Washington State Department of Transportation

Washington State Ferries

Port Townsend-Coupeville Partnership Group

Wednesday July 25 | 5:15 p.m. – 7:15 p.m.*
Cotton Building, 607 Water St, Port Townsend

AGENDA

Time	Topic	Lead
5:15 p.m.	Welcome • Opening remarks • Recap 7/10 conference call • Overview agenda	David Moseley, Assistant Secretary, WSF Heather Rogers, Facilitator (BERK)
5:25 p.m.	Rollout Experience • Key takeaways and lessons learned • Group discussion	Brian Churchwell, WSF
5:55 p.m.	Current System Usage • Usage statistics	Brian Churchwell
6:05 p.m.	Customer Input Survey • Survey results	Heather Rogers
6:50 p.m.	Terminal projects update	Leonard Smith, WSF
7:00 p.m.	Wrap up and General Comments	All
7:15 p.m.	Thank You; Meeting Adjourned	David Moseley

Meeting Materials:
- Save a Spot Rollout: Lessons Learned
- Customer Input Survey analysis
- System usage statistics

* Coincides with sailing schedule; 4:30 departure from Coupeville and 8:30 departure from Port Townsend

For more information, please contact:
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PORT TOWNSEND – COUPEVILLE PARTNERSHIP GROUP
Save a Spot Rollout: Lessons Learned

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The new reservations website went live on June 13, 2012, and redemption of reservations from the new system began on June 17, 2012 at the Port Townsend, Coupeville, Anacortes, Sidney, and Friday Harbor terminals.

By and large, customers were pleased with the new system (per recent Customer Input Survey results). However, there were a few issues with the rollout that slowed terminal processing time, increased wait times on the customer service phone lines, and caused some customer frustration.

WSF hopes to learn from these issues and improve the rollout process for future phases. Key takeaways include the following:

- **Allow more time for testing, training, and customer outreach/education.** The development schedule was delayed too close to the system launch date, resulting in too little time for testing, staff training, and customer education.
- **Schedule system launch in the winter season to minimize risk and adverse impacts to staff.** System launch in the summer was difficult to manage due to increased ridership and staffing schedules that include temporary summer staff unfamiliar with WSF.
- **Improve outreach to commercial customers.** Outreach to commercial customers was not adequate to fully prepare them for system changes and should be conducted earlier and more often in future phases.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WSF would like to hear the Partnership Group's perspective on the system rollout.

Topics

- **Deployment Schedule.** Timing of the deployment with the summer schedule and ultimate adherence to the project schedule.
- **Customer Outreach and Education.** Were customers prepared for the new system, and did they have enough information to use it easily?
- **Rollout at the Terminals.** Reflections on terminal rollout and redemption of reservations out of the new system.

Questions

1. **What went well?**
2. **What could be improved?**
3. **Are there any recommendations for future phases?**

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PORT TOWNSEND – COUPEVILLE PARTNERSHIP GROUP
Save a Spot Rollout: Usage Reports

The exhibits on this page show the standard system usage metrics that WSF is tracking by week. Usage patterns coincide with the following key dates.

June 4	Website live for Sidney, B.C. routes, and WSF staff begins entering commercial reservations.
June 13	Website live for Port Townsend/Coupeville and Executive Account customers on San Juan Islands routes
June 17	Redemption begins at terminals

Exhibit 1: Save a Spot Reservation Activity – All Routes with Reservations

Week	New Reservations	Changes	Cancellations
June 4	5,471	192	56
June 11	4,872	273	169
June 18	6,575	485	312
June 25	9,735	641	682
July 2	6,719	626	397
July 9	7,386	683	707
Total	**33,372**	**2,217**	**1,616**

Exhibit 2: New Reservations by Account Type

Week	Guest	Universal	Premier	Executive		Online
June 4	2,490	459	-	2,522		68%
June 11	3,324	632	43	873		72%
June 18	5,333	958	71	213		78%
June 25	5,535	988	94	3,118		78%
July 2	5,457	928	66	268		79%
July 9	5,931	1,040	84	331		78%
Total	**22,139**	**3,965**	**274**	**6,994**		**77%**

Note: the percent online reflects Guest and Universal Account users only.

Exhibit 3: Redemption Activity at Port Townsend/Coupeville

Week	# of Secured Reservations	# of Reservations Redeemed	% Show Ratio
June 18	3,058	2,892	95%
June 25	3,305	3,094	94%
July 2	3,970	3,671	92%
July 9	3,810	3,321	87%
Total	**14,143**	**12,978**	**92%**

Note: the "% Show Ratio" reflects whether or not customers redeemed their reservation on the same ***operating day*** *as their originally reserved sailing. It does not reflect whether or not they redeemed their reservation on the sailing that they booked.*

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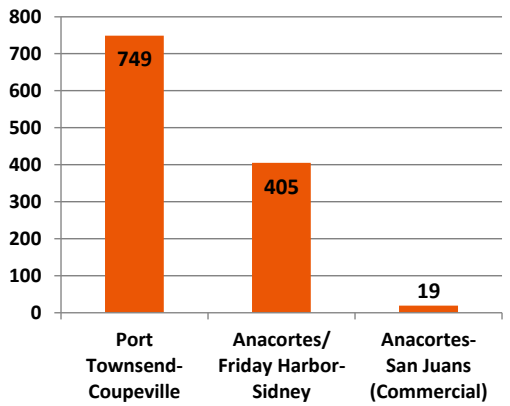
PORT TOWNSEND – COUPEVILLE PARTNERSHIP GROUP
Analysis of Customer Input Survey Results

OVERVIEW OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

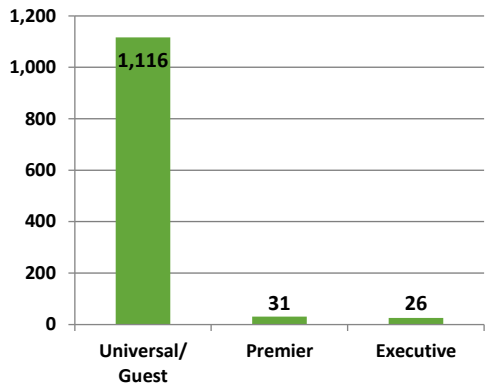
In order to better understand customer response to the new Save a Spot reservation system and target improvement efforts, WSF sent a survey to approximately 4,500 customers who made a reservation for travel between June 30, 2012 and July 8, 2012. In total, 1,173 customers took the survey, for a response rate of 25%. The exhibits below show which routes and account types the survey respondents used.

Exhibit 1
Respondents by Route



n = 1,173 respondents

Exhibit 2
Respondents by Account Type



n = 1,173 respondents

In the comments, many customers stated they didn't know which account type they used.

MAKING A RESERVATION

Exhibit 3 and Exhibit 4 show how survey respondents that made a reservation online rated the website on how easy it was to use. This chart only shows survey respondents that made or attempted to make a reservation online – 9% of respondents did not use the website to make a reservation.

Exhibit 3
Website Ease of Use by Route

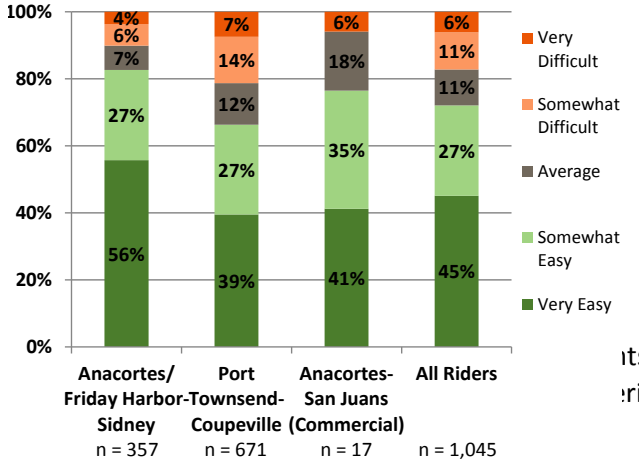
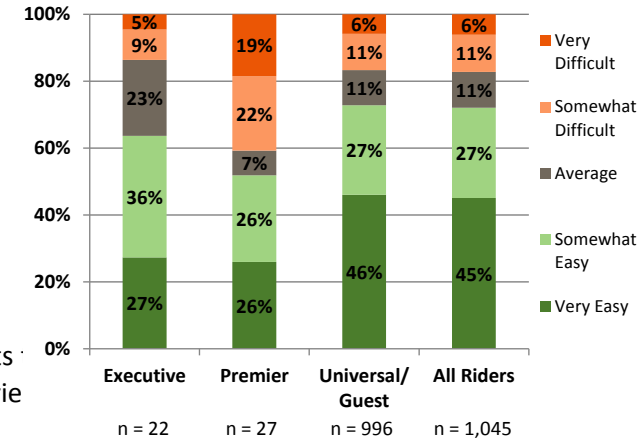


Exhibit 4
Website Ease of Use by Account Type



July 25, 2012

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Exhibit 5
Phone Service Experience by Route

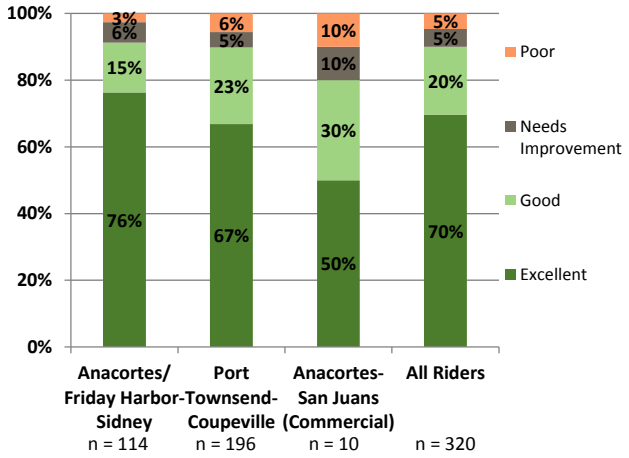
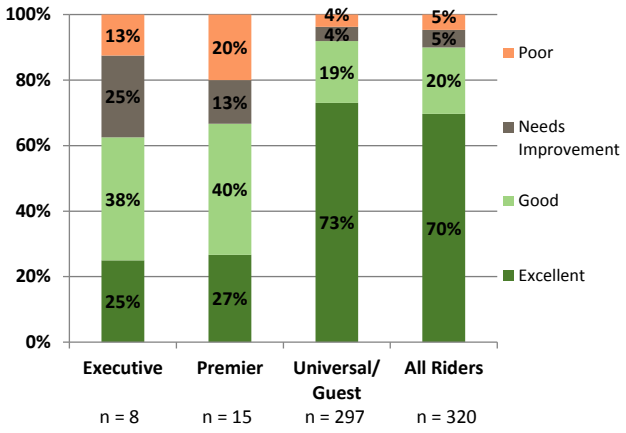


Exhibit 6
Phone Service Experience by Account Type



CHANGING OR CANCELING A RESERVATION

Exhibit 7 and Exhibit 8 show how respondents that made a change or cancelation via the website rated the site's ease of use. Overall, about 15% of respondents made a change or cancelation, and about 64% of the respondents that made a change or cancelation did so via the website.

Exhibit 7
Change/Cancelation via Website
Ease of Use by Route

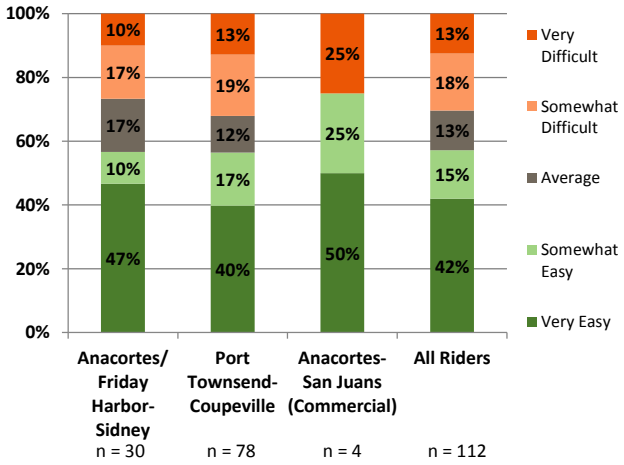
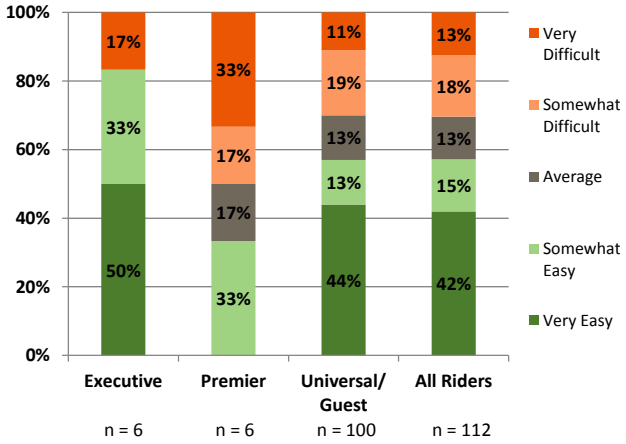


Exhibit 8
Change/Cancelation via Website
Ease of Use by Account Type



CHECKING IN AT THE TERMINAL

Exhibit 9 shows how respondents felt about the clarity of the reservation check-in process. Survey respondents were asked if they knew in advance about specific aspects of check-in, such as when to arrive, what they should bring, that their deposit would be credited toward their fare, and that they would owe some additional fare at the tollbooth.

Exhibit 9
Clarity of Reservation Check-in Process

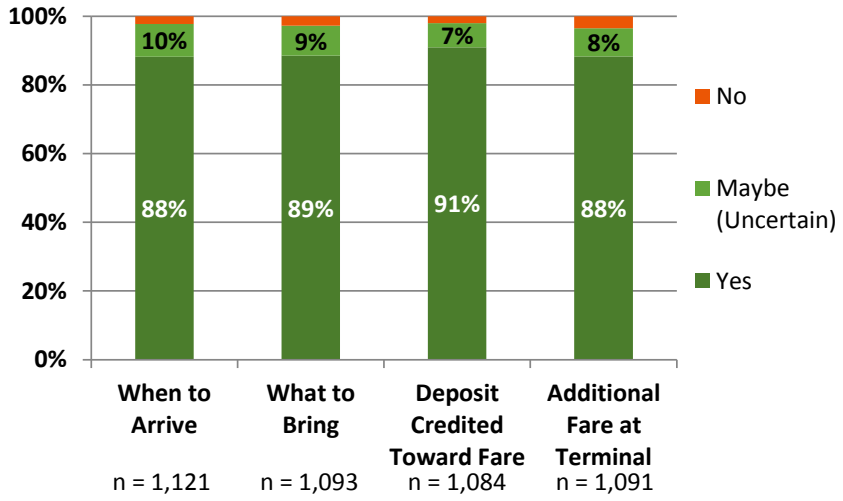


Exhibit 10 and Exhibit 11 show whether or not survey respondents brought their printed confirmation page or printed barcode to the terminal, by route and by account type.

Exhibit 10
Printed Confirmation/Barcode by Route

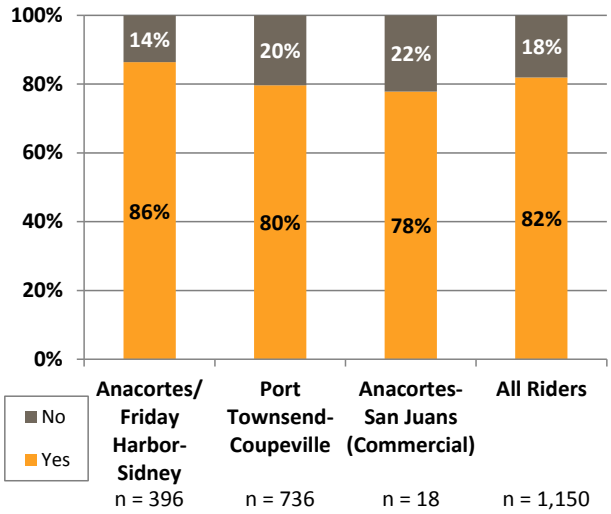


Exhibit 11
Printed Confirmation/Barcode by Account Type

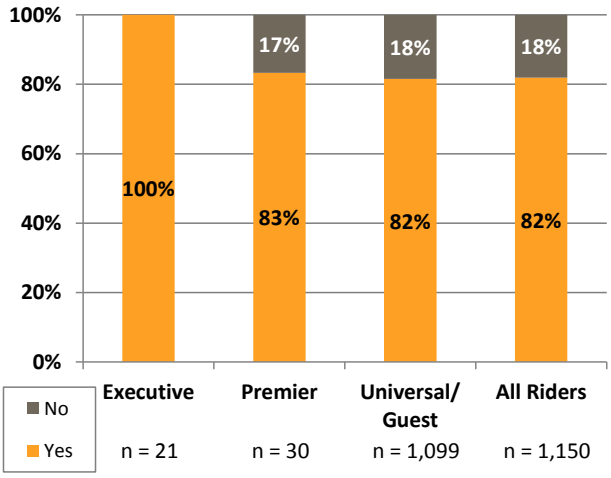


Exhibit 12 and Exhibit 13 show whether or not survey respondents thought the tollbooth operator processed their transaction easily.

Exhibit 12
Easy Tollbooth Transaction Processing by Route

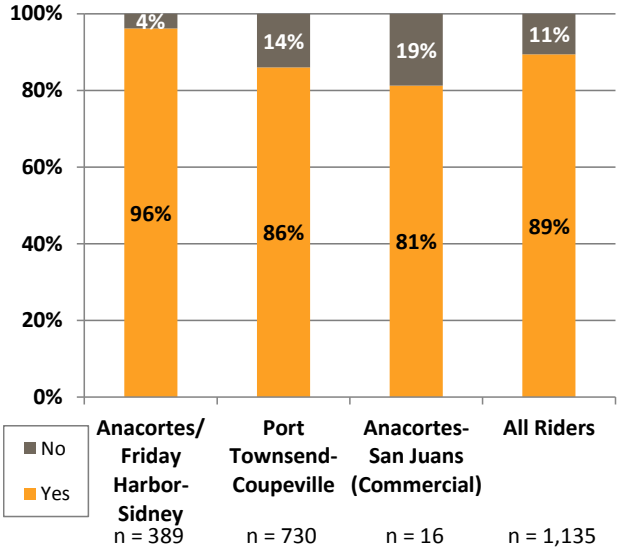


Exhibit 13
Easy Tollbooth Transaction Processing by Account Type

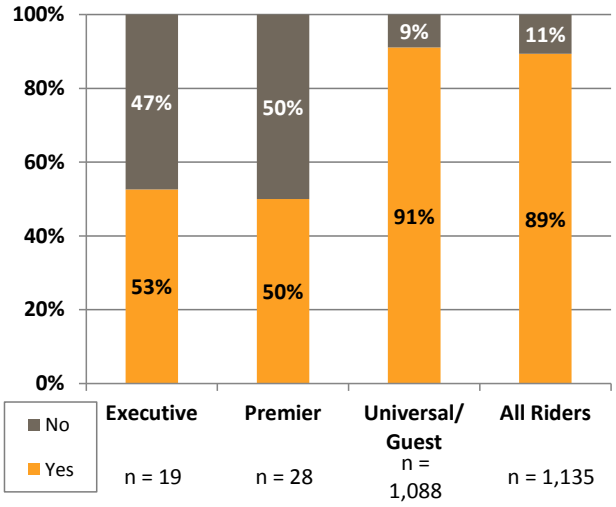


Exhibit 14 and Exhibit 15 show how survey respondents rated their reservation check-in experience overall, by route and by account type.

Exhibit 14
Overall Check-in Experience by Route

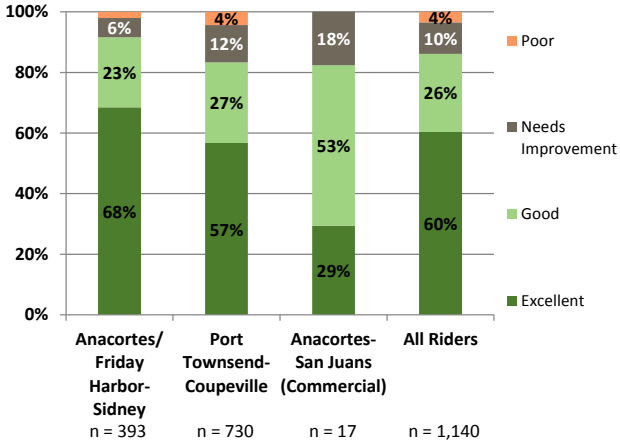
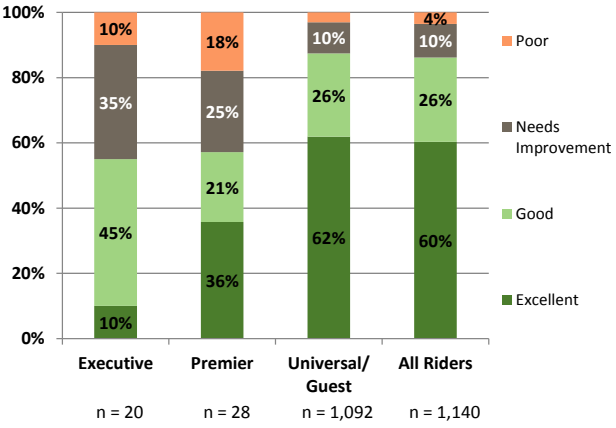


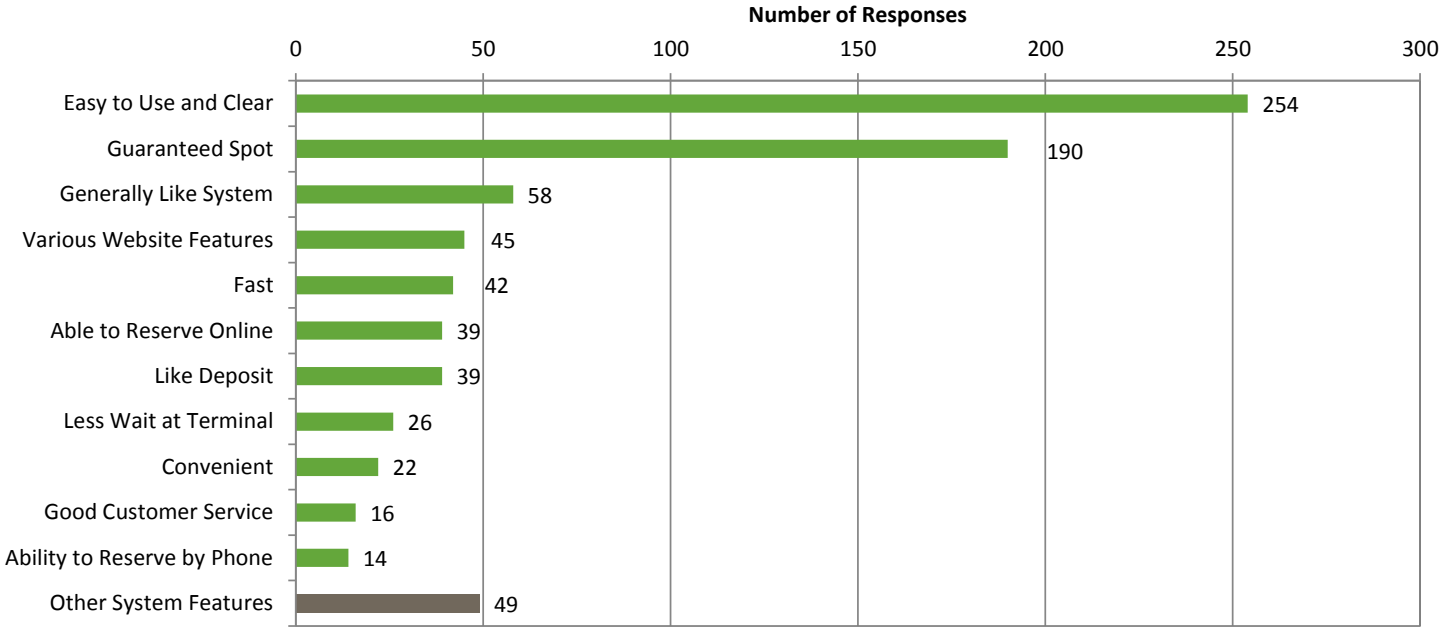
Exhibit 15
Overall Check-in Experience by Account Type



OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

This section documents the range of responses received for open-ended questions in the survey. Exhibit 16 shows the breakdown of responses to the question "Please describe what you like best about the new reservation system." Customers provided over 750 responses to this question. Responses were reviewed and aggregated into the categories used in Exhibit 16. Some responses were counted in multiple categories.

Exhibit 16
What Respondents Like Best about the Reservation System



The most common response "Easy to Use and Clear" included appreciation for the clarity of website instructions and overall ease of use. The second most common category, "Guaranteed Spot," included many responses about the value of being able to make travel plans and peace of mind knowing one would be able to make a sailing.

A few other categories of note include:

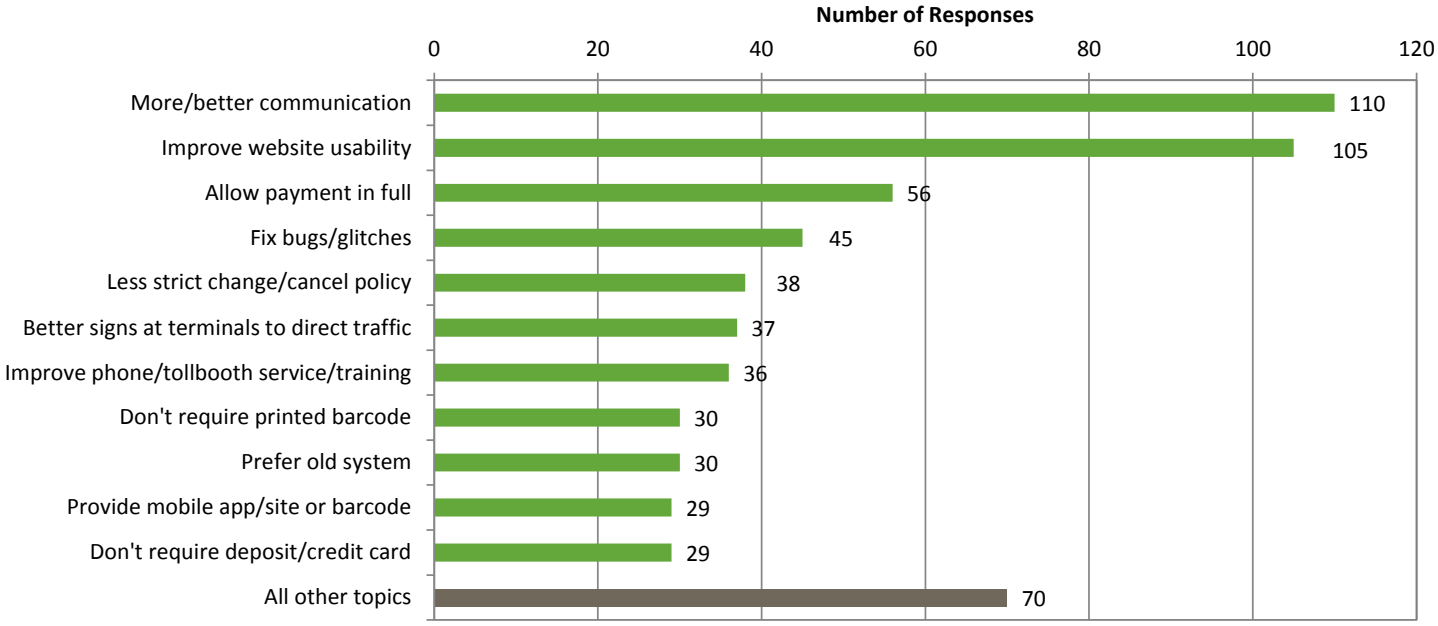
- **Various Website Features.** Comments in this category included appreciation for the following features, among others:
  - Seeing space availability for reservation spots and stand by spots.
  - The convenience of having account information stored in the system.
  - Availability of sailing schedule and tide information.
  - Being able to track reservations and account activity online.
  - Website layout and navigation – numbered steps and drop-down menus.
- **Other System Features.** Comments in this category included appreciation for the following features, among others:
  - Flexible change and cancellation policies and ability to do this online.
  - Printed confirmation pages.

- The ability to reserve far in advance as well as on short notice.
- The ability to reserve round trips and multiple trips.
- The system works on smart phones.
- Deposits being honored anytime during the sailing day (for both early arrivers and those that missed a sailing).

- **Like Deposit.** This category included appreciation for two aspects of the deposit feature:
  - That the reservations are free and the deposit is applied to the final fare. Many compared this to BC Ferries which charges for reservations.
  - That the deposit reduces the number of false reservations, a problem under the previous Port Townsend-Coupeville reservation system.

Exhibit 17 shows the breakdown of responses to the question "please describe how we can improve the reservation system. Are there any additional features you would like to see?" Customers provided over 500 responses to this question. Responses were reviewed and aggregated into the categories shown in Exhibit 17. Some responses were counted in multiple categories.

Exhibit 17
Topic Areas Suggested for System Improvement



The most common responses related to improving communication to the customer and improving the general usability of the website. With these broad categories there were many specific comments, the most common of which were:

- **More/better communication**. Comments in this category included, among others:
  - Wanting more clarity on how much additional money will be owed at the tollbooth.
  - Wanting more descriptions/direction to help determine if a vehicle is under 14'.
  - Wanting more information on how far in advance customers should arrive at the terminal.

    - Wanting the printout to contain more or clearer information, such as departure times, directions, arrival time windows, improved formatting, etc.

- **Improve website usability**. Comments in this category included, among others:
    - Wanting an easier or more clear process to book a round trip.
    - Wanting an easier process to change or cancel a reservation.
    - Confusion about setting up an account of whether or not an account is needed at all.
    - Reducing the amount of scrolling and redundant buttons, and generally clearer site navigation.
    - Clearer instructions for password requirements when setting up an account.

A few other categories of note are:

- **Don't require deposit/credit card**. This category has two main buckets:
    - Some people do not want to pay upfront because they risk losing their deposit or it's financially difficult to pay up front for more than one trip at a time.
    - Some people do not want to provide their credit card information online due to privacy concerns.
- **All other topics**. Comments in this category were extremely varied, and included but were not limited to:
    - Offering reservations on more routes.
    - Allowing bulk or recurring reservations or reservations more than one month in advance.
    - Allow customers to arrive later and still guarantee a reservation.
    - Allow additional methods of payment, such as ORCA, Good To Go!, Paypal, or multi-ride cards.