



Meeting #5
Kingston Ferry Advisory Committee Public Meeting
Kingston Yacht Club
Kingston, Washington
Tuesday, June 24, 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

Paul Lundy, Kingston FAC

David Moseley, Assistant Secretary, Washington State Ferries

Paul Lundy, Kingston FAC, introduced himself and thanked everyone for coming. He introduced Walt Elliot, FAC Co-Chair, and the FAC members present. Paul introduced David Moseley.

David thanked everyone for coming inside on a beautiful night to share their input. He said that Washington State Ferries (WSF) is at a critical point in developing the long-range plan. He introduced members of the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) Elmira and Bob and staff Paul Parker. He said that the WSTC is responsible for the customer survey and is working with WSF to provide information to inform the studies. He said that WSF needs community feedback tonight and that he wants to hear what people have to say about these issues. The study is important and the 2009 legislation session is critical to Ferries. The current system is not financially sustainable into the future given the current expenditures and services.

David reported out on several topics he had heard from the communities, including at the last meeting in Kingston in early April, and what WSF has done as a result.

- As of Sunday, June 22, full-fare, single-ride tickets for all routes 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 met with a group in Kingston at their request on June 6 to talk specifically about ferry traffic affecting the Kingston downtown. The stakeholder group presented and offered some ideas on how to deal with the issues affecting downtown including highway routing changes. They requested a person from WSF work with WSDOT Highways to look into



these ideas. Leonard Smith, WSF Operations, is coordinating that effort. As part of that meeting, David said that they had a great discussion around the reservations system.

- David said that there was a request for some cross-hatching downtown and that has been completed.

David 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.

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 Questions and Comments

1. These seem like things that every organization should be doing all along. Why haven't we done them all along? I'd like to see implementation on an accelerated basis and evidence of implementation over the next six months and reported back to the communities. I am very supportive of these strategies and want to see them implemented immediately.
2. We're painfully aware that WSF makes money off this run and that Bremerton is only at 54% recovery. Are you going to rethink the travel shed issue and look at each individual run? *The legislation indicates that we should look beyond the original travel shed studies.*
3. Why does it take the state legislation to do these things?
4. Is the pricing question limited to just vehicles? *No, we'll talk about pedestrians and bicycles as well.*

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 break-down was as follows:

1. Pricing	36
2. Reservations	22
3. Transit Access Enhancement	34
4. Non-motorized Access Enhancement	26
5. Enhanced User Information	7
6. Technologies for Improved Fare Collection	4
7. Non-Single Occupancy promotion	4
8. Traffic and Dock Space Management	23
9. Parking and Holding	20
Ferry Financing Legislation	9
Strategies and the Long Range Plan	12

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 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 Comment and Questions

1. Could be a benefit to provide a predictable, reserve-able early and late run specifically for commercial vehicles. Get them off the regular ferries during peak periods.
2. Reservations would help during holidays, weekends, and special events – our “peak” travel times when the lines are the longest. Could reduce traffic in town.
3. Reservations would allow us to reclaim some of our personal time by reducing the time we have to spend in queue waiting to get on a boat.
4. Reservations would enhance user information and knowledge, i.e. about major tourist attractions.
5. Reservations could be helpful, especially for recreational vehicles, but it would need to be heavily promoted. At the same time, reservations for recreational vehicles could be a problem if they take up all the reserved capacity.
6. Reservations would be helpful for our guests, tourists or other visitors because it would guarantee they could arrive on a certain day at a certain time; they could plan their trip more reliably.
7. There are a number of retirees who have moved over from the Seattle side, and reservations would help them stay in touch with their families and allow them to be more specific with appointments for medical appointments, etc.
8. Reservations would help users make informed decisions (i.e. what sailing to take, how to plan their trip, etc.)
9. Reservations might help relieve our queuing problems, but we’re not convinced they really will take cars off the streets.
10. Giving reserved preference at peak times to smaller cars would discourage large trucks from taking up all the space on the boats.
11. Reservations would not be useful for regular commuters at high peak periods.
12. Reservations are a “band-aid” fix and would cause more steps for ferry users whereas highway users don’t have to do this. You don’t need reservations to travel on I-5 – why should they be needed on the ferries?
13. I don’t think reservations would help because my use is more spontaneous. It is difficult to predict travel needs, so reservations would not support that need for flexibility and would cause a loss of spontaneity.



14. Attaching a reservation to a specific vehicle would be limiting – what if the vehicle breaks down, or you change your mind about which vehicle to bring?
15. Filling boats with reserved vehicles can create another queuing problem with people who don't have reservations and have to wait and wait on standby for a space on a boat. For every person who makes a reservation, someone else who doesn't make a reservation will be waiting longer for a space.
16. Reservations seem based on elitism.
17. There isn't enough holding room to separate reservations and non-reservation customers.
18. This could harm commercial traffic / vehicles such as logging trucks. There needs to be special consideration for those moving freight and goods who are reliant on ferries for their business.
19. We are concerned that some users who are "tech savvy" could "game" the system by reserving multiple blocks of times and days and boxing others out who are using the system appropriately.
20. Online reservations may end up discriminating against some users (i.e. elderly people who don't use or have computers.)
21. Some percentage of the boat needs to not be reserved (at least 50%).
22. The additional cost to implement reservations may be a barrier, depending on how it is implemented. This would have to be a big money maker for WSF and support would be more likely if it was.
23. Seems like a waste, spending money on phone operators, kiosks, implementation costs, etc.
24. Any reservations system needs to provide benefits to the local citizens, not just tourists.
25. I'd like to see license plate recognition, transponders and other such technology as well as improved fare collection used in any reservations system.
26. There needs to be a penalty for no-shows.
27. There should be the ability to make multiple days or time reservations for commuters to provide flexibility.
28. The reservation system needs matching transit options.
29. We need a better explanation of how a reservations system would benefit users and WSF.
30. There need to be provisions / flexibility for people who miss their reserved sailing. You should be able to make multiple reservations for one visit to preserve flexibility.
31. Regular users should get some kind of priority for reservations – Examples: a standing reservation for commuters, a Good-to-Go type pass, a commuter-only lane.



32. We need to resolve the holding issues in Kingston with or without reservations.
33. Reservations system needs to allow those waiting to get out and shop and patronize local businesses.
34. There would need to be a specific prepaid line for those with reservations to expedite processing. How would reservations traffic be managed?

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

The first question was asked after the presentation and Ray gave a short answer. The others were recorded in the small workgroups.



1. How come there's no fuel surcharge like airplanes? *The legislation froze fares until October 2009.*
2. Managing deck space by filling the boat with more, smaller cars could be a benefit, but it could affect on-time performance.
3. Peak period pricing sounds good but we doubt there are that many commuters who have the opportunity to change their commute hours due to job demands. We travel when we have to – we doubt pricing would change our behavior – only penalize commuters.
4. People are well aware of the peak times and avoid them when possible - we don't sit in ferry lines because we want to – it's due to necessity, not discretion.
5. There would have to be a major change in price to change behavior but that would dampen demand and hurt the local economy.
6. Would carpools, vanpools, etc. have to pay the same peak fare or would they get a discount? They should get a discount as an incentive to fill their vehicles.
7. Simplify carpool rules.
8. Looking at peak pricing was mandated by the Legislature, but it just may not reap enough gain to be worth the pain.
9. There needs to be individualized pricing strategies for very different user types (freight, commuter, etc.).
10. If Ferries were a private operation, they would focus their effort on the peak times, keep those routes operating, and jettison the non-peak boats in order to maximize profit.
11. When revenues exceed operating costs, increase capacity.
12. Certain functions should be outsourced to improve efficiency and lower costs.
13. Make passengers free. Good-to-Go works with free passengers.
14. Peak period pricing should be sensitive to time of day, day of the week, direction of travel and route.
15. Low-income folks have less flexibility – peak pricing would hurt them more.
16. I will pay what I have to pay – I need to get to work.
17. Trucks should be restricted to way off-peak travel.
18. Reduce the walk-on fare.
19. Fuel surcharges are another pricing opportunity.
20. Would need better transit and transit connections for peak pricing to work.
21. Add a boat on the weekend to go from Kingston to Seattle. The demand is there.
22. Provide passenger-only ferries to Seattle from Kingston – whether by WSF or by a private provider.



23. Balance the demand by moving boats around to different routes according to peak times for the routes, rather than trying to move people from peak to non-peak times.
24. Add a smaller boat for midday, add a late night boat for weekends, add an earlier boat for commuters.
25. Assign pricing on boats according to profitability – for example, Kingston fare box revenue exceeds the cost of the service whereas San Juan routes fare box revenue is far under the cost of providing the service. The high loss routes are the drag on the system. Make a public policy decision to fund that imbalance, rather than penalizing commuters on the profitable routes.
26. Improve schedule and efficiency of boats (adjust schedule so they can be on time).
27. Provide carpool and vanpool reimbursement.
28. Offer priority loading for more than just vanpools.
29. If peak pricing is applied (which I hope it isn't), it must include frequent user discounts so that the strategy is focused on moving the discretionary user's trip to non-peak times.
30. Do not increase prices.
31. Provide alternate routes – passenger ferries versus car travel to move people out of their cars.
32. We need better parking options to walk-on or use transit (on both sides). Walk-ons would probably increase if the Sounder train met every ferry.
33. We need better transit on the east side of the Sound.
34. We need pricing combined with transferrable transit / ferry fares and better user information for ferry and transit service.
35. We want a guarantee of reliability and predictability that will get us where we need to go.
36. Extend multi-rides to one year.
37. Pricing should be specific to the route. Bremerton is a longer route so it should be more.
38. Keep fares flat for them rather than increasing seasonal fares to encourage 12-month riders to maintain continuity.
39. Establish a small car / large vehicle price differential.
40. Provide incentives for small cars, but it may create a burden for some.
41. Provide more and better local commercial opportunities.
42. Round trip ticketing would provide operational efficiency in the loading / unloading process.
43. Accept foreign currency to make it easier for international traffic.
44. Expedite ticketing by getting rid of paper receipts.
45. Increase ridership through customer-friendly amenities (i.e. kids' play area).
46. Work with communities and businesses on any pricing changes.



Additional Public Comments and Questions

1. Who decided to put flat screen TVs on the boat? *It was subsidized by federal grants and is part of the homeland security mandates.*
2. Although the two workshops were focused on pricing and reservations, we did discuss a lot of the other strategies because in many cases they are interdependent or related – such as improving transit access in order to increase walk-on ridership.
3. Regarding fare collection strategies, we need to focus on the bread and butter commuters' needs, but not make it too difficult for the tourist to use the system.
4. Ferries should be thinking much more strategically. There are a number of questions that Ferries should be asking regarding their business needs. If you focused on those types of questions publicly, we would be happy to respond to them.
5. We are extremely tired of cross-subsidies for special groups, i.e. tourists traveling to the San Juans, or the military members traveling to and from Bremerton.
6. You should be asking “What routes would we make money on?” and one of those routes should definitely be a triangle run between Seattle, Kingston and Vashon.
7. What is the basis for your decision-making? You seem to only be responding to the legislative mandates and not thinking about operations to improve profitability. It seems you are responding politically rather than strategically.
8. We have heard many times that certain changes can't be considered because of various crew issues – i.e. labor agreement constraints, but we don't hear what those constraints are. It would be helpful to hear what the constraints are since many decisions always seem to come back to that.
9. Have you thought about running three smaller boats per route rather than two larger boats, or mixing and matching the fleet for more flexibility? Boat size decisions affect many other decisions – it seems that boat capacity doesn't match these other effects. Where are the business decisions that drive your decisions?
10. Every time we come here we ask, where is Ferries' business plan? What is the funding strategy? What is the plan for buying other ferries beyond the four already ordered?
11. Not having concessions on boats (beyond food) seems like a lost revenue opportunity. There seem to be many opportunities for other businesses on the boats.
12. When building new boats, you always seem to build bigger boats, dumping more traffic on our two-lane roads, causing significant community impacts. If you build bigger boats for a route, the roads should be



- expanded accordingly to mitigate impacts on local residents and businesses.
13. Traffic signals should be matched to ferry and non-ferry travel patterns using sensors rather than timing. That way we wouldn't be sitting at a light waiting when there is absolutely no traffic coming from the other direction.
 14. It is public policy to fund non-profitable runs. There needs to be a thorough economic analysis of what it costs to move passengers from place to place. Does a full boat make more economic sense? If so, maybe adding capacity at peak times would bring in more revenue that could be used to help subsidize the non-profitable routes.
 15. The issue of dock management is important to us and there are solutions that could be implemented right now to manage more cars (such as a remote holding lot on property ferries already owns in Kingston.)
 16. It seems that your current process is built around looking at the problem from the wrong perspective. Instead of chasing people off the boats at certain times, you should think about ways to increase people's use of the ferries.
 17. There are specific stakeholder groups that need to be involved in this discussion who will not attend or speak up at public meetings (i.e. military, Tribes, commercial businesses who rely on freight movement, etc.) Ferries should have discussions with representatives of these groups in small focus groups to ensure their specific concerns are addressed.
 18. When thinking about getting people to get out of their cars to walk onto the ferries, think about their needs and how to improve their experience. For example, people who are traveling with dogs need to know what accommodations are available on the boats when they bring their dog with them.
 19. You should use streaming video to show people how any changes will affect them and how to use them to make it go smoother.
 20. Think regionally about any system changes, especially regarding the tourism industry. Pay attention to chamber of commerce statistics to understand the implications of all the people who visit ferry-served areas. If any of those transportation links are broken, big negative economic impacts would occur. Be aware of this as you consider changes and be sure to work with the groups knowledgeable about these issues.
 21. Passenger only service to Seattle should be part of any solution.

Diane thanked everyone and encouraged everyone to fill out the pink surveys from Walt.

David thanked everyone for coming to the meeting "beyond the call of duty" to give their input to WSF.



Paul encouraged people to contact him or Walt about the Kingston FAC and emphasized that they are here to represent the public.

Approximately 38 attendees. Public sign-in included:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Paul Parker | John L Ross |
| Robin Bookey | Michael Jannenga |
| Kelly Joines | Yvonne Meyer |
| Diana Storey | David Adler |
| Dan O'Neal | Sheryl & Gordon Becker |
| Betsy Cooper | Randy & Debra Nan |
| Lisa Knox | Dick & Judy Osborne |
| William R. Priest | Paul Lundy |
| Chris Imbach | Rhonda Peterson |
| Ralph Marsh | Walter Oliver |
| Connie Simila | Judy Ruliffson |
| James & Pam Dzama | Harriet Muhrlein |
| Chris Kennedy | Douglas A Raun |
| Kelly P Moran | Linda Paralex |
| Walt Elliott | Anne and Wayne Blair |
| Jill Satran | Bill & Arleen Crader |

- Washington State Ferries Staff
 David Moseley, Assistant Secretary
 Ray Deardorf, Planning Director
 Marta Coursey, Director of Communications
 Leonard Smith, Operations
 Doug Schlieff, Operations
 Tim Payne, Consultant
 Becca Aue, Consultant
 Rob Berman, Consultant
 Diane Adams, Consultant
 Kristina Walker, Consultant
 Penny Mabie, Consultant

The following written comments were submitted at the meeting:

Harriet Muhrlein
[contact info omitted]

SUGGESTIONS FOR DECREASING FERRY CONGESTION IN KINGSTON

Better signage located closer together might help.



Alerting the ferry traffic about using the shoulder of the highway all the way to the centrally marked 'ferry only' lanes by the Community Center would be useful.

(The one printed sign before Barber Cutoff and the one lighted sign just after Barber Cutoff are not sufficient.)

Warnings about the possibility of traffic tickets for ferry drivers who block the marked driveways, side streets, cross walks and the main traffic lane should be posted in newspapers, on ferries and in local stores. This should be done before instituting the ultimate writing of tickets for these infractions.

(Thursday through Monday might be the only time enforcement would be required.)

We could also have some signs letting travelers know when the ferry holding lot is full.

(The one on Highway 3 south of Poulsbo and Highway 104 west of Hood Canal listing the approximate wait time for the Kingston ferry do not "Cut The Mustard." They are not updated frequently enough and are not easy to read.)

The use of the chits so that people do not cut in line in Kingston should be maintained but, with many travelers trying to avoid the extra long Sunday and Holiday lines, it is nearly impossible for the State Patrol to be in Kingston all of the needed times.

[I seem, to recall that more printed roadside signs were used many years ago when our children were young and we traveled to the Olympic Peninsula frequently in the summer.] Our children are now in their 40s.

Paul Dzania

Regarding the peak pricing plan –

1. Have Eastside employers been contacted requesting that they change their hours of operation to accommodate the ferry system?
2. Will DOT use peak pricing to access all major roads in the state (tolls to enter or exit I-5, 405, etc.)?
3. How do you deal with the unions who will not consider spit shifts?