

**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**WSF PORT TOWNSEND / COUPEVILLE VRS PARTNERSHIP MEETING**  
**COTTON BUILDING, PORT TOWNSEND, WA**  
Wednesday, April 25, 2012 5:15 – 8:00 p.m.

*Note: This meeting summary represents notes from the Washington State Department of Transportation Ferries Division (WSF) Partnership Group Meeting, and is not a formal transcript or minutes. It is provided as a record for the staff, group members and public in attendance, and other interested parties.*

**Welcome**

WSDOT Assistant Secretary David Moseley  
Heather Rogers, Berk & Associates

David welcomed the group members and thanked them for coming.

Heather went over the agenda.

**Project Updates**

Heather Rogers, Berk & Associates

Heather gave a brief update on the preferential loading WAC revisions and the Usability Testing results.

**Software Demonstration**

Brian Churchwell, WSF IT Department

Brian demonstrated Premier Account features, including how to make, change or cancel a reservation (see screenshot handout).

**Questions & Comments**

1. (David Sullivan) Will you be able to use this website from mobile phones?  
*Yes. In the future we are looking at having a mobile version of the site that is more user friendly from a cell phone.*
2. (Helen Price Johnson) Is there a "back" button in case you want to go back and make sure you made the right choices. (Referring to the Payment Information page)  
*Great idea, we will look at that.*
3. (Bob Clay) So you make a reservation for the car and driver, then if you have a passenger you pay for them at the booth.  
*Correct. This allows us to validate the type of fare, senior, child, etc.*  
The only place I see that stated is the final checkout page, is it somewhere else?  
*We tried to put it in different spots.*
4. (Ralph Young) The majority of people will have to pay more money at the booth; will you require that they present their card or will that be stored in the system?  
*They will have to present their card; for security reasons we will not store it in a system that the tollbooth person can access.*
5. (Helen Price Johnson) So you're not required to use the same card as the one on file for your reservation account?  
*Correct.*
6. (Tom Thiersch) Is the bar code the same as the reservation number?

*No, the bar code is specific to your account. They can also look you up by name, telephone number or confirmation number.*

The confirmation number is unique?

*Yes, the confirmation number is unique to that transaction.*

7. (Bob Clay) If you're stuck in traffic and you have to call and change your reservation, can you still use the barcode you printed up from the old reservation?  
*Yes.*
8. (Helen Price Johnson) Why is the vehicle tab called "My Favorites" instead of "My Vehicles"? (Referring to the Account Management page)  
*As we include other routes in the new system you may want to store different routes under "My Favorites" as well as your different vehicles.*
9. (Ralph Young) The left column says the reservation number; that number is not that important number to the customer, why not flip the columns so the more important information comes first. (Referring to the Reservation Confirmation page)
10. (Tom Thiersch) Why does it say "Replaced" instead of just "Cancelled," what difference does it make? (Referring to the Reservation History page)  
*It makes it easier for someone in customer service because they can see the changes you have made. Perhaps that's not the best word choice; we can look at that.*
11. (Kim Younger) I would like to be able to click on the column headers in order to sort the columns. (Referring to the Reservation History page)  
*Good idea.*
12. (Leonard Smith) How much history are we keeping; for how long?  
*I will check into that.*
13. (Tom Thiersch) I would like to be able to check a box so that I see only the active reservations, not the changed or cancelled ones. (Referring to the Reservation History page)  
*Good idea.*
14. (Bob Clay) This history page could be really useful to a business; they could look and see which trucks went where, when.
15. (Tom Thiersch) Will this account be integrated with other WSF systems?  
*Not yet. We will look at integrating this system with the email alerts and Wave To Go, but the first priority is to get the system up and running.*
16. (Bob Clay) You should keep some of that white space; down the road you may want to add advertisements.  
*We will keep that in mind, that is a potential non-fare revenue for us.*

## **Implementation Schedule**

Heather Rogers, Berk & Associates

Heather discussed key dates associated with implementation, and what customers will see at the terminals when (see page 2 of handout packet).

1. (Ralph Young) I assume this schedule is for Port Townsend/Coupeville, not the San Juans?  
*This schedule is for all the routes that currently have a reservation system: Port Townsend/Coupeville, Anacortes/Sidney, and commercial users in the San Juans.*  
I heard a rumor that implementation would happen in the San Juans first, and then at Port Townsend, was that false?  
*Yes, everyone gets the new system at the same time.*
2. (Michelle Sandoval) Are you advertising this lapse?  
*Yes, on the website.*
3. (Kim Younger) So no changes can be made over the phone during that window?



*No, the system will be locked down; we decided to have only one system at a time to avoid confusion for customers and minimize customer service agents having to switch between different screens.*

Does it need to be the whole 16 days?

*Yes. We wanted to make sure we left the current system up through Memorial Day weekend. We felt that this time period would have the least impact on that busy holiday weekend, but it's still early enough to have people making most of their summer reservations on the new system.*

4. (Tom Thiersch) It says the new site is live on June 1 but you can't make a reservation for a sailing before June 17?

*That is correct; it starts with the new summer schedule.*

5. (Bob Clay) How did the initial testing go?

*There were no major glitches; the feedback we got was to make the pages more clear and to change certain word choices to help people understand better. We are very satisfied with the feedback we got.*

6. (Bob Clay) Will you be doing outreach to the Chambers?

*Yes, Susan will be coming to meet with the Chambers and Visitors Bureaus to walk them through implementation.*

7. (Bob Clay) When a vessel goes out of service and you have reserved customers backed up what will you do?

*Our service disruption plan, which this group helped us decide on, is as follows: When a vessel goes down we will immediately notify all reservation holders and stop taking any more reservations for the rest of the day. Then we will take care of the customers staged on the dock, reserved and standby alike. After that we will not allow anymore standby traffic on the dock until we recover; until we are back on schedule we will only honor reservation holders.*

Those reservations may be a sailing behind.

*Correct. We will notify reservation holders of the expected delays and also lift the no-show policy for that day. Those with a choice about travel could make other plans and will have the deposit refunded to them at the end of the business day. If they decide to come down anyway we would get them on as soon as we could. BC Ferries has gone through several iterations of their service disruption policy; they keep adjusting it as they learn. We will improve our plan as we go.*

8. (Tom Thiersch) The notification street signs, is that happening?

*In Coupeville we are putting in two signs advertising the advisory radio as well as two fixed signs between Fort Casey and the tollbooths to tell people which lane to get into. The same is happening at Port Townsend along with a new signal system at the tollbooths to allow channelization. We will try to get this work done before June 17 if we can.*

## Parking Lot Issues

Heather Rogers of Berk & Associates

Heather went over questions and comments collected from all the prior VRS meetings that have not yet been explicitly addressed (see pages 3-7 of handout packet).

1. (Ralph Young) What would a kiosk cost?

*We're not sure; we have not looked at it that closely. We prefer the idea of people going to the Visitors Bureaus where people will be trained to help them make a reservation.*

2. (Michelle Sandoval) That's an interesting thought; the Visitors Bureau would need computer access.

*Yes.*



3. (Tom Thiersch) Will Premier and Executive customers see a different view than the general user?  
*No, the only difference would be the amount of space available.*
4. (Helen Price Johnson) Will there be a later at night weekend trip on the summer schedule?  
*We have been working on schedule requests for the Port Townsend/Coupeville route, which include an earlier sailing to accommodate commercial traffic that wants to travel earlier in the day, as well as a late night sailing on weekends. We worked on this for three months and came up with a schedule that we are going to try on a pilot basis. The new boat will move one sailing earlier, then on Friday and Saturday we will have an extended break midday which will allow for the last sailing from Port Townsend to depart at 10 p.m. and the last from Coupeville to depart at 10:45 p.m. We will try this and see how it works.*
5. (Michelle Sandoval) By "work" do you mean if enough people use it?  
*Yes. The midday is actually a peak time on this route; we don't want to trade a full boat for one that is only a third full.*  
Thank you very much for trying this. My only thought is that it might not be late enough.
6. (Helen Price Johnson) Will you take reservations when there are low tides scheduled?  
*No, those sailings will be blocked and will show "tidal cancellation" as the status.*
7. (Kim Younger) For clarification, can we just print one barcode off and keep it in the car?  
*Yes, you can tape it to the back of your revalue card. Laminating it is a good idea.*
8. (Ralph Young) Do you have enough resources to handle implementation?  
*That's a good question; we need it to be as close to perfect as we can make it. We don't have the budget for staffing two tollbooths indefinitely, and to make this work we need both booths open. When both vessels are sailing, both booths will be staffed, but only one booth will be staffed when only one vessel is sailing on the route. If we see a problem emerging because of staffing issues we will try to address it within the funds that we have. We want to have this system on multiple routes, so we need this to work well so that we get less resistance in the future rollouts.*
9. (Tom Thiersch) It would be helpful to have a "feedback" button on the site so we can interact with tech support when we have an issue with Save a Spot.  
*Like an online assistant.*  
Or a feedback form at the end of the process to let you know how it went; something that goes directly to the experts. Also there should be an FAQ page for people to review.

### **Establish Next Meeting Date**

Heather Rogers of Berk & Associates

Heather suggested the last two weeks in July for the next meeting.

July 26 seemed to work for all the group members in attendance. Heather said she would check the availability of the venue as well as WSF staff and get back to the group.

### **Round Table**

Heather Rogers of Berk & Associates

Heather asked the group to go around and give any final thoughts prior to rolling out the new system.

1. (Kim Younger) This has been great, thank you. My concern is a successful launch. It's nice to hear that you are committed to the importance of that.

2. (Tom Thiersch) My concern is that the new system is complicated to explain to users; I don't know how to solve that. I think it will help to have clear communications. Perhaps a high-clip bulleted handout for the average user who doesn't need to know all the details.
3. (David Sullivan) I remember people saying years ago that WSF doesn't listen; I think you do and I appreciate it.
4. (Michelle Sandoval) I second that, I am lucky to be a part of this. I think the first system was cumbersome but it was a huge milestone, and I think this new system will be much easier than the first. I think it will go very well.
5. (Bob Clay) Thank you for involving me; I have much faith and am impressed by your people and your resources. I think it's going to be great. The value of it will overshadow any problems you have in the beginning.
6. (Helen Price Johnson) I agree. I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this process. With such tight budgets investing like this is smart. I think we'll be looking back in September very happily.
7. (Ralph Young) I'm very impressed. I think the south end of Whidbey might get jealous and change their minds. I just hope we don't get nicked and dined to death on the credit card transactions.
8. (Ellin Larimer) I think it will work.

### Public Comments

No public comments.

### Conclusion

David thanked everyone for coming. Meeting was adjourned.

### Group Members

Present	Name of Group Member
	Timothy Caldwell
X	Bob Clay
	Nancy Conard
	Robert Hammett
	Ian Jefferds
X	Helen Price Johnson
	David King
X	Ellin Larimer
	Lisa Lynes
	Brian Martin
	Jennifer Meyer
	Josh Peters
	Christina Pivarnik
X	Michelle Sandoval
	Diane Schostak
	Rick Sepler
X	David Sullivan
X	Tom Thiersch
	David Timmons

	Patricia Willesoft
X	Kim Younger
X	Ralph Young

**Project Team**

- David Moseley, WSDOT Assistant Secretary
- George Capacci, WSF Deputy Chief of Operations
- Marta Coursey, WSF Director of Communications
- Brian Churchwell, WSF IT Department
- Leonard Smith, WSF Operations Manager
- Heather Rogers, Berk & Associates
- Rachel Waitt, WSF Terminal Engineering

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