



Meeting #2
Port Townsend Ferry Advisory Committee Public Meeting
Fort Worden State Park
Port Townsend, Washington
Wednesday, June 18, 2008: 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

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

Introduction,

Tom Thiersch, Jefferson County FAC Alternate Chair

David Moseley, Assistant Secretary, Washington State Ferries

Tom Thiersch opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. Tim asked Washington State Ferries (WSF) staff to introduce themselves and then he introduced David Moseley.

David Moseley thanked everyone for coming and told them that this meeting comes at a critical time for WSF and he appreciates people taking the time to attend. David stated that tonight's meeting is a workshop format, which is different than the typical FAC public meetings.

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

- WSF is moving forward with construction of the Island Home design vessel following clear public dissatisfaction over the Steilacoom II. The new ferry is in design and should be under construction before the end of this year.
- In response to public input over the reduced vehicle capacity of the Steilacoom II, there will be additional runs Thursday – Monday on the Port Townsend/Keystone route now through October 13.
- The pilot reservations program at PT/Keystone is constantly being evaluated and we appreciate all of the comments to-date and will have fuller discussion later on this evening. Attendees tonight are the “experts” and can give WSF more information than any other community.
- WSF is closely watching for passenger overload issues. They haven't had many but they are planning carefully for the summer festivals.
- He has heard a lot of conversations about musicians on ferries in the future. He has worked with people to come up with a solution that works and will be sharing with the public soon.
- A theme from the last round of public FAC meetings is a need for better coordination between WSF and transit agencies. He has been talking with



- some of the transit agencies and will schedule some meetings with Jefferson Transit.
- WSF and Google transit Web site will be going live with that at the end of the month and thanked them for that suggestion.
 - 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.
 - David said that he has been asked about for a passenger-only ferry during the Hood Canal Bridge closure (in reference to the WSDOT Olympic Region survey). David said that he has been briefed and knows about the issue. He noted that people have asked for a car ferry during this time as well but he barely has enough boats for the 10 existing routes, much less a new route. If something changes, he will do everything he can to change that answer.

David left his email and phone number and encouraged people to contact him directly. He then introduced Rob Berman.

Presentation

Rob Berman, Planning Consultant

Rob 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. Rob said that the attendees probably experience this here in Port Townsend with the long queues and traffic through town.

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. Rob directed the attendees to the nine strategies in their packets and to the nine boards around the room.



Rob 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.

Rob 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.

Public Comment and Questions

1. Why isn't security mentioned? *Diane asked him to hold his questions for the small group discussion.*
2. What constraints is WSF under to set pricing? *There is a process involving the Washington Transportation Commission. Previously, WSF has made*



recommendations to the Commission. There is a series of proposals and hearings, and an outreach program to take the proposals to the public but ultimately, they have the authority. Currently the fares are frozen until October 2009. We need to get through the work of this study to decide what the operational strategies are that we need and then review the fares. We need to figure out how we can be more efficient first.

Format of Meeting / Ideas for Strategy Development

Diane Adams, Public Outreach Consultant

Diane said that David and his staff were at the meeting to listen and to get input from the public. Diane encouraged people to fill in a comment form at the meeting and take one home to friends and family. Diane introduced the four parts of the meeting; dot exercise, a small group discussion on reservations, a small group discussion on pricing, and then a session to capture additional comments.

Diane explained the dot exercise and asked participants to think about which strategies are most beneficial to them as a WSF user. 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 breakdown was as follows:

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Pricing | 31 |
| 2. Reservations | 32 |
| 3. Transit Access Enhancement | 22 |
| 4. Non-motorized Access Enhancement | 10 |
| 5. Enhanced User Information | 13 |
| 6. Technologies for Improved Fare Collection | 6 |
| 7. Non-Single Occupancy Promotion | 8 |
| 8. Traffic and Dock Space Management | 11 |
| 9. Parking and Holding | 10 |

Workshop #1: Reservations

Tom introduced the Jefferson County FAC members present at the meeting: Rick Sepler, Tim Snider and Andrew Karagas. He welcomed them to speak if they were interested.

Tim stated that tonight is a change and that the FAC is excited to have this process available and to have WSF working with them and asking for the public's input.



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 served). 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 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 WSF implements a reservations system on your route, what specific things should be part of it?

Public Comments and Questions

The first two questions were asked during Ray's presentation and he was able to provide brief answers. The remaining comments and questions were made during the small group work sessions.

1. Is there going to be space saved for non-reservations? *That is exactly how a system can be designed, with any of these considerations.*
2. Would motorcycles be included? *Yes, it could apply to all vehicles.*
3. A reservations system is a great idea and should be implemented year 'round. The system works in Port Townsend and this is a good place to model/test a reservations system. There are many places where a reservations system would be a plus.
4. Reservations have created more shoppers in downtown Port Townsend because they don't need to wait in line for hours. We are noticing the economic impacts. There are economic benefits to local communities since people can shop while they wait. There are benefits to people, especially families with small children, etc.
5. There are security advantages since you know who will be traveling on sailings.
6. Travelers can save fuel and help the environment because they won't have to sit in line.



7. A reservations system will help reduce the number of parking lots needed, get cars off the street and eliminate congestion and confusion, especially in Port Townsend where remote holding is a challenge.
8. The system can help WSF plan service and more efficiently use the fleet. A system can help fill excess capacity. The system helps with the small capacity of the boat.
9. Travelers may have a better idea when there is a guaranteed sailing and when there are tide cancellations.
10. A reservations system will make planned travel easy, but more difficult for spontaneous travelers.
11. Advertising and education are critical components of a successful reservations system. There are lots of people who don't/won't know how to use a reservations system. Customer services need to be consistent, information must be complete, and the system adequately staffed. Fare payment needs to be integrated with other transit systems.
12. Businesses helping with reservations would be a plus.
13. Personal accounts on the Web would be easier to navigate.
14. Motorcycles and groups will need to be accommodated. It may make sense to restrict reservations for over length commercial vehicles.
15. Move discretionary travelers to off-peak, less busy sailings.
16. Like the 30 minute advance arrival requirement. At the same time, some would like to arrive later than 30 minutes.
17. There are concerns about traffic delays or other events that may make the traveler miss a reserved departure time, especially during times when the Hood Canal Bridge opens for maritime traffic. Sometimes return traffic is not predictable.
18. Frequent ride cars should still be able to make reservations. There is some concern about paying twice with a multi-ride pass if there's a reservations fee.
19. We don't want people to make fake reservations and tie-up capacity, so we need to find a way to limit the number of reservations per person and by day.
20. There needs to be penalties for no shows so that the boat is full to highest possible capacity at all times. Will there be a penalty for cancelling or no shows?
21. The system needs to be balanced with spontaneous travel and regular planned travel. An ideal system will be linked to all available transit links (including highways) and be flexible. It's reasonable to ask for a fee. There should be a variety of ways to make a reservation and to know how much capacity is available for each sailing.
22. Ferry booths and visitors centers need to be educated about how it works. Education is the key to success. Ferry booth employees, visitor center employees, etc. need to be knowledgeable about the system.



23. People need the ability to buy round trip tickets for big festival weekends.
24. If the system becomes automated, there should always be one staff available to answer questions.
25. There should be vouchers available for other routes in case of a no-sail.
26. Will motorcycles be required to have reservations or can this be optional?
27. How will the system accommodate short notice travel and cancellations?

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 Comments and Questions

1. Off-peak discount pricing is a good idea, especially for large and/or commercial vehicles. WSF needs to review space and weight classes and rates. Discounted off-peak will encourage people to change behavior (e.g. get up earlier). Pricing could change people's travel patterns if there were fewer sailings in the early morning and evening.



2. Simplification of pricing is least useful. Congestion pricing makes sense. Off peak makes sense. WSF should reduce fare in off peak times to even out traffic. Mode shifting may be a challenge since most travelers have one option – drive or not drive. Connections make mode shift to walking risky.
3. Charging a high price during peak periods penalizes those with no choice. Fares should be higher for tourists than for residents. Pricing is more of an issue for commuters.
4. Provide a special card for residents that costs less. A recreational user fee would benefit regular users. You should target tourists because they want to get to their destination and not hit the commuters so hard.
5. There should be one flat vehicle price with no fee for passengers and one rate for walk-ons all the time. If fares are higher during peak periods, travelers may choose to go or may choose to wait. It's good to have a choice.
6. More park and ride lots would encourage mode shift and decrease single occupant vehicles. Mode-shift pricing will encourage people to bike or walk on.
7. Should provide lower prices for walk-ons and encourage people to get out of cars. Eliminate the bicycle fare as a means of encouraging discounts for mode shift.
8. Should be discounts for high occupancy vehicles.
9. Transit connections are essential and more information should be available on transit options. Provide transit from the ferry to popular destinations such as the airport.
10. There should be one DOT ticket to use on highways/bridges, and ferries so travelers only have to pay once. The system needs to be easy, as in the ability to pre-pay a set amount on a transponder.
11. There needs to be current information showing where congestion is so that people can plan travel accordingly.
12. Will all routes have their own peak?
13. Is there a flipping point for ferry prices (e.g. \$4/gallon for gas)?

Additional Public Comments and Questions

1. If you integrate transit it will result in higher ridership and higher rider satisfaction.
2. The League of Women Voters would like to say that WSF is part of the State Highway System and should be funded as such. Fares should not pay for operating costs.
3. A big transit system is not friendly to non-residents.
4. WSF should partner with Zipcar.
5. I think that privately operated boats from Port Townsend to Seattle by someone other than WSF would be a good idea.



6. The Non-motorized Advisory Board of Port Townsend would like attention to be paid to the connections between transit options. WSF needs to coordinate with buses and trains to ensure people aren't being left in the middle of nowhere.
7. WSF should look into the Guaranteed Ride Home program. It isn't that expensive and it encourages more people to use alternative transit options.
8. WSF needs to plan for people (not boats, cars, docks, etc.)
9. Is there a plan for a community gathering space on the new Island Home boats?
10. Will there be information kiosks at the ferry docks? If people don't know about their options, they won't use them.
11. Thank you, David, for coming. We see a lot of meetings and the attitude out of Ferries is different now and vastly better.

David summarized the meeting by saying that the information gathered tonight is important to the study. David congratulated the participants on the great work done and thanked them for engaging in the conversation and providing information to WSF. He said that notes were taken during the meeting and that everything will be on the Web site and will be open to public comment by mid-July.

David adjourned the meeting.

Approximately 25 attendees. The public sign-in included:

Catharine Robinson	Dan O'Neal	Dennis Schultz
Mary Fleckensten	Marcy Jaffe	Betty Todd
Deborah Hammond	Barbara Ierulli	Barbara Bowen
Dennis Daneau	Barney Burke	Dave Turissini
Elmira Forner	Blair Scunian	Jim Reilly
David Michael	Jane Scuzan	Jim Todd
Walt Elliott	Andrew Reding	Forest Shomer
Rick Sepler	Tim Snider	Christine Ota
Bill Dengler	Andrew Karagas	
Ken Lorg	Susan Windle	

Washington State Ferries Staff
 David Moseley, Assistant Secretary
 Ray Deardorf, Planning Director
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 Hadley Greene, Communications Manager
 Dan Ferguson, Operations
 Doug Schlieff, Operations



Leonard Smith, Operations
Jayne Davis, Operations
Rob Berman, Consultant
Michael Hodgins, Consultant
Tim Payne, Consultant
Diane Adams, Consultant
Kristina Walker, Consultant

The following written comments were submitted at the meeting:

Andrew Reding
[personal contact information omitted]

1. None
2. Consider offering discount to those who make reservations versus those who don't. Penalties for no-shows are essential.
3. - Peak pricing surcharges and off-peak discounts are a great idea.
 - Reduce cost of pedestrian/bicyclist fares, shifting the cost to SOVs.
 - Improve transit connections & guarantee them (nothing worse than being abandoned in the middle of nowhere, such as transfer station between - Kitsap Transit & Jefferson Transit in Poulsbo for Port Townsend Seattle.
 - Extend light rail connections to ferries on east side of Puget Sound.

Anonymous

1. Integrate information – ease travel. Give us a way to know our choices.
2. Cancellation must be possible.
3. Off peak is great idea.

Betty Todd, League of Women Voters, WA
[personal contact information omitted]

Washington State Ferries may consider the desirability of reasonable fares for commuters when developing fare and pricing policy proposals, according to the state RCW. And the Washington Transportation Commission is authorized to set fares and pricing policies.

After considerable study, the League of Women Voters of Washington believes that;

Ferries are part of the highway system and should be funded as such. Passenger-only ferries should be funded as are other modes of public transportation. The fare box should not be expected to totally fund ferry operations in Washington State.