



Meeting #8
Bremerton Ferry Advisory Committee Public Workshop
Norm Dicks Government Center
Bremerton, Washington
Monday, June 30, 2008: 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Note: This meeting summary represents notes from the Ferry Advisory Committee public workshop, 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.

Introduction,

David Moseley, Assistant Secretary, Washington State Ferries

David welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. He introduced Senator Keller, Representative Rolfes and Representative Seaquist and the Washington Transportation State Commission (WSTC) members Dick Ford, Bob Distler and Phil Parker, Jill Satran from Governor Gregoire's office and Reema Griffith from the WSTC office.

David explained that the work we are doing tonight is particularly important because the ferry system that we have right now is not financially sustainable. That's why the legislation asked us to conduct several studies in coordination the WSTC and Legislative Joint Transportation Committee (JTC). We will have another set of public meetings in September.

David reported out on several topics he had heard from the communities over the last couple months and what Washington State Ferries (WSF) has done as a result.

- A theme from the last round of public FAC meetings is a need for better coordination between Ferries and transit agencies. David recognized John Clauson from Kitsap Transit. David recognized Kitsap County as having some of the best transit. David said that when he arrived at the Bremerton terminal, there were three buses waiting for commuters.
- As of Sunday, June 22, full-fare, single-ride tickets for all routes will expire 90 days from the date of purchase. Previously they expired seven days from the date of purchase.
- The 30-minute lock-out has been removed. Riders can now charge multiple cars to the ticket system.
- At the March meeting, Ferries was asked to check the log on the 4:50 a.m. and 6:20 a.m. ferries because they were leaving late. David reported that he has been monitoring the logs and they seem to be within the 10 minute



- window. David encouraged people to let him know if they still found it a problem.
- Also at the last meeting, many attendees mentioned that the 10:30 p.m. sailing out of Seattle is too early for people at events, activities, baseball games, etc. David said that Ferries looked into this concern. The ferries need to stay on-time since there is a large number of Navy shipyard workers who use that sailing to get to their graveyard shift.

David introduced Ray Deardorf.

Presentation

Ray Deardorf, Planning Director

Ray walked the attendees through an information packet. He stated that WSF has a specific legislative directive to be here tonight and to gather public input. He encouraged attendees to look at the details of the legislation on the boards and in their packets. The WSF will use the information from these FAC meetings and the Washington Transportation Commission surveys to a draft long-term plan, scheduled to be released in late November/early December.

The key concept in this process is adaptive management. The WSF wants to keep costs low and be as efficient as possible. There is an imbalance of supply and demand. This means that during specific times there are a lot more vehicles showing up to ride our ferries than we have space for. The resulting problems are congestion, underutilized ferries, unhappy people and people who don't use the system.

The bottom line is that WSF has to find a way to manage demand and increase efficiency. The planning team developed a long list of strategies to study. Ray directed the attendees to the nine strategies in their packets and to the nine boards around the room.

Ray gave an overview of the nine strategies.

- Pricing has been identified as one of the best ways to manage demand. Pricing strategies are peak pricing, mode-shift pricing (use other ways of getting on the ferry), off peak pricing, and simplification of the pricing structure. We're looking at this as a revenue neutral option.
- Reservations can also be effective for the system. This primarily applies to cars. There are examples listed here that you can look at online when you get home. A reservations system means reliability both for customers and WSF. It moves the queue from dock to online. We've heard from some of you that you can already see a difference in Port Townsend, that you don't



- see the lines anymore. Reservations are adaptable to the community (e.g., only require reservations on weekends or in the summer).
- Transit access enhancements refer to the connections with buses and trains on either side of the ferry.
 - Technologies for improved fare collection go hand in hand with the reservations system.
 - Non-motorized access enhancements would improve access for pedestrians and cyclists. Lots of ferry terminals have opportunities for this and most ferry runs have space for this.
 - Enhanced user information would allow riders to view routes online, plan multiple routes, and be able to see availability in real time.
 - Promotion of non-single occupancy vehicle options includes strategies to show people that you don't have to drive on the ferry. We could work with private enterprises like Zipcar. This might work best for heavy commuter routes.
 - Managing dock space could include using a metered exit queue. The philosophy here is if we could manage better, would not need as much infrastructure.
 - Parking and holding refers to space at the terminals and could extend reservations to parking.

Ray described the process for creating the long-range plan. The WSF will incorporate input from the nine FAC public workshops held in June, continue to study the best operational strategies, incorporate information from the Washington State Transportation Commission survey and then create the draft of the long-term plan by September.

Introduction of Meeting Format / Ideas for Strategy Development

Diane Adams, Public Outreach Consultant

Diane said that she would be help attendees walk through the agenda and generate input for WSF on these concepts. Diane described the four parts of the meeting. She said the meeting would start with time to think about the strategies and vote for the most beneficial. She said the second and third parts would include small group discussion on the reservations system and pricing strategies. Diane stated that at the end of the night there would be time for additional comments if attendees had comments on things that hadn't been discussed yet in the meeting.

Diane asked participants to think about which strategies would be valuable to themselves or their communities. She asked them to place the dots on display boards representing each of the nine strategies according to their individual priority (one or more on any of the boards).



The dot break-down was as follows:

1. Pricing	30
2. Reservations	18
3. Transit Access Enhancement	30
4. Non-motorized Access Enhancement	26
5. Enhanced User Information	25
6. Technologies for Improved Fare Collection	14
7. Non-Single Occupancy promotion	16
8. Traffic and Dock Space Management	12
9. Parking and Holding	20

Workshop #1: Reservations

Ray Deardorf, Planning Director

Ray spoke in detail about a potential reservations system. A reservations system needs to be flexible and WSF would have the flexibility to vary how spots are reserved (some months in advance, some weeks in advance, some days in advance, some hours in advance) and how many spots will remain unreserved (first come, first serve). The system needs to be convenient for the customer – available online, phone or walk-up. Customers need to be able to view the wait list online in real time. In addition, riders need to have access to the terminal and know where to go. The system could use transponders, license plate recognition, etc. The system could be adjusted daily to accommodate current situations, have the ability to book reservations for multiple reservations. Ray stated that one of the benefits of the system is that it could be linked to demand pricing.

Diane reviewed the ground rules for the meeting before groups started their small group discussions.

1. start/end on time
2. listen with respect
3. stay on topic
4. contribute
5. be concise

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

- Do you see a reservations system helping you? If so, how?
- If not, what concerns do you have about a reservations system?
- If Washington State Ferries implements a reservations system on your route, what specific things should be part of it?

Public Comment and Questions



1. The Bremerton to Seattle run works fine; but the Seattle to Bremerton run does not.
2. My concern is that if I don't have a reservation I won't be able to get on the ferry.
3. A reservations system would allow more reliable planning for travel, but may inhibit spontaneous trips. It would diversify options for travelers.
4. Could the system include an e-mail ticket option that allows the user to get credit if the ticket is not scanned?
5. Traffic and terminal access in Seattle present challenges to a successful reservations system. It would be helpful to have a reservations lane at the terminal equipped to read transponders.
6. We need flexibility if the system is going to work, especially as it relates to the return trip.
7. A reservations system is not currently relevant to the Bremerton route, but may work for others. WSF needs to evaluate the applicability of a reservations system by route.
8. Need more ticket booths open.
9. Need to limit the number of spaces saved for reservations and those spaces should be available first to regular commuters.
10. There should be a fee to make a reservation and a penalty to cancel.
11. What will the priority be for appointments or emergencies?
12. Do medical people have to make them?
13. Will people who can't get a reservation be turned off by the system?
14. It won't help walk-ons or bicycles.
15. There will be additional administrative costs to operate a reservations system 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.
16. A reservation system would work for tourists. Tourists are already charged a summer surcharge.
17. A reservation system would allow me to get some time back since I wouldn't need to arrive so early.
18. What is the percentage of tourists on these runs? WSF could conduct a poll of our communities to determine what they want.
19. A reservations system would only assist during peak ridership times and I'm already avoiding peak hours so it wouldn't help me too much.
20. Reservations should be limited to specific sailings.
21. What happens if the boat breaks down? Would the rider get credit?
22. There would need to be separate staging at Colman Dock.
23. Need improved terminal access on Alaskan Way for people with reservations.



Workshop #2: Pricing

Ray Deardorf, Planning Director

Ray Deardorf introduced the pricing options including peak-pricing, mode-shift pricing, off-peak pricing and pricing simplification.

Ray said that WSF has the flexibility to target pricing by route according to demand (time of day, time of year) and integrate the system with frequent user policies. The legislation is asking WSF to simplify fares (for example: several routes would share the same fare) and WSF is required to keep a senior discount.

Pricing can help manage vehicle deck space. Ray said that one of the options is to encourage people to drive smaller cars by charging more for large vehicles or instituting a small car rate. Currently, cars between one foot and 20' pay the same price.

Diane introduced the workshop, questions and options. Facilitators led the groups through the following questions:

- Of the four pricing options discussed, would any of them change your ferry usage behavior, i.e. walk on, smaller car, carpool, bus?
- If not a pricing strategy, what other strategy would make it appealing for you to change your ferry usage behavior?

Options:

1. peak pricing
2. mode-shift pricing
3. off-peak discounts
4. price simplification

Public Comment and Questions

1. Set price according to length and weight.
2. WSF should provide pricing carrots not sticks.
3. I'm not going to buy a new car for the ferry.
4. Route shifting would work.
5. Parking is cost prohibitive and is also not convenient so mode shifting will be a challenge.
6. Should charge a flat rate per vehicle.
7. Need to coordinate transit.
8. The schedule for commuters is set and so it doesn't work to shift. Commuters would be penalized with peak period pricing. They need an



- incentive. Commuters and frequent users should be given a discount and the ability to purchase a ticket with no expiration date.
9. Focus pricing to capture increased revenue from recreational users, not commuters and frequent users.
 10. Integrate pricing and payment into one payment system. Use transponders and coordinate with other transit, park and rides and all other WSDOT services, including Good2Go passes. Transponders would be great.
 11. Promote non-single occupancy vehicles with single fare per car.
 12. Create a late night loop route from Seattle to Bainbridge Island to Bremerton.
 13. In order for off-peak discounts to work there will need to be more sailings.
 14. There should be an additional discount for carpool/vanpool.
 15. Fuel price affects route choice.
 16. Need to improve WSF connections with other transit, including Metro.
 17. Improve technologies for fare collection.
 18. Improve service disruption notices.
 19. Favor lowering the Bremerton price as a way to keep people from driving all the way to Bainbridge. Concerned this could get a negative reaction from other routes since the Bremerton route is so long.
 20. Small car pricing could work but would need to be publicized well. Terminal staff would need to be given the authority to enforce it well.
 21. Need consistency in the boat sizes. Service should be dependable.
 22. The parking rates should be lowered to give people incentive to walk on.
 23. WSF should work with major employers to adjust work schedules as much as possible. The State should provide incentive for employers to do so.

Additional Public Comments and Questions

1. I'd like to see smaller boats, more frequency.
2. People will take the Bainbridge Island ferry home because there isn't any space on the Bremerton Ferry.
3. There are good things here but I feel like there are small system "tweakings." David said that WSF is not sustainable into the future and I feel like a fundamental shift in conversation needs to happen. Not just increase pricing (which also needs to happen) but need a fundamental change in the system.
4. Bob Distler said that the system is unsustainable. The legislature is aware that the 2009 session is key. He said that the WTC is working on numbers so that we can all agree and believe in them. The change will require some state funding. The fuel costs are not going down. WSF needs to look at its quality of service and account for growth.
5. We are the Central Kitsap ferry. I won't drive to Bainbridge Island to pay the same fee. Gas costs are going up. We are not addressing people.



- Why can't we do something about the rule that says boats have to be built in Washington? Build them anywhere, just get them built. Kitsap County has had building permits for years but have not built any new roads, let's get them built. The new access to the ferry in Bremerton will be good.
6. I'd like to know what the impact will be when the Tacoma Narrows Bridge fee goes up.
 7. I'd like to see the Good to Go system used on the ferry system. It can be used on everything else (bridge, HOT lanes, etc). It all needs to be one system.
 8. It's all about convenience. That's why we take the ferry or why we chose to drive around. It's whatever is most convenient. Is this boat mostly tourists or commuters?
 9. I'm a commuter so it's important that I get to my job at a certain time. I heard that you can slow the ferries down to save gas? Is that true? How does that affect transit connections?
 10. I heard that WSF is running fewer engines to save fuel? Is this slowing the ferries down?
 11. We need to attract more walk-ons. We have 90% of the walk-on capacity free most of the time. Let's not waste it.
 12. The unused space in the midday could be free.
 13. The bathrooms on the boats are filthy.
 14. The government needs to figure out transportation. We need some accountability.
 15. If we want people to walk on the ferry, why are we selling the passenger-only ferries?
 16. We had passenger-only ferries, I thought they were worth the extra money I had to pay. I think that Washington State gave up too early. The legislation should bring them back. Why are you selling new boats when the old ones are breaking down?
 17. The Staten Island Ferry in New York City is free for passengers.

David closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their input. He told the attendees that WSF is running some boats on two engines rather than four to save fuel but that it does not decrease the speed of the boats and they are able to stay on schedule.

David expressed appreciation of the WSF fleet staff at the meeting and asked them to raise their hands. He said that that says a lot to him that they care enough about the long-range plan to come out to these meetings. David gave the Washington Transportation Commissioners a chance to speak.



Phil Parker thanked everyone for coming and giving feedback to the WSF staff. He said that the WTC is concerned with the state of the ferries system and that he is encouraged by the information he's heard at these meetings.

David adjourned the meeting.

There were approximately 37 attendees. The public sign-in included:

Daryn Swisher	Chris Kornelis
Ann Erickson	Patty Seljestad
Judy Friedberg-Nerf	John Clauson
Mary Fleckenstein	Adam Brockus
RB Nerf	Fred Finn
Derek Kilmer	Rich Town
Rich Schefsty	Tom Luce
Marina Anna Baker	Phil Parker
Bob Distler	Joan Dingfield
Mark Lowe	Blair Scanlan
Angela Borus	Donald and Victoria Forbes
Patricia Grayble	Frank and Ann Reed
Juanita Jones	Beanie JMW Fleming
Tracy Guster	Dick Ford
Larry Seaquist	Christine Rolfes
James J. Brophy	John L. Ross
Diane Smart	Linda Lovgren Houlton
Jay Haskins	Rex Nelson

Washington State Ferries Staff
David Moseley, Assistant Secretary
Ray Deardorf, Planning Director
Joy Goldenberg, Communications Manager
Shawn Devine, Communications Consultant
Tim Payne, Consultant
Steve Rodgers, Director of Operations
Leonard Smith, Operations
Diane Adams, Consultant
Kristina Walker, Consultant

There were no written comments submitted.