one in the fall and part two in the spring. These trainings are timed so that they align with ITS elements being ready and the anticipated increase in traffic volume closer to the summer season.

Orcas Island and Friday Harbor contract agents will receive a "train-the-trainer" training and then be responsible for training their staff.

### Anacortes Terminal Part 1: December 2014/January 2015

#### Key Changes

For Ticket Sellers at Anacortes changes will be minimal.

- Functions in the toll booth won't change as sellers currently process reservations for commercial customers and all traffic on the International route.

- Volume of customers with reservations is anticipated to be light initially and then grow with the approach of late-spring/summer season.

For Staging Booth and Traffic Attendants at Anacortes changes will be minimal.

- Staging locations will change slightly as customers with reservations will be staged separately from customers without reservations.
- Volume of customers with reservations is anticipated to be light initially and new processes should be routine by late-spring/summer season.

#### Training

Efficient continuous throughput at the tollbooths and staging booth is essential, so training will be focused on reducing queues and keeping processing time to a minimum.

- For Ticket Sellers training will include reviewing reservation business practices, policies, and procedures, as well as what to do in the event of a service disruption.
- For Staging Booth and Traffic Attendants training will include new staging procedures, as well as what to do in the event of a service disruption.
- An updated operations manual will be provided to all employees.

#### Support

- Anacortes Reservations Manager will monitor processes, coach staff, problem solve and add staffing as/if needed.
- Additional on-site support will be provided the first couple weeks of operations to answer questions quickly to not impact operations.

### **Anacortes Terminal Part 2: March/April 2015**

#### Key Changes

Ability for Ticket Sellers at Anacortes to make reservations for the *next* available sailing for customers at their tollbooth.

- Functionality in the toll booth will be upgraded, adding limited ability to make reservations. A load management program will be deployed to assist staging booth and traffic attendants manage vehicle staging in the holding lanes.
- A virtual staging model will provide a significant upgrade in speed and accuracy to the current pen & paper process.

#### Training

Efficient continuous throughput at the tollbooths and staging booth is essential, so training will be focused on reducing queues and keeping processing time to a minimum.

- For Ticket Sellers training will include how to manage the process of making a reservation for the *next* available sailing if a customer requests this at the tollbooth.
- For Staging Booth and Traffic Attendants training will include how to use new virtual staging program.

#### Support

- Given that making a reservation is expected to be a 60-90 second process, WSF will forecast expected overloads and add sellers to meet the demand, monitoring the need and staffing appropriately.
- Anacortes Reservations Manager will monitor processes, coach staff, problem solve and add staffing as/if needed.
- Additional on-site support will be provided the first couple weeks of implementing the new technologies to answer questions quickly to not impact operations.

### **Friday Harbor: December 2014/January 2015**

#### Key Changes

A new handheld reservation redemption process occurring in the holding areas combined with the scaling up of reservations for all customers will bring significant process changes. As in Anacortes, staff will acclimate with initial light loads.

#### Training

As is the norm with contractors, WSF will train one or two Friday Harbor employees and the contract agent will manage the training of their staff.

- Contract agents will have the opportunity to test, train and refine their handheld and other processes this fall with commercial customers.
- Training will also include reviewing reservation business practices, policies, and procedures, when to scan a reservation, a what to do in the event of a service disruption

#### Support

Friday Harbor will use the handheld scanners sooner and much more heavily than Orcas Island, likely driving refinements in the software and usage practices that will benefit Orcas.

- IT and Operations staff will ensure WSF equipment and software operates correctly and is optimized for Friday Harbor.
- Staffing requirements will be monitored and provisions have been made to adjust staffing levels.

### **Orcas Island: December 2014/January 2015**

#### Key Changes

Like Anacortes, commercial reservations are already redeemed at the tollbooth and initial light loads will allow staff a gradual ramp up.

- Functions in the toll booth won't change as sellers currently process reservations for commercial customers and all traffic on the International route.
- Handheld redemption will be added, but is a secondary process planned for heavier traffic times, and will likely not be utilized initially.

#### Training

As is the norm with contractors, WSF will train one or two Orcas employees and the contract agent will manage the training of their staff.

- Contract agents will have the opportunity to test, train and refine their handheld and other processes this fall with commercial customers.
- Training will also include reviewing reservation business practices, policies, and procedures, as well as what to do in the event of a service disruption

#### Support

- IT and Operations staff will ensure WSF equipment and software operates correctly and is optimized for Orcas Island.
- Staffing requirements will be monitored and provisions have been made to adjust staffing levels.

*\*Please Note: Processes at Lopez, Shaw and Sidney do not change.*