



WSDOT Ferries Division Public Meeting  
Vashon, Wash.  
McMurray Middle School Multipurpose Room  
Monday, Oct. 13, 2008: 6:30 – 9 p.m.

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

### **Open House**

Meeting attendees were given an opportunity to review the boards set up throughout the room. Ferries Division staff were available to answer questions.

### **Introduction**

*David Moseley, Assistant Secretary, WSDOT Ferries Division*

*Alan Mendel, Vashon FAC Chair*

*Diane Adams, Meeting Facilitator*

Alan welcomed everyone and asked people to fill out a survey given by his Ferry Advisory Committee (FAC). He announced the upcoming FAC and transportation committee meetings on Vashon and encouraged people to attend.

Alan said that we're here tonight for a specific purpose which is to discuss the long-range plan. He encouraged attendees to stay on topic and noted that there are other venues for some of the other concerns we might have but that tonight is about the long-range plan.

Diane reviewed the agenda and the ground rules.

David thanked everyone for coming. David apologized for having to use the smaller boat [the Hiyu] on the Tahlequah / Point Defiance route. He said that he is aware that the Hiyu is inadequate for the run and that it provides diminished service. He said that the reality is that he does not have enough boats to effectively operate the Ferries Division system.

David highlighted a few local concerns:

1. *New boats.* David said that the Ferries Division needs to build new boats. He said that we have the biggest ferry system in the United States and we do not have any back-up boats. He emphasized that this is not a sustainable way to operate. He said that the Ferries Division is working on building these boats. Ferries has a contract with Todd Shipyards and is on track to begin construction by the end of 2009 for the 144-car boats. The



- bids are due to the Ferries Division on Nov. 6, 2008 for (at least) two 64-car vessels and David hopes to contract before Thanksgiving.
2. *New cameras.* David was pleased to announce that the Ferries Division has four cameras functioning on the Vashon / Fauntleroy route. He said that he heard this request in March and that, with the help of WSDOT, they were able to install the cameras. Anyone can view the state of the backup in real time online. David thanked WSDOT Northwest Region for providing the funding and making the project happen. David let people know that they can view camera footage online at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/cameras/](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/cameras/)

**Presentation: System Challenges and Funding Problem**

*David Moseley, Assistant Secretary, WSDOT Ferries Division*

David explained that since the motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) went away, the Ferries Division lost 25 percent of the operating budget and 40 percent of the capital budget. What has happened since then is that the legislature has brought discretionary funds from other places to keep the ferry system going. This has been necessary even though the Ferries Division has reduced services and raised fares. David emphasized that this is why the system is not sustainable.

David described the \$3.9 billion gap in funding the existing baseline. He explained that on the capital side it's because the Ferries Division has an aging fleet and on the operations side it's because of the high costs fuel. The Ferries Division was raising 78 percent of the operating budget from the fare box. Now the Ferries Division is only raising 70 percent because of fuel costs.

**Presentation: Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC)**

*Dick Ford, Commission Chairman*

*Philip Parker, Commissioner*

The legislature tasked the commission with figuring out how to fund the ferry system. We have spent a lot of time working with the Ferries Division to make sure that the numbers are the same in all of our studies. We are all forecasting the future but no one knows what fuel costs are going to be. Dick reiterated that the ferry system cannot run without a capital budget and we must invest in the system and the operating costs. WSTC is looking at three scenarios:

- State funding and some federal funding. The fare money would cover 80 percent of operation costs. This does assume fare increases over the next 22 years.
- The "three-legged stool" concept would include state funding, fares, and local funding.



- Raise taxes state-wide. The reality is that revenues from the gas tax are declining because people aren't driving as much so we need to find another source of funding.

#### Public Questions and Questions

1. Did you look at using the lottery / gaming for income? It seems like it would be beneficial. *No, we didn't.*

#### **Presentation: Building Blocks for the Long Range Plan**

*Ray Deardorf, Planning Director*

Ray gave an overview of the strategies that the Ferries Division has identified as the most effective for managing demand. These are reservations for vehicles, transit enhancements and pricing.

#### Reservations:

Ray reviewed the reservations system and reminded attendees that the reservations system has been very successful on the Port Townsend / Keystone route. He said that the Ferries Division will build on that experience and tailor it to each route. Ray said that he knows there were a lot of concerns about reservations in June and the Ferries Division has worked on answering those questions for the public. A few key pieces that would make the system successful are:

- Users would pay something in advance to avoid no-shows
- Space would vary by route and time of day
- Vehicles would need to arrive 10 to 15 minutes ahead of time
- Reservations could be made up to 30 minutes ahead of sailing
- Majority of boat would be reserved (small number of spaces set aside for emergencies)

#### Public Comments and Questions

1. Vashon is not projected to grow at all. Where did you get your numbers? *We are using a regional forecast.*
2. What are your capital and operating costs for a reservations system? *We're working on that but it's in the \$10s of millions.*
3. It looks like the reservations system is a book keeping nightmare when a sailing is canceled. How is this going to happen? *There is a lot of additional fine tuning that we need to do but this is how we would approach it. We would lay out specifics for a system disruption before we implement it.*
4. Are you thinking about charging for reservations? *That's not off the table but it has not been worked out yet. The one thing that we know is that, like the Anacortes / Sidney route and like an airplane, you would pay for your*



- ticket when you make the reservations even if you don't pay a premium. Currently, on the Port Townsend / Keystone route you do not pay ahead and we have a high number of no-shows. People are complaining about the fact that the information is saying that the boat is full but they are sailing half full.*
5. *Is there a cost avoidance by doing a reservation system? In a system that would have future growth and no additional capacity, you have long queues. A reservations system means you would not have the need for additional holding areas.*
  6. *You seem to have a tough enough time managing cars coming from Southworth. I have no confidence that you can do this. Why in the world are you considering this? A reservations system would reduce the need for large holding areas and save money. The customer benefit is that people don't have to wait in line.*
  7. *Can you explain how the resident frequent-user program would work? We have had conversations with the attorney general's office about doing this legally and it appears that it is a possibility. There are many options including identification through a driver's license or a frequent-user card. This identification would allow you to have access to certain sailings or the ability to book further in advance than others.*
  8. *You referred to other ferry systems that you've looked at. Which ones have urban commuters rather than tourists? The system in Istanbul has a lot of similarities to ours. It's a big system with a large commuter base. We've also looked at Martha's Vineyard and other US systems but those are less commuter-oriented. We have looked at many systems and we continue to study them to see what works.*
  9. *In the Istanbul system, do they reserve a majority of the boat? It may be 100 percent or slightly less.*
  10. *You say that the majority of the boat should be reserved for maximum efficiency. How much is the majority? We need to reserve most of the boat, but not all. We will always have some availability for medical emergencies, vanpools and spontaneous travelers. If you don't reserve a majority, you get diminishing benefits. We would start with a small percentage of reservations and then work up, letting people adjust to the system.*

Transit Enhancements:

Ray talked about the reasons that the Ferries Division is considering transit enhancements as a part of their long-range plan. He said that the survey showed that lack of transit was a frequently cited factor that prevented people from walking on the ferry. Studies have shown that if you want to get people out of their cars, transit needs to be available on both sides of the route.



### Pricing:

Research shows that pricing strategies affect demand. Ray said that the Ferries Division has looked at its pricing structure and evaluated tools to find the incentives and disincentives within pricing. These strategies would get phased in over time and would only be used if demand warrants:

- Congestion pricing
- Frequent user policy
- Small car incentive
- Off-peak discount
- Passenger discount

Ray explained that the Ferries Division would most likely mix and match elements of each pricing strategy to develop a package. He said that the Ferries Division wants to maximize the demand shift, achieve revenue neutrality, and minimize the overall cost impact on frequent users.

The last building block is the ferry service changes. If the Ferries Division cannot manage the demand, they would need to increase service. Ray suggested that these things would be implemented if we are not able to change demand with the strategies.

### **Vashon / Southworth / Fauntleroy and Tahlequah / Point Defiance Packages**

*Ray Deardorf, Planning Director*

Ray said that now that we have the strategies, we have to meld them together into a package that works for this route. The first step is to add reservations and transit enhancements. There may be more people who want a sailing than reservations are available. At that point, the Ferries Division would add pricing strategies to help shift people to other sailings. Then, on this route, the service changes would include splitting up the multi-route sailings. Level I would split the route out for Fauntleroy / Vashon and Fauntleroy / Southworth and add a small boat for Vashon / Southworth. This would increase capacity and offer direct routes. The Level II service additions would send the Southworth boat directly to Seattle so that Vashon is the only boat going to Fauntleroy, and include the small boat for Vashon / Southworth. But he asked attendees to remember that these route services make everything more expensive.

### **Small Group Discussion**

*Diane Adams, Meeting Facilitator*

Diane presented the workshop questions and attendees broke into small groups to discuss:

- What impact would a package like this have on you and your community?



- Other ideas/concerns?

Public Comment and Questions recorded in small groups:

1. What about passenger-only ferries?
2. There is going to be congestion in Fauntleroy even in the baseline case.
3. The reservations system is too general – we need more details including costs for the system and for WSF. What is the timeline for implementation?
4. People have already adjusted as much as they can.
5. We need more revenue and it looks like a reservation system just costs more money.
6. A reservation system reduces lines and reduces the need for new terminals.
7. A Southworth / Seattle sailing would help Vashon but do Southworth people actually need to get to Seattle?
8. Ferries are not-for-profit and we're comparing them to the airlines (for-profits). I have a problem with charging a premium.
9. I'm concern with the lack of standby room; what if I miss my reservation?
10. I'm concerned that cancelling my reservation is too much work. Will I talk to a human?
11. You have to cover capital costs with premiums.
12. A reservations system makes me lose my flexibility.
13. I like the phased approach for reservations.
14. What payment type will be used? The Tacoma Narrows Bridge transponders work great.
15. What about one-time users? How will they pay if we all have transponders? They already clog system.
16. We're being guided to this conclusion and the reservation system seems like the only choice. Do we have the option to back out if it doesn't work?
17. I think if there is a small car fee with a big difference in cost, it will make people change.
18. There is limited parking on both sides of the route because the county doesn't provide frequent enough service. We need parking on either side of the boats – including the Point Defiance / Tahlequah route.
19. People won't buy a new car just for the small car rate.
20. People might make long-term decisions to take advantage of the small car discount.
21. How would motorcycles be charged?
22. Things are different with the current state of the economy.
23. Natural drivers (like gas prices) will make a difference.
24. The King County passenger-only boat will have an impact on WSF boats.
25. Peak pricing penalizes the 9-5 commuter and ridership will go down.



26. I'm worried about the indirect costs because the laborers have to travel at peak times.
27. Off-peak incentives are much better than peak pricing disincentives.
28. Peak pricing may change some people's travel habits but Vashon is a commuter-based system with no options to change.
29. Twenty-five percent of Vashon residents favor reservations.
30. You can fill 100 percent of the boat with commuter vehicles.
31. Sixty-three percent of commuters would take transit if it met the boat on the east side.
32. Many people's commutes are less predictable so reservations are difficult.
33. The system is too complex.
34. Commercial traffic is misusing system and acting as regular traffic.
35. You need better information for users including a schedule for the Web that shows which boats are usually full and a place to share carpool spots informally.
36. Where will you put reserved cars at terminals?
37. Could WSF operate a shuttle to a transit hub?
38. How many buses could you buy with the money it would take to implement a reservation system?
39. Queuing impacts won't really change without major capital improvements. Why can't the Fauntleroy dock be expanded?
40. Fifty-five percent of residents have a price point that would cause them to leave the island.
41. There are too many contingencies for your reservation system.
42. What times are considered peak times?
43. What was learned from the Port Townsend / Keystone route? The staff could have had a better explanation of how reservations worked. There was no feedback on how lessons learned are being captured.
44. Why not buy a new boat instead of funding reservations?
45. How would reservations be made? A step-by-step would be helpful.
46. What would be the revenue differential if walk-ons and passengers were free (assuming that it is done in conjunction with differential charges for vehicle sizes)?
47. Look at other models for reservations, not just ferry systems.
48. How does a reservations system reduce the queue?
49. How will I make and time return reservations when I'm not home if I don't have a cell, my plans change, etc.?
50. On the Fauntleroy side, many people miss the ferry because the Southworth line is in the front. I can't see how a reservations system could work to manage the queues.
51. Paying more for peak fares or premiums for reservations is not equitable.



52. There may be some positive impacts to the people who are frequent-users, who are mobile and who are well off. The impacts will mostly be negative to people who are already somewhat marginalized.
53. A reservations system works against non-commuter and non-technical population. The reservations system assumes that everyone has a cell phone and can text message.
54. I don't believe any of these issues will be mitigated until all transportation agencies work together to fully integrate the transportation system. There can't be just one solution.
55. This ferry system is our highway. Please assign the same value to the ferry system as you do to bridges.
56. The handicapped and seniors will be impacted if not given special permits because they can't walk on.
57. We need to look at Vashon as a unique situation when looking at the overall system. What special consideration will be given to our communities?
58. What kind of impacts will these packages have on our island with a large, aging demographic?
59. There is no strategy to increase ridership in any of the recommendations.
60. What impact would these strategies have on tourism and economic impacts?
61. It seems like the same questions are being asked as in June with no answers.
62. Vashon's population is stable and we have more "at home" businesses.
63. What do you do at Fauntleroy when the boats are late but people show up for multiple sailings with reservations?
64. We can't do reservations without fixing the triangle. If you fixed the triangle (i.e. Level I or II), you wouldn't need reservations.
65. People adjust themselves around long lines.
66. People have already adjusted as much as they can without peak pricing.
67. Reservations are a great idea - for Canada.
68. There is a lot of labor needed for a reservations system.
69. Medical emergencies can already get priority so that's not a new benefit.
70. Trucks and bikes should be held at Vashon before climbing the hill.
71. I have no faith in the system because the problems with EFS [electronic fare system] haven't been resolved.
72. I'm concerned about the allocation of boats between Vashon and Southworth.
73. The surcharge should be for tourists and the commuter fare system should not go up.
74. Commercial carriers don't know when they need to travel (i.e. tow truck).
75. Reservations are not good for business. There is no guarantee of getting on.



Diane led a report back discussion and encouraged people to send in comments and continue the dialogue with WSF. Alan thanked everyone for coming and participating. He reminded attendees to take his survey on their way out.

1. You're taking all this information, what happens next? *We will compile the information received from this and other public meetings (in March and June). We will prepare a draft long-range plan by mid-November. We will be back out in communities in December for public hearings on the draft long-range plan and then it will be finalized for the 2009 legislative session which starts in January.*

David thanked everyone for coming. He said that he appreciates how this community takes the WSF work very seriously. He also mentioned that the white paper that the Vashon community did was thoughtful. He said that they are an example of providing thoughtful, detailed information.

David highlighted some key points from the meeting:

- He asked people to find out how the Port Townsend / Keystone reservations system is working by calling the Chamber, the users and the elected officials in the area. He said that it has been extremely positive and that he's meeting with the locals for "lessons learned" session.
- David reminded people that this conversation is conceptual. He said that there is a lot of detail that needs to be worked out prior to the implementation. He assured them that WSF will be back talking about the specific details prior to implementation.

Alan thanked David and his staff for spending the time with the Vashon Island public. He encouraged people to sign in and thanked them for coming.

Approximately 59 attendees. The public sign-in included:

- |                |                    |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Joe Ulatoski   | Louis H. Engels    | Richard Rotruck    |
| Susan Guidetti | Wendy Wharton      | Kathleen Otis      |
| Kari Ulatoski  | Neil Jungemann     | Mark Gripp         |
| Joan Coulson   | Jim Beardsley      | Alice Larson       |
| Eric Roecks    | Andrea Avni        | Sandra Distelhorst |
| Rebecca Roecks | Scott DeNies       | Diane Stofler      |
| Mike Sadduth   | Ellen Kritzman     | Ken Zaglin         |
| Gary Sipple    | Yvonne Kupenberg   | Ivan Weiss         |
| Bailcyde Longh | Alan Gorski        | Claudia Kimball    |
| Richard Jones  | Jan Stephens       | Karen Carston      |
| Connie Engels  | Rep. Sharon Nelson | Rebecca Wittman    |



Judy Olson  
George Butler  
Carol Butler  
Greg Beardsley  
Jon Flora  
Helen D. Nelson  
Douglas Larsen  
Norm Stipp  
Alan Mendel

Liz Otis  
Gary Dawson  
Mike Dawson  
Lee Ockinger  
Hilary Emmer  
Maeve Lambert  
Laura Snyder  
Allan K. Snyder  
Lynn Greirer

Mary Fleckenstein  
Pam Schueler  
Vickie Mercer  
Fran O'Reilly  
David Bolin  
Martin Geri  
Josh Goldfinger  
Edeen M Parrish

**Ferries Division Staff:**

David Moseley, Assistant Secretary  
Ray Deardorf, Planning Director  
Marty Coursey, Director of Communications  
Doug Schlieff, Operations  
Diane Adams, Consultant  
Penny Mabie, Consultant  
Kristina Walker, Consultant  
Blair Scanlan, Cedar River Group

**Washington State Transportation Commission:**

Phillip Parker, Commissioner  
Dick Ford, Commissioner  
Reema Griffith, Executive Director

The following comments were submitted at the meeting. Names have been omitted.

*Received at the meeting, Oct. 13, 2008*

WSF can't even administer the present allocation system successfully and you want to impose reservations on top of this? I say NO! I have no confidence that WSF could manage this at all! Please DO NOT GO DOWN THIS PATH! THE ENTIRE CONCEPT IS INSANE! One solution helps solve the most problems – putting a bus on every ferry – both ways. Harlan Rosford ran three round trips a day and his bus was full. We could do this with smaller buses in off peak hours. This is the best single transit enhancement we could make. WSF is not the problem here – Metro is.

*Received at the meeting, Oct. 13, 2008*



Is there any way you would consider arranging a shuttle to take Vashon and Southworth walk ons straight to downtown. The 118 & 116 & 54 do not take riders directly to connections downtown. These buses go into West Seattle making stops then onto 1<sup>st</sup> Ave making more stops. Wouldn't it be cost effective to charge for a ferry ride and make something off a bus fare on a bus run by the WSF?

Buy and run a nice P.O. boat and I would ride it. Check out Vallejo – San Francisco Bay link for California. Thank you for your fair and honest ears in this matter.

*Received at the meeting, Oct. 13, 2008*

Comparing the ferry system (public trans) to the airline industry (for-profit) is the wrong approach. I have the feeling that we are being led in the direction which WSF wants to go, i.e. 90 percent reservations for fee.

*Received at the meeting, Oct. 13, 2008*

Peak pricing is not fair to commuters – we cannot charge different prices to other people. We are STATE highway. We need the STATE to pay for this highway. The rich cannot be allowed to go to the front of the line and the rest of us stay put in line. Fauntleroy does not work now – the 4:20 p.m. ferry - Vashon only sailing does not always leave full when the line is long because Southworth cars are ahead of us. Reservations will actually make this situation worse.

Transit is fine – we don't even have Sunday service. The cuts we have makes seeing a play in Seattle difficult because there is not boat after 10:15 for another 1 ½ hours.

Give us two Issaquah boats now.

*Received at the meeting, Oct. 13, 2008*

I worry about the technology of the reservation system.

- breakdowns or interruptions in reservation system
- ease of use, esp. for elderly and poor
- personal devices needed to access –not everyone has
- equity / equal access to reservation system
- complexity – adding more complexity to commuters lives



*Received at the meeting, Oct. 13, 2008*

I think the impacts of the packages will be mixed for the most capable / mobile users, but for those who are already marginalized due to age / lack of mobility / economic hardship, the impact is almost all negative.

\*The best way to influence ridership and demand is to contribute to making it easier, safer and more comfortable to leave the cars at home. Please see integration below.

None of these problems can really be solved without close cooperation and integration with all other transit agencies. How to do that? How I wish I knew!

*Received at the meeting, Oct. 13, 2008*

No reservations – won't work well.  
Ferries are Vashon's only road.  
Back ups mostly due to ferry being late or Southworth.  
Expand roads if concerned about backups.  
Impossible to "know" when one will be able to make a ferry if meeting or appointment.  
More boats – small car discount good green point.  
Vashon is not Port Townsend. Ferry users are a commuter community.

*Received at the meeting, Oct. 13, 2008*

We are an "island" unique in that we are an "urban commuter island."  
Every other route on the system has another way (or more) to get where they need to go. A reservation system doesn't address the needs of commercial (sometimes very large vehicles) or people who need to get off and on infrequently.

Enlarge dock facility at Fauntleroy. Shuttle between Vashon and Fauntleroy and Southworth and Fauntleroy or downtown. Those of us who are infrequent users can't use transit (public) because we combine errands and appointments.

*Received at the meeting, Oct. 13, 2008*

Reservations system will not work.



1. Designed for general system not Vashon. We are an island. Only San Juans are similar but they aren't situated for urban regular commuters, we have no alternate routes other than ferries.
2. Vashon is NOT growing population-wise. In fact, we have a larger proportion of home-based businesses. Population growing older. Less likely to regularly work. So our demand on the ferry system is likely to decrease.
3. System will require used to have a cell phone and text messaging.
4. I, as someone who designed my business not to commute, will be punished.
  - a. E.g. to catch a morning air flight I would not know until 24 hours ahead whether I can make my flight.
  - b. I would be competing first with Southworth reservations, second with Vashon regular commuters when those very few remaining slots with everyone else calling in for reservations.
5. There is NO comparable system in the world with an urban commute pool for a water-locked island. We don't want to be your guinea pigs.

*Received at the meeting, Oct. 13, 2008*

I feel strongly that the reservation system would not be a good fit for Vashon Island. Ambulances, police, school, busses, already have priority loading. Medical emergencies can be accommodated by the fire department and if returning from a hospital a doctors note gives priority loading.

Bikes and big trucks should be held on the Vashon dock until all the small faster vehicles have exited the ferry boat. It will be safer for all.

The following comments were received following the meeting.

*Received via mail, Oct. 30, 2008*

Problem – generalized design, not designed for Vashon – specifically the north end triangle route. Vehicles arriving just at their reserved sailing time with minimal queuing a pipe dream. No dock space.

Problem – 90% reservations required to really work, won't work on a route that is neither mostly tourists, nor predictable 9-5 commuter but includes many who go to events, medical appointments, etc. – might know ferry they will leave Vashon but not when they can expect to return.



Peak period pricing – No! We already go non-peak to/from Vashon if at all possible. DO all you can to promote and coordinate with transit.

Break the triangle now; then maybe we can plan for options.

All Vashon residents, having no option other than ferry, should have non-expiring discount cards; no seasonal surcharge.

You start your proposals with “analysis suggests” – get real, get out of the office, experience the mess and base you proposals accordingly.

*Received via e-mail, Oct. 20, 2008*

Some thoughts on the Fauntleroy/Vashon/Southworth, Fauntleroy/Southworth, and proposed Southworth/Seattle routes.

After attending the public meeting at John Sedgwick Junior High School on 16 October I understand that there is a significant shortage of funding for WSF and you are looking hard at reservations as a way to spread service w/o increasing capacity. That may or may not work, what I would like to address most is the Strategies & More Service (Level II) proposal that you have on your Route-Level Summaries for Fauntleroy/Vashon/Southworth and Seattle. These issues may have been considered by WSF in your planning but they were not adequately presented at the meeting and I see no information on your web sight addressing them.

As I understand it the Level II proposal for Fauntleroy/Vashon/Southworth is: 5 boats; 2 for Fauntleroy/Vashon, 2 for Southworth/Seattle, and 1 for Vashon/Southworth. I think this is a good start that (possibly in addition to your reservation ideas, but maybe with one less boat) would benefit riders the most and not cost that much more.

1. No mention is made on what size vessels are proposed for each of these routes and if consideration was given that rider ship on the Fauntleroy/Vashon route may actually decrease as Vashon riders might go over to Southworth so they can transfer to the direct Southworth/Seattle sailings. Also what is the expected Southworth/Seattle rider ship - passengers vs. drivers? I would suspect that passenger only riders would increase as the current drive on passengers no longer need to drive to Seattle from Fauntleroy.

2. Vashon fares: to save money remove ticket takers/checkers on the



Island. If someone has paid to get on the island, they have already paid to get off in any direction. Of course this will be offset some by requiring a ticket taker for passenger fares from Southworth to Vashon, but their is already someone their.

3. Transfers at Vashon between Fauntleroy/Southworth: a fare structure as in item 2 would promote an easy, relatively quick transfer, not to mention the elimination of the mixed loading - by forcing everyone to get off one vessel to get on another. No additional fare or check would be required as it would be the same as a Vashon Island round trip fare. However, this would most likely garner complaints from the non-driving passengers who have gotten used to the pay oneway only fare scheme as this would require them to pay both ways (Fauntleroy to Southworth and back Southworth to Fauntleroy), unless maybe the passenger only fare could be made attractively low for commuters.

4. Transfer at Southworth with Vashon; would require departing one vessel and paying to get on the other. With the one way fare as it is now; Vashon to Southworth to Seattle passengers would not have to pay, however they would pay twice to return unless some new Vashon/Seattle transfer ticket were implemented.

My observation is that with a Southworth/Seattle route there would be increased passengers and fewer vehicles because; a) it is most of the rider's final destination and b) I would also anticipate new passenger rider ship in short order for destinations other than Seattle, as there are far more mass transit connections out of Seattle than the couple of buses occasionally servicing Fauntleroy so not as many vehicles and vanpools would be needed. Additionally there is ample of unused parking at the Southworth terminal for park & ride options.

How much more would it really cost for more convenient service for the majority of the riders (commuters)? Nowhere is it mentioned this option would eliminate the need for a POV from Vashon to Seattle, saving somebody - you or King county the cost of that passenger only service. How much would be saved by eliminating the mixed loading and vessel maneuvering involved with Vashon in the middle of a Fauntleroy/Vashon/Southworth run. Are 5 boats really needed for this proposal? Or would the Fauntleroy/Vashon rider ship shift enough to Southworth/Seattle to only require 1 boat for Fauntleroy/Vashon (a short & quick run), thereby making this a 4 boat proposal?

I commute 5 days a week from Southworth to Fauntleroy and on to work in



Seattle, I also occasionally fly out of SEATAC and the connection with the ST 560 bus between Fauntleroy/SEATAC allows me to walk on at Southworth and get to the airport. However, most of the events in Seattle I forgo as being too inconvenient to get to from Fauntleroy as a walk on passenger or too expensive to drive.

One additional comment is on the mass transit connections. Many times it is the bus to the ferry connection that is the problem. An example is the 116 Metro bus that meets ferry commuters at the terminal in the AM to take them to downtown Seattle - nice. The problem is the return trip to the ferry terminal; traffic, Seahawk/Mariner games & events, make the buses unpredictable and frequently late. It doesn't take many times of watching the ferry you should have been able to catch, with time left over, sail away because the bus you are on is 20 minutes or more late, to give up on that mass transit idea and opt for something more predictable.

Thank you,

██████████

*Received via e-mail, Oct. 17, 2008*

1. Three wheeled vehicles are the only ones which must pay peak season surcharge even if they buy a 20-ride pass. It is ludicrous that a trike or sidecar rig is treated as an oversized vehicle and subjected to peak season surcharges IN ADDITION TO the oversize vehicle surcharge they already have to pay.
2. Three wheeled vehicles do not have the re-value card option available to them.
3. Southworth needs a 7:15 A.M. boat from Southworth to Fauntleroy. It's ridiculous that there is an hour and fifteen minute gap in service during the peak of commuter traffic.
4. Good-to-go & Wave-to-go need to be combined.
5. Ferry passages purchased should never expire. The money they were purchased with does not expire. When a service has been paid for, it should be delivered, even if it is a year or two after purchase. Tking money and refusing to deliver is theft, plain and simple. Many commuters use more than one mode, and have to retain multiple passes. It is very difficult



to use all of them when I have to keep a car pas, trike/sidecar pass, motorcycle pass and walk on pass.

6. Bicycles should not be charged more than pedestrians. Washington state needs to encourage alternative transportation methods, and a bicycle is one of the most environmentally friendly modes of transportation.

*Received via e-mail, Oct. 14, 2008*

Power the Washington State Ferries Utilizing Grid Electricity. The Washington State Ferry System can save money, stabilize the cost of energy, and eliminate most if not all carbon emissions.

**Current Facts:**

1. The propeller shafts on the Washington State Ferries are powered via electrical motors.
2. Energy is stored aboard the Ferries in liquid form as diesel fuel. A diesel generator converts the energy in the diesel fuel to the electrical power required to run the motors delivering power to the propellers.
3. Diesel fuel must be transferred to the storage tanks on the ferries via hose connections giving rise to the potential for fuel spills.
4. Diesel fuel is currently being delivered via fuel trucks. The trucks burn diesel and add to carbon emissions.
5. The current system is inefficient, harmful to the environment, and unnecessary.

**Technical Feasibility:**

1. Lithium Ion Batteries are currently available such that a bank of them can store enough energy to operate a ferry for an entire day.
2. The durability of Lithium Ion batteries has been proven.
3. A seagoing vessel can be designed to carry the weight of the batteries.
4. Adaptation to existing ferry design would be cost effective. Essentially the on board diesel generator and diesel storage tanks would be replaced with battery storage capacity.
5. The diesel fuel lines used to fill the on board diesel storage tanks would be replaced with a high capacity shore-power electrical connection.



6. The ferry is a perfect application for electrical power because of the defined time under power and the time spent “pushing the dock” that can be used for recharging the batteries.

**Benefits:**

1. Cost savings of \$1,443,064 annually for a boat like the WSF MV Tillikum. This is based upon \$4 per gallon diesel and an electricity rate of \$.10 per kwh.
2. Alternate funding is available for “green projects.” An example of available funds is 10 million in grant money from Google for ideas that improve the world.
3. Electricity is generated locally while diesel is imported.
4. The diesel fuel delivery costs, along with the risk of (and actual) environmental pollution is eliminated.
5. No longer will the diesel generators have to be maintained with oil changes, daily service, and engine overhauls.
6. No future carbon tax.

[report accompanied comment – available upon request]

**Vashon-Maury Island Community position paper  
Washington State Ferry System  
23 August 2008 (“D” Draft)**

The Vashon-Maury Island Community Council and Ferry Advisory Committee prepared this position paper to provide the Governor, State Legislators and other key officials (including the Secretary of Transportation, the Assistant Secretary of Transportation (Ferries), the Transportation Commissioners and executives of the Washington State Ferry System) the views of Island residents regarding critical ferry-related issues and proposals that have surfaced over the past several months.

As this Position Paper is comprehensive and lengthy in nature, we have also condensed it into an Executive Summary and Power Point presentation for ease of use.

We begin by taking the larger view that Washington State Ferries are a key element of what makes this state unique. They are both iconic state symbols and absolutely essential elements in our statewide transportation network. As manifestations of our coastal character and Northwest culture, our ferries serve citizens from across the state and appeal strongly to tourists from around the world. For both economic and practical



public interest reasons, it behooves all of us to sustain this vital marine link in our statewide transportation system.

Also fundamental to the points we make here is the reality that Vashon and Maury Island are true islands. The ferry system is not only our highway to the mainland, but, far more importantly, it is our only lifeline to vital services. When essential needs such as critical medical care, economically-necessary travel to and from work on the mainland and the provision of skilled services and supplies to the Island have to be met, we have no other options but the ferry. It is that simple for us and for all of the other island and peninsula communities who must rely on the ferries for like needs.

Following a format similar to what WSDOT presented at various ferry community meetings in the spring of this year, we speak to the following essential areas in this paper:

- Funding — pricing strategies and establishment of a stable source of funding
- Operational strategies
- Customer expectations and satisfaction
- Level of service standards

Vashon and Maury Island residents appreciate the efforts being put forth by the Governor, the State Legislature, the State Transportation Commission, the Ferry System, and others to resolve what have become serious problems in providing adequate ferry service at reasonable prices. We, also appreciate the early sharing of the operational and pricing options being considered. And, we are encouraged by and welcome the current openness in communication and willingness to listen on the part of all of the aforementioned parties. Our comments, therefore, are being offered in the hopes they will help the decision-makers at all levels reach fair and equitable conclusions reflecting not only the needs of the Ferry System, but, more importantly, the needs of the people it exists to serve...we, its customers.

### **FUNDING:**

We appreciate that ferry financing is a top priority for the State Legislature and Washington State Ferries (WSF). We also understand the rationale underpinning the legislature having directed WSF to focus on “Operational and Pricing Strategies,” both of which are critical to the ferry system’s ability to function. However, fares alone—currently at near 80% fare box recovery—should and cannot be used as the sole source of funding ferry system operations. Not only is it theoretically impossible for fares alone to do so, but, the equally compelling downside is that, as Governor Christine Gregoire so clearly and eloquently articulated in a recent Sequim Gazette article, “raising fares is not an option because it just reduces ridership which (further) reduces revenue.” This is why we—the residents of Vashon and Maury Islands--wholeheartedly endorse establishing a stable source of funding for WSF operations and believe strongly that consideration



should be given to re-establishing the motor vehicle excise tax (in some form) to help provide for that stable funding. It is evident in the economic climate prevailing today that the Legislature would be hard-pressed to fund the ferry system otherwise. However, the baseline caveat to re-establishment is that monies raised from the “directed” excise tax would be specifically earmarked for WSF operational expenses and could not be siphoned off for other State needs.

Secondly, we strongly encourage the Legislature and Transportation Commission to investigate other non-fare increase revenue opportunities to assist in creating and maintaining a stable source of funding for the ferries. We believe selling corporate advertising to name the boats similar to what was done at Safeco and Qwest Fields would be an excellent source of revenue. Additionally we would support the concept of selling 2-3 minutes of on-board public address system advertising per 15 minutes of ferry run time. Another revenue generating suggestion would be to create a new lottery game (similar to Quinto) as part of the state lottery system with all revenues gained from the game going to support the ferries. We would also endorse publicly acceptable gaming options (e.g. pull tabs etc.) being implemented on the ferries. And finally, we would endorse for-profit special events on board ferries such as band concerts/dances/parties etc.

#### **PRICING:**

We appreciate ferries are, as some might argue, the costliest element of our state highway system. The near-80% fare box recovery rate that prevails today seems extreme compared with fares levied by ferry systems outside of Puget Sound for comparable service, as well as the tolls presently charged for other state highway system elements like the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Interestingly, Assistant Secretary of Transportation David Mosley concurred with this assessment in a telephone interview with local KOMO radio news reporters on his first official day. When asked about WSF ferry fares, he replied that his impression then was that they were at least three times what other comparable ferry systems were currently charging. This further reinforces fares alone should not and cannot support continued ferry system operations because the corresponding negative impact on ridership makes them essentially finite.

Vashon and Maury Island residents strongly oppose the “peak hour pricing” concept being considered by WSF. We believe the logic behind this concept is seriously flawed whether you increase fares for peak hours or if you discount them for non-peak hours. Peak hour pricing will not help level ferry loading, increase riders or reduce wait times. Virtually all Vashon-Maury Island residents and individuals who commute to and from work on or off island and who have some flexibility in their schedules have already adapted to minimize “wait times” and will continue to do so. Non-commuters also have already adapted to the extent possible to avoid long ferry lines and wait times. Further, peak hour pricing would be discriminatory. It would disproportionately penalize lower



pay individuals who because of their jobs must commute between Vashon-Maury Island and the mainland or vice versa and who have to be at their workplaces at specific times. Peak hour pricing will also indirectly and adversely impact virtually all island residents. Today, many businesses and services must subsidize their lower paid employees who commute onto the island during peak hours. Implementing Peak hour pricing will only exacerbate this and result in passing these increased costs along to customers. It will also adversely affect approximately 200 students or their families who commute to or from Vashon. Most of these students must meet academic schedules that necessitate travel during peak hours:

Likewise, the proposed “priority pricing” concept is discriminatory to the less financially able islanders and others traveling to and from the islands, creating stratification and a class system for ferry customers. The WSF system is a government provided service and should promote equal, not priority access. This strategy also, doesn’t help level boat loading for the same reasons stated for peak hour pricing. And, it is counter to the legislative directive to keep fare schedules as simple as possible; priority pricing will just further complicate fares. Finally, there is limited holding space for a separate priority line at the Fauntleroy terminal making dock management a significant logistical issue.

In today’s environment where we have significant concerns with the cost of fuel and the state of our environment, we agree it is to the benefit of all to create incentives to encourage smaller and more fuel-efficient vehicles and to find ways of getting people out of their cars. We also understand and appreciate that deck square footage is the underlying measurement for determining the quantity and size of boats in the ferry fleet. Therefore, WSF should accommodate the greatest number of people in the least amount of space by creating incentives for people to use smaller vehicles to maximize the number of vehicles carried on each run. And, in so doing, it will positively influence the number and size of boats needed for the fleet. Toward this end, we would encourage pricing fares by the size of vehicles (sub-compact, compact etc.) with the incentive that passengers in vehicles ride for no fare(car and driver charge only). While this proposed system might encourage walk-ons to try to catch a ride in a vehicle rather than pay the walk-on fare, we think this would be a minimal issue. Additionally, we would suggest a minimum 18 month notification period before implementation to give people time to budget/plan to decrease the size of their vehicle(s). While this kind of pricing system on the surface penalizes people who require larger vehicles, it does provide an off-set of not charging for their passengers. In summary, this kind of pricing system would encourage the use of smaller fuel efficient vehicles, encourage more people in vehicles, encourage more van pools, and therefore would be good for the ferry system, the state, and the environment.

Also, to further reduce vehicle traffic and increase passenger traffic, we strongly encourage a significant reduction in walk-on passenger fares. The ideal would be to not charge passengers at all, but any reduction would be welcome. An additional benefit of no charge for passengers would be further simplification of WSF’s fare collection



system. WSF would only need to collect the proper fare for each vehicle without regard to how many occupants are in the vehicle. This significantly facilitates the use of an electronic system described below in the Operational Strategies section.

We strongly encourage the continued use of discounted fares for frequent customers and we further encourage that the definition be expanded to include all residents of ferry dependent communities. As stated earlier, Vashon and Maury Island residents are completely ferry-dependent to access their places of employment, school and specialized or critical medical services, etc. It is our only roadway to and from the islands.

While some of the strategies under consideration will have a positive impact on traffic patterns and vehicle usage we do not believe this impact will go very far toward resolving the major problems currently being faced by WSF. The lack of a stable source of funding to support both operational and capital needs and the need for additional and replacement boats right now --and continuing for at least the next 20 years-- clearly cannot be solved by what we have seen in WSF's proposals to date. The legislature and the Governor must provide a solution for these problems. Ferry system customers are financially unwilling and truly unable to bear such a burden in increasing numbers.

### **OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES:**

First, and perhaps most importantly, we strongly call upon the Governor and the Legislature to direct WSF, Sound Transit, King County Metro, Pierce Transit, Kitsap Transit, and all other Puget sound mass transit agencies to partner with each other in far more proactive ways than exist at present to provide for a fully integrated transportation network that truly encourages and entices people to get out of their cars and take other forms of transportation. Apart from the obvious benefit of fewer single occupancy vehicles (SOV) on Puget Sound region roads, it actually would increase ridership on ferries, busses, trains, etc. because people would know they could count on such transportation to get them where they need to go, when they need to get there. To reinforce this point, 52% of respondents in our 2004 Island Survey (when gas prices were significantly lower) said they would get out of their cars if integrated transportation service were available. People don't perceive these competing agencies have formed a true working together relationship for the good of their customers, their counties, and the State. As a consequence, people continue to drive their single occupancy vehicles because they feel doing so is a sure means of getting them from points, A to B to C, etc. The key to such integration is reliable and up-to-the minute schedule and related communication/coordination between transit agencies so any anomalies that happen in the mix are quickly recognized and properly adjusted for. Without such rapid, around-the-clock communication and coordination there can and never will be an integrated answer to the region's and, in particular, WSF's SOV transportation woes.



Specifically, for the Fauntleroy terminal, we encourage Metro to provide more express bus service to downtown Seattle (specifically to Bus Tunnel Terminal) and back to Fauntleroy (coordinated closely with ferry schedules), particularly for the morning and evening hours during the week and for the evening/night hours on the weekend. This same express service is needed from the Tahlequah terminal to downtown Tacoma and back to Tahlequah. Additionally, to maximize utilization of this service, either parking at Vashon's north-end terminal will need to be increased or additional park and ride lots established on the island with commensurate bus service to the dock (refer to the next paragraph).

We also believe that if transit service on Vashon and Maury islands were improved, it would further assist getting people out of their vehicles. We encourage Metro to adopt a hub and spoke concept on Vashon and Maury Island. This concept proposes that small vans from several designated points on both islands would shuttle people to downtown Vashon. Mainline bus service would then be available to take people to the North and South end terminals coordinated with Ferry arrivals and departures. We believe there would be sufficient riders to support this concept even on weekends.

We would also encourage piloting Zip/Flex car availability near all ferry terminals to allow those who need a car to easily access this resource allowing them to walk-on the ferry leaving personal cars on island.

WSF is currently operating a "reservation system" at Port Townsend and it appears that with some on-going modifications it is largely well received by ferry customers. We believe that some form of reservation system for the Vashon routes could prove equally successful. However, we stress that any reservation system implemented must be adaptable to the peculiarities for each route. In Vashon's case, we request that before any such system is implemented that the details of it be worked in advance with the Vashon Ferry Advisory Committee. In general, we suggest starting with a fairly small allocation as a pilot program with the option to increase the allocation should it prove warranted. We believe, as is the case of Port Townsend, no fee should be charged for a reservation. We also believe that reservations should be able to be made on line or by phone call and that people could only make them a few days to a few hours in advance. This would help afford a balance between commuters potentially booking the same ferry every day weeks in advance and those who need to reserve a slot on shorter notice for things such as a doctor's visit, airplane travel, etc. With relatively efficient dock management, we think the terminals at Point Defiance, Tahlequah and the north end of Vashon could accommodate holding areas for a reservation system. However, we believe there would be significant challenges with dock management at Fauntleroy, particularly with the "Fauntleroy-Vashon-Southworth Triangle" dynamics. We also have significant concerns if a reservation system were implemented before we have sufficient back up boats in the WSF system. Without back-up capability, we believe a reservation system would greatly compound an already intolerable situation when boats are out of service.



The “Fauntleroy-Vashon-Southworth Triangle” route is a major impediment to the operation of an efficient ferry system. One of the primary causes of these inefficiencies is the Fauntleroy dock, which is currently handling in excess of 200-300% of its designed traffic capacity. This results in long lines of traffic on city streets and, because of the dual destination loading, inadequate holding space on the dock and an inadequate number of toll-booths, often results in boats leaving the dock with empty vehicle spaces while vehicles are still in line beyond the toll booths. Even if improvements could be made to the dock, which is extremely doubtful, some of these problems would continue. The best solution would be to reroute Southworth traffic to Colman dock in downtown Seattle, run a shuttle boat between Vashon and Southworth and use Fauntleroy exclusively for Vashon traffic. While recognizing that this solution may require additional boats to be assigned to the runs (an additional Southworth-Seattle boat and a shuttle boat), the overall savings in operational efficiency and improved utilization in boat space should justify this solution.

We agree with and commend WSF and the State for transitioning to more automation collecting ferry fares. However, we do not see the logic of utilizing more than one system; for example, “Good to Go”/ “Wave to Go”. New York State and others have one system -Easy Pass-which is used for everything in the state that has a toll from Airport Parking to bridges to priority lanes etc. They have set up their fare pricing so that one system can accommodate any and all fare charging thereby gaining great efficiency and customer acceptance. We wonder why Washington State can’t simply adopt New York’s or an equivalent system that is already proven. We should not have tax payers paying to reinvent the wheel. We appreciate that WSF, with the current pricing methodology of charging for passengers in vehicles, creates a problem for the toll station reader; however, if WSF adopted our suggestion for pricing vehicle and driver only, it would eliminate that problem. We understand that the transponder software would need to be able to accommodate for the size of the vehicle by having a link to the automobile licensing data, but we don’t think this should be an overwhelming issue to resolve. As more and more tolling for parts of the transportation system is implemented, it seems obvious that we need to accommodate all tolled portions with the same system to gain efficiencies and save tax-payer money.

We strongly recommend that any mandate that obliges WSF to procure its fleet and other operational resources in Washington State alone, while an admirable goal, must be repealed immediately. We appreciate the rationale for such restrictions but believe that the time has long since passed when logic justified such a mandate. Today, such a mandate simply and severely limits WSF’s ability to seek out the most competitive and best solution to its operating system and capital needs. Also, the current mandate by definition eliminates our ability to apply for Federal grant money, should the opportunity arise.



We also strongly endorse and encourage any actions WSF can take to further reduce its administrative overhead staffing and associated costs. Admittedly, WSF has endeavored to do so in the past, and even more so recently, but has been hampered in large part by State employee retention mandates, union mandates and/or a myriad of other personnel related obstacles. Whether true or not, ferry customers perceive that WSF is top-heavy, particularly on the capital improvement side. Many corporations have found they can be much more cost competitive by out-sourcing much of their design work, rather than maintaining large engineering staffs. The pervasive perception of very high overhead WSF costs makes it doubly hard for ferry riders to accept today's fare structure much less any future fare increases. WSF must be allowed to manage its workforce in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible if it is ever to achieve the economy of scale it must enjoy to operate in the black and, as important, to garner the customer acceptance necessary to any future fare increases. This can only happen, of course, if State, union and other factors now limiting realistic, efficient, economical personnel management policies within WSF are moderated accordingly.

We endorse the following WSDOT's proposed strategies:

**Non-Motorized Enhancements.** We are in agreement with all the strategies proposed in this area by WSF. However, we would like to emphasize the need to greatly improve the accessibility for the disabled who are significantly challenged in boarding, gaining access to elevators and getting off the boats in a timely fashion. Secondly, we want to emphasize the need for better bicycle access and holding areas. Improving bicycle access again promotes more people getting out of their vehicles.

**Enhanced Customer Information.** We are well aware--that until new boats are in the fleet-- we will have frequent disruptions of ferry service. It is therefore incumbent on WSF to find multiple, effective and expeditious ways of communicating those disruptions to ferry customers. We encourage WSF to work closely with the Ferry Advisory Committees to adopt the best practical communication methodologies, including enhanced e-mail notification, reader boards at or near all terminals, radio station announcements, etc.

**Promotion of Non-SOV Modes**

**Improved Traffic and Dock Space Management.**

WSF has stated it is considering differential pricing for the north and south ends of Vashon as a way to entice more people to use the south end boat thereby more evenly distributing the loads. We believe this is flawed logic. The price of gas and the time involved in driving the additional distance is what determines which ferry islanders will use. In our estimation, the differential between the two terminals would have to be so



significant to entice people to the south end that it would be impractical and is absolutely counter to concerns about trying to get people to use less fuel.

### **CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS AND SATISFACTION:**

Those residents of Vashon and Maury Island who have had an opportunity to interface with Secretary Hammond, Assistant Secretary Moseley and a number of other senior executives of WSF have been most impressed and gratified by the change in attitude since they assumed their positions. However, this attitude has yet to permeate all levels.

On a micro level, we note there is still somewhat of a “we/they” attitude prevalent among WSF dock and vessel employees and ferry service customers. Recognizing that such attitudes develop over a period of time it is incumbent on both ferry customers and WSF to recognize the need for courtesy and respect on both sides. We, as customers, need to let WSF employees know that we appreciate the services being provided. WSF employees need to understand that we, as taxpayers and customers, deserve to be treated with equal respect and courtesy. Toward this end, we encourage WSF to adopt the word “customer” (as opposed to ferry “user” or “rider”) in both their formal and informal references. We would also encourage WSF to develop a customer satisfaction plan as part of their annual business plan.

We have been very encouraged by the attitude and performance of the newly appointed Department of Transportation and Washington State Ferry leadership teams in working with ferry served communities, both in communicating information to the communities and in listening to input from them. We have stressed to WSF that we can work together to solve problems. They have information of which we are not aware and we have information of which they are not aware. If we communicate we can share that information, reach better decisions and understand the reasons for those decisions. Everyone benefits from that kind of relationship. We cannot stress enough the need to continue and improve upon the communication process in which we are now engaged.

On a macro level, when ferry related problems arise, we as customers and taxpayers need to be provided with straight forward, timely, and accurate answers to pertinent questions instead of “pat-on-the-head-like” bureaucratic responses that insult our intelligence as has happened all too frequently in past administrations. We want the ferry system to function as a business that wants our continued patronage and one that, within reasonable parameters, will do its best to meet our service expectations. Over the past several years, confidence and trust in the ferry system and in those agencies and individuals who impact the system has eroded. That confidence and trust must be carefully and deliberately rebuilt. We expect that WSF, the Department of Transportation and the legislature will lead the way by honestly addressing customer concerns and expeditiously rebuild WSF to a point where its service is efficient, affordable and friendly to its customers.



We are most appreciative of King County assuming responsibility for the Vashon-Seattle passenger only ferry. We believe this is a vital complement to the service provided by WSF. We look forward to working together with King County to create an efficient, effective, and customer friendly passenger-only service that meets the needs of both commuters and the general population. We would also note that this service is supported by a small, countywide, property tax levy.

### **LEVEL OF SERVICE:**

It is incumbent upon WSF to change the measure of its level of service standards from number of boats one must wait for to the amount of time one must wait before boarding a boat. Customers can much more easily relate to the time they must wait as opposed to the number of boats that come and go before they can board. In conjunction with this change we would urge WSF to develop and use current and accurate rider data on each route to formulate and update the level of service standard. This is particularly applicable to the Vashon routes where fares are collected in only one direction so that statistics for traffic leaving the island are not accurately kept and therefore cannot be used to determine wait times.

### **TO CONCLUDE:**

We have raised many points in this paper we believe warrant serious consideration. But we want to underscore the three that we believe are most crucial for the near-term resolution of the current ferry crisis and form the basis for long-term cost-effective sustainability:

- The Governor and the Legislature need to insist that all Puget Sound Transit agencies and WSF partner with each other in far more proactive ways to create a fully integrated transportation system that entices people to get out of their cars and use mass transit.
- All providers and stakeholders must recognize that continuing to burden current ferry system customers with higher fares will be directly counter-productive to the larger transportation and environmental goals espoused by the State -- and ultimately will cripple WSF; a dire consequence for its customers and the public at large.
- And, the absolute necessity for the Governor and the Legislature to establish a stable source of funding for the ferry system that will cover both capital resource requirements (near and long-term) and on-going cost effective operational management. We expect this may mean some form of additional taxation.



**Washington State  
Department of Transportation**



Lastly, we appreciate all the addressees' taking the time to consider the positions in this paper and we look forward to working together to improve our State Ferry System and make it a source of pride for us all.