

San Juan Islands Partnership Group

**Wednesday, September 11, 2013 | 11:30 a.m. – 2:05 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"> Opening Remarks 	David Moseley, WSF
11:45 a.m.	Meeting Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductions Review agenda and meeting objectives 	Michael Hodgins, Facilitator (BERK)
11:50 a.m.	New Go-live Date: December 28, 2014 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change from Fall to Winter 2014 	Brian Churchwell, WSF
12:00 p.m.	Release of Reservation Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback and new ideas from group New WSF release schedule concept 	Brian Churchwell
TBD	Break (10 min)	
	Release of Reservation Space (continued)	Brian Churchwell
1:20 p.m.	ITS & Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised plan for ITS elements Updates and feedback on current conditions website 	Leonard Smith Brian Churchwell
1:50 p.m.	Public Comments	Michael Hodgins
2:05 p.m.	Meeting Adjourned	

Meeting Materials:

- Release of Reservation Space
- Phase II Capital for Anacortes and San Juan Islands Terminals

* 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

SAN JUAN ISLANDS PARTNERSHIP GROUP

Release of Reservation Space

Background and Context

System Design

An inherent challenge of designing the vehicle reservation system is answering the following question: *How do we ensure that space is available to all types of WSF customers in a way that aligns with their travel needs?* In other words, how do you design a reservation system that supports both tourists, who tend to plan far in advance, and residents of the San Juan Islands, who tend to make more last-minute trips?

The 2010 Vehicle Reservation System Predesign Study proposed the concept of the Premier Program to handle this challenge. The Premier Program would allow customers who met certain criteria to reserve space on the boat made available only to Program members.

San Juan Island Challenges

Through the partnership process, WSF and the Partnership Group have identified multiple concerns with implementing the Premier Program for the San Juan Islands.

- One concern is that it is difficult to define program eligibility criteria that are “right” for the Islands. Proposed criteria were thought to be too complicated and would not allow all Island residents to be members, which meant that the concerns around travel planning for residents were only partially mitigated.
- A second concern is that the Premier Program doesn’t address the issue of time spent by drive-up customers waiting at the terminal for available space. Waits can be multiple hours long during peak times, and customers cannot leave the dock to do something productive while they wait. Partnership Group members noted it would be preferable if drive-up customers could be sent away from the staging area with a guaranteed spot.

Revised Reservation Space Release Proposal

Partnership Input

One of WSF’s Lopez Partnership members presented an alternative plan to make guaranteed space available in two phased releases. This proposal would have one release occur approximately 6 months before the sailing (or, as soon as the schedule is available, whichever is less) and have the second release occur closer to sailing departure. In total, these two releases would make about 95% of the vessel available for reservations. The rationale for this plan is that a phased release process would better guarantee space for all customers by releasing some space early for tourists and others who want to plan in advance, and leave some space locked up until closer to departure so travelers who only know their plans a few days in advance would still be able to make reservations.

Release of Reservation Space

The phased release approach was explored during the Vehicle Reservation System Predesign process, but was not proposed as part of the operating plan because the Edmonds-Kingston Partnership Group working with WSF at that time thought a phased release would not address the needs of regular system users as well as the Premier Program would. This group felt that phasing the release of space would be confusing because space would be “full” one day but then available the next, which could be difficult for customers to understand and for WSF to communicate.

However, WSF is open to exploring this option again, with the refinements identified below, as it may prove to be a better solution than the Premier Program for the San Juan Islands. In addition, supporting a near-departure release would allow WSF to make a high percentage of the boat available for reservations (up to 95%) because there would be less need for drive-up travel. This would reduce congestion by having a majority of vehicles arriving at the terminal with a guaranteed space on an upcoming sailing.

In addition, customers would be able to make reservations at the terminal so those that do drive-up to the terminal can leave with a guaranteed spot on the next available boat, instead of having to park and wait for an indeterminate amount of time.

Goals

The goals of moving away from the Premier Program and toward a tiered release of space include:

- Providing equal access to guaranteed space for customers with different travel planning needs
- Simplifying operations by eliminating the need for a Premier Program
- Saving costs on development by eliminating the need for a Premier Program
- Simplifying communication with customers as the system is released
- Allowing tourists to make their ferry vehicle reservations at the same time they are booking their other reservations (lodging, airfare, etc.) when that season's sailing schedule is available.
- Providing customers (at Anacortes only) with a guaranteed space on a future sailing with the staging area is full
- Maximum utilization of the current staging area

WSF Potential Operating Plan

WSF has spent the past month investigating the feasibility of this suggestion and the Partnership's feedback about the Premier Program and has designed the following potential operating plan:

- In total, make 95% of the vessel capacity (or 95% of the allotment for eastbound sailings) available for vehicle reservations.
- Release space in two phases:
 - **First Release:** Provide approximately 50% of the space up to six months in advance to allow commercial account customers and tourists to plan their travels
 - **Second Release:** Provide approximately 45% of the space one week or less in advance of the sailing date to meet the needs of those that plan their travel closer to the sailing departure date.

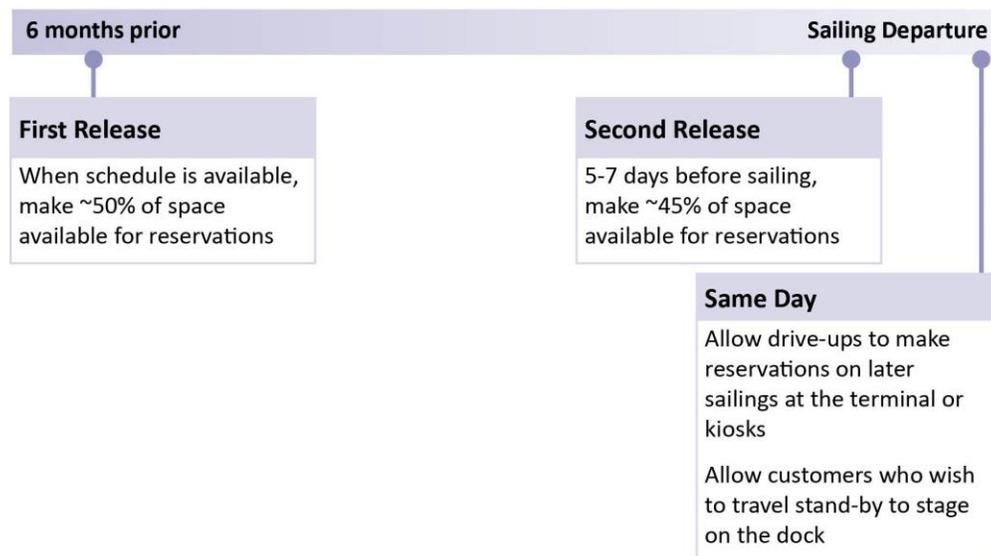
Release of Reservation Space

The simplicity of two release points may alleviate some of the confusion about a phased release program brought up during the Predesign, because the Predesign explored multiple release points, which raised confusion and communications concern among the Edmonds-Kingston Partnership Group. The potential operating plan would also simplify communications compared to the Premier Program by not requiring separate allocations of space for different customer types trying to make reservations on the same vessel.

- Provide additional locations for our customers to make reservations, such as at the terminal and at a location in downtown Anacortes for those arriving without having made a reservation in advance. We will communicate heavily to drive-ups to go to the downtown location to make a reservation for a later sailing so they have a guaranteed spot when arriving at our terminal. For those drive-ups that arrive without their guaranteed spot, we will provide a means to make a reservation at the terminal for a later sailing so they can leave and return with a guaranteed spot. This will reduce wasted time spent at the terminal.
- Limit the number of stand-by vehicles staged in the holding area because a majority of customers (up to 95%) will have a guaranteed vehicle space
- Require credit card information to be collected for each reservation to collect the no-show fee.

Exhibit 1 summarizes the release plan timeline described above.

Exhibit 1
Conceptual Release Timeline



- The **first release** is designed to benefit users who tend to make reservations far in advance, such as commercial customers, tourists planning to visit the Islands, residents planning vacations off the Islands, and commuters with regular schedules.
- The **second release** is designed to work for customers who make travel plans closer to the sailing date, such as residents planning day-trips off the Islands and tourists planning last-minute trips to the Islands.
- The **same-day availability** of reservations at the terminal is designed to benefit all users by reducing the wasted time spent at the terminal in the stand-by line. This change does not represent an

additional release of space. It is a policy change that would allow drive-up customers to make reservations at the terminal only within previously released space, if it is available.

Concerns/Areas to Monitor

The above presents a potential operating plan for handling the release of reservation space in the San Juan Islands. Like all aspects of the vehicle reservation system, it may need to be refined over time as WSF becomes familiar with how people actually use the system once it's implemented.

WSF will consider the following metrics to measure how well the operating plan is working for customers and for WSF:

- WSF will track if calls to Customer Service increase after the first release is fully reserved, which may imply space needs to be distributed differently between the first and second release or that WSF needs to improve communications about the upcoming second release.
- WSF will track how quickly the first release is being reserved to inform how space should be distributed between the first and second releases. If the first release is filling up too quickly, WSF may increase the amount of space released six months in advance.
- WSF will track how long it takes to make reservations at the tollbooth and the impact this has on transaction times and staffing at the Anacortes terminal.
- WSF will analyze how much it will cost to integrate the Wave2Go ticketing system to allow tollbooth sellers to make a reservation.

San Juan Islands Wait Time Analysis

A reservation system with 95% of space available for reservations is designed to reduce wait times by balancing the boat toward the majority of customers having guaranteed spots, and only a few customers without reservations driving up and waiting one or more sailings to travel.

The San Juan Islands, however, differ from other routes because they have a higher overall usage during the peak season and because time between sailings is longer than on other routes. Therefore, even if drive-ups are reduced to a smaller number of vehicles, some of these vehicles still may wait multiple hours until the next sailing to their desired destination.

To understand the magnitude of wait times in the Islands, WSF tracked the following information for three consecutive Fridays this August:

- At what time did the upcoming sailing get oversold?
- At what time did the first two overloaded vehicles on each sailing purchase their tickets?

Using these two data points, WSF was able to understand the “worst case scenario” amount of time waited for each sailing on these days due to overloads. In other words, how long did the first vehicles in line for each sailing wait between buying their tickets and traveling?

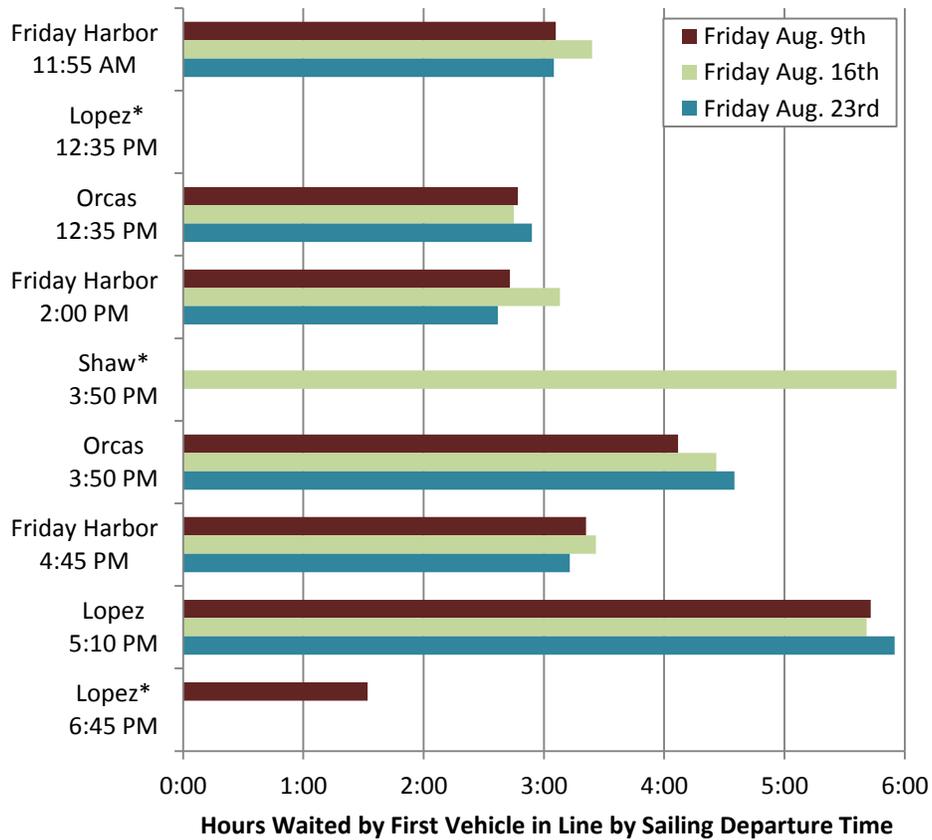
Exhibit 2 captures the results of this analysis by showing the length of time (in hours) from ticket purchase to vessel departure for all sailings where the previous sailing to that destination overloaded.

It's important to note that this is the amount of time waited by the vehicle that waited in line the longest. It does not reflect the average or regular wait time on these sailings, and may reflect the experience of only one or two cars. Additionally, sometimes the wait time listed is long but only reflects

one sailing due to long headways, such as sailings from Anacortes to Lopez. For example, if customers are bumped from the 12:35 sailing to Lopez, they have to wait until 5:10 to travel.

These types of waits could be alleviated by the proposal above to let customers make reservations at the tollbooth, thereby allowing them to leave the dock and return for a later sailing with a guaranteed space.

Exhibit 2
Hours Waited by First Vehicle in Line for Westbound Sailings, August 2013



* If the previous sailing to a specific destination did not overload, no wait times are shown for that sailing. All vehicles loaded on that sailing arrived at the terminal after the previous sailing departed.

- Throughout the day, many sailings had their first vehicle in line wait between 2 and 4 hours for that sailing.
- The longest potential wait times occurred for customers traveling to Shaw and Lopez, as there are nearly five hours between some sailings.

SAN JUAN ISLANDS PARTNERSHIP GROUP

Phase II Capital for Anacortes and San Juan Islands

Introduction

Background & Context

Implementing vehicle reservations in the San Juan Islands will require capital improvements to ferry terminals and intelligent transportation systems (ITS) networks on the Islands and at the Anacortes terminal. Reservations-related improvements may include highway and terminal radio transmitters, highway signs, cameras to count vehicles and monitor staging areas, handheld scanners and wireless access points, and changes to tollbooths.

About this Document

At the January 2013 San Juan Island Partnership Meeting, WSF presented a draft list of capital improvements to support VRS implementation. This document presents updated thinking about capital that reflects the conversations that have been had with the Partnership Group and with WSF staff since January.

Overall, WSF has reduced the list of needed improvements by prioritizing around the following concepts:

- **Staying within budget.** The original capital list presented in January was determined to be higher than the amount budgeted for Phase II capital improvements in the Islands and at Anacortes. In order to be responsive to budgetary needs, WSF critically reviewed the previous capital list to identify improvements that could be accomplished through operational changes or less expensive options.
- **Supporting the reservation system.** Some ITS investments on the original list were identified as improving WSF operations in general, but were not specifically needed to support the reservation system. WSF identified funding from its operating budget that could support these investments instead, leaving reservations capital funding available for reservations-specific improvements.

Responding to Partnership Group feedback. The release of reservation space described earlier in this meeting will require different capital needs. Since up to 95% of the boat will be reserved, we need to provide good communication prior to the terminal that reservations are highly recommended and directing non-reservation holders to our mobile website, a downtown Anacortes location, or to call Customer Service. The tables included in this document show the capital improvements that WSF is currently recommending at each terminal, as well as the capital improvements that have been identified as not necessary since the previous meeting. Capital improvements that have been removed from the list are shown with a strikethrough.

Capital Improvements By Terminal

The following table summarizes the capital improvements that WSF, terminal staff, and the San Juan Island Partnership have identified as necessary to support a reservation system.

Friday Harbor

ITS Element	Element Detail	Notes
<u>Planned Improvements</u>		
Web Cameras	2 web cameras for lot A 1 Web camera for lot B	We will need 2 WSF cameras to view Lot A. The second camera is required due to placement of cameras on WSF property and the limited field of view with only one camera.
Wire Less Access Points	2 Wireless Access Points to operate handheld scanners (Lot A & B)	
<u>Removed Improvements</u>		
Static Signage	Replace 3 existing signs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lot B sign ● Lane assignment ● Directions to Lot B/C 	This work was a benefit to existing operations, not specific to reservations. Other money was identified within the Operation's budget to complete these items.
Vehicle Counts	2 cameras on transfer span to count vehicles loaded	Vehicle counting system will not provide the destination of all vehicles. Therefore, the terminal staff will still need to manually count by destination.
Web Cameras	2-3 web cameras to view Lots A, B, & C.	Due to the network and power access limitations we have deleted the lot C's camera.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Storage building at the head of Lot A for scanners and other equipment ● Striping in Lot C 	<p>Storage space for housing the handheld scanners and other related equipment was included within a maintenance project.</p> <p>Striping in Lot C was recently completed with other on-gong maintenance activities.</p>

Orcas

ITS Element	Element Detail	Notes
<u>Planned Improvements</u>		
Web Cameras	3 web cameras to view holding area and access lanes	
Wire Less Access Points	2 Wireless Access Points to operate scanners (front of main lot & access lanes)	
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demolish existing tollbooth and build new tollbooth located prior to holding area • Cabling and power to support new tollbooth and the wireless access points • Manual gate to secure holding area 	
<u>Removed Improvements</u>		
Static Signage	Replace existing lane assignment sign by the tollbooth (not overhead).	New lane assignment sign will no longer be needed since we are not removing the grass and trees area next to the tollbooth to expand holding area. We also verified the existing sign will be visible from the new tollbooth location and the entrance to the holding area.
Electronic Sign	1 Prior to access road	The VMS sign was to be provided right where the customer is turning into the through lane for the vehicle tollbooth and holding area. At that point, they are already committed to go to the through lane. We don't feel there would be a large enough benefit.
Vehicle Counts	1 camera on transfer span to count vehicles loaded	Vehicle counting system will not provide the destination of all vehicles. Therefore, the terminal staff will still need to manually count.
Other	Remove grass area / trees to increase holding area	There are major utilities located in this area and it would be costly to move them for the few additional staging spaces it would gain us.

Lopez

ITS Element	Element Detail	Notes
<u>Planned Improvements</u>		
Web Cameras	3 web cameras to view holding area and shoulder holding lanes	
<u>Removed Improvements</u>		
Vehicle Counts	1 camera on transfer span to count vehicles loaded	Vehicle counting system will not provide the destination of all vehicles. Therefore, the terminal staff will still need to manually count.

Shaw

ITS Element	Element Detail	Notes
<u>Removed Improvements</u>		
Vehicle Counts	1 camera on transfer span to count vehicles loaded	Vehicle counting system will not provide the destination of all vehicles. Therefore, the terminal staff will still need to manually count.

Anacortes

ITS Element	Element Detail	Notes
<u>Planned Improvements</u>		
Electronic Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Tollbooth Variable Message Signs (VMS) • 1 VMS sign prior to Commercial Ave 	We heard from Partnership group and staff that we should be communicating with customers prior to them getting to the terminal.
Video Counts	Provide vehicle length/ height/ counting system at Staging Booth	We are looking at different technologies to help make the Staging Booth process more efficient.
Web Cameras	3 cameras to view vehicle holding area	
Highway Advisory Radio	Upgrade existing HART on SR 20 to standardize operation, text to voice	
Other	Re-number holding lanes to 1-19 (includes customs lanes)	
<u>Removed Improvements</u>		
Other	Change gate position at bottom of lot to allow trucks to easily maneuver out of all lanes	Auto –turn analysis was completed recently by the design team and determined gate positions are not required to be relocated.