

**MEETING SUMMARY
WSF PORT TOWNSEND / COUPEVILLE VRS PARTNERSHIP MEETING
COTTON BUILDING, PORT TOWNSEND, WA
Tuesday, March 13, 2012 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.**

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

Welcome

WSDOT Assistant Secretary David Moseley
Heather Rogers, Berk & Associates

David welcomed the group members, thanked them for coming and gave a brief update on the Legislative session.

Heather went over the agenda, noting that there would be time for public comment at the end of the meeting.

Project Updates

Heather Rogers, Berk & Associates

Heather gave a brief update on the WAC revisions (see pages 2-10 of the handout packet). There will be a public hearing regarding changes to the WAC in Seattle on April 11.

Heather then discussed the upcoming Usability Testing (see page 11 of the handout packet). Group members are encouraged to recruit volunteers for this testing.

Questions & Comments

1. (Tom Thiersch) How many people will be involved with this testing?
Probably about 20-30. We want to make sure that we get a variety of different types of users: commuters, commercial, occasional, etc.
2. (David King) How are you looking for people other than asking this group to recruit for you?
We have also approached our Edmonds/Kingston VRS Partnership group. Depending on the response we get from both groups we may move forward with other types of outreach.
3. (Ralph Young) You need 20-30 people for each day?
No, total. We will probably schedule 8-10 for each day since each person gets a one-hour time block. If we need to arrange for further testing days we can.
4. (Tom Thiersch) The people that I would suggest work during the day, so perhaps later hours would be better.
That is a good point, thank you.

Software Demonstration

Brian Churchwell, WSF IT Department
Mike Mellin, IT Project Manager

Brian and Mike demonstrated how to make a reservation as a guest user (see screenshot handout).

Questions & Comments

1. (Kim Younger) You said that it would show on the screen if a sailing was unavailable due to tidal conditions?
If we have to adjust the schedule for tides or vessel issues we can modify the system so that it reflects those changes.
2. (David King) People that are new to riding ferries will need to know that if the reservations are full there may still be space for them to drive up.
We have identified areas where we can add some text to explain what "Drive Up" means.
3. (Tim Caldwell) If you're a commuter and you've made your reservation, do you have to re-enter that information for the return trip?
It will auto-fill your vehicle information so that you don't have to fill it out again.
4. (David King) Where do you put in that you are a senior?
You don't; being a senior will not change your deposit amount. The deposit will be the same as the senior vehicle fare, so seniors will not end up paying more at the booth unless they have passengers in their car.
5. (David King) Will the availability change when you put in the size of your vehicle? Like if you have a tall truck, will that change how much space there is?
Yes.
6. (Michelle Sandoval) Is there a place on your site where people can purchase the app that sends cancellation alerts to smartphones?
That app is different from the WSDOT app; it's actually not ours; rather it's a third party app that uses the information that we provide about service disruptions.
7. (Tom Thiersch) So this demonstration is for a guest user; for an account holder I'm assuming that whole side of the screen would already be populated with our information?
Correct; that information would already be filled for you which expedites the process greatly.
8. (David King) The system takes debit and credit cards?
Yes both, as long as the debit card has a Visa or MasterCard logo.
9. (Tim Caldwell) As a commuter if you wanted to book an entire month would you have to pay a \$7 fee for each sailing up front?
We want commuters to be part of the Premier Customer group; you would use a revalue multi-ride card, then upgrade to premier status which requires no deposit. You would only be charged a deposit amount after failing to show up for a reserved sailing.
10. (Robert Hammett) So you make a month's worth of reservations and you only have to print a one-page confirmation?
Correct, that one barcode is your confirmation for all of the reservations you made.
11. (Robert Hammett) Will your scanners be able to scan that barcode from our smartphone screens?
Not yet. That requires 3D scanning technology and our current scanners are only 2D. We are looking at what it would take to upgrade in the future.
12. (Tim Caldwell) As a guest you pay a fee when you make your reservation—your deposit. Something on the screen needs to let people know that they may owe more money once they get to the tollbooth. Make it large enough to be really noticeable. People from out of town may not realize that they need to pay more once they arrive.
We will be populating areas on the webpage to warn people of that.
13. (Kim Younger) I assume there will be an email confirmation sent?
Yes, if you enter your email address on the confirmation page we will send an email to that account.
14. (Michelle Sandoval) Is the default to have those email update boxes checked or unchecked?
I believe it is unchecked, but that is an easy change.
The default should be that the boxes are checked for those options.

Brian and Mike demonstrated how to change or cancel a reservation (see screenshot handout).

Questions & Comments

1. (Michelle Sandoval) If you go to the change/cancel page and you have lost your confirmation number, what do you do?
You would call our Customer Service department; they would ask you various questions for security and then provide it to you.
2. (Tim Caldwell) You should add a note on that page showing the Customer Service phone number for those that have lost their confirmation number.
Good point, we can add that.
3. (Ralph Young) Why not just add the ability to enter personal information on that screen if you have forgotten your confirmation number.
We decided against that idea for security reasons.
4. (David King) What happens if you have missed a boat and you're trying to change your reservation?
If you have already missed your sailing, you can rebook a sailing that is more than two hours out—this is only allowed once a day without a penalty. The other option is to show up at the terminal and your deposit is good toward a Drive Up spot on the next sailing.
5. (Tom Thiersch) I don't think listing the vessel name is important; that seems like a waste of real-estate on your webpage.
Different boats have different types of ADA access, which is important to some users. Does anyone else in the group think it's important to list the vessel name?
6. (Tim Caldwell) I only care if there are height restrictions or ADA issues.
7. (David King) Why does it say that you will be credited the difference at the booth?
In order to minimize the amount of credit card transactions, if the change is for less than five dollars we will give you cash at the booth rather than putting it back on your card.

Service Disruptions

Brian Churchwell, WSF IT Department
Heather Rogers, Berk & Associates

Brian and Heather discussed service disruptions (see pages 12-16 of handout packet).

1. (David King) Is ours the only route where this is necessary?
We have disruptions on all of our routes, but they are more common here and in the San Juans.
2. (Kim Younger) If I have a reservation, will I get an alert that tells me to arrive later, rather than me coming and having to sit in line?
Yes, you will be alerted to the later sailing time, and the 15 minute arrival window will apply to that later time.
3. (David King) The crew will have an updated manifest of reserved vehicles?
Yes.
4. (Tim Caldwell) Given the scenario with one dropped sailing, will reservations be done for the entire day?
Assuming the 80% reserved state, at a peak time during the summer, it will take us some time to recover from that disruption. We will have to assess it situation by situation; perhaps refund our Drive Ups and tell them to drive around so that we can accommodate our reservation holders.
5. (David King) The column on the webpage that shows the Drive Up availability, will that be accurate during these scenarios?

That column is not real-time, but for these situations we will go in and adjust it so that people don't drive up.

Heather asked the group which option under Scenario 3 sounds best to them.

6. (Tom Thiersch) I look at it like an airline model: if my plane can't leave the gate for some reason and I have to catch a later flight, I can't really bump the people with tickets on the next flight. I think anyone with a reservation should be honored if at all possible.
7. (David King) I'm ok with being bumped by those who were reserved on a sailing ahead of me, but I would want to be given the next available space over people without reservations.
8. (Kim Younger) I don't love either of these options
There could be a hybrid option as well.
I feel like if someone is already on the dock they should get on, but when I arrive with my reservation I should be put ahead of those without a reservation.
9. (Michelle Sandoval) We are notifying people that sailings have been cancelled and giving them their money back. At that point no one has a reservation anymore; it should be first come, first served.
They won't get their refund during that period, but rather at the end of the day if they didn't end up sailing.
10. (David Sullivan) I wanted to point out that it's not just three hours if someone has to drive around, it can be longer than that. Could you honor a reservation on the other ferry routes that a person would then have to use to help decrease the agitation of the people being put out?
That's a good point; we will make note of that idea.
11. (Robert Hammett) Is there any way you could send alerts prior to the first sailing of the day if it gets cancelled? I get all the way there before I know that first sailing isn't running.
We are looking at extending our customer service hours in order to be able to do that.

Heather asked the group to go around and choose an option for Scenario 3.

Option 3 was not described in the meeting packet. The group defined it as giving boarding priority to people already on the dock first – both reservation-holders and drive-ups – then only to reservation holders after that. No new drive-ups would be allowed into the terminal until the disruption had been cleared, but drive-ups already in the terminal would not be asked to leave.

- Tim Caldwell: Option 1
- Robert Hammett: Option 3
- Tom Thiersch: Option 1
- Ralph Young: Option 3
- David Sullivan: Option 3
- David King: Option 3
- Kim Younger: Option 3
- Christina Pivarnik: Option 3

Establish Next Meeting Date

Heather Rogers of Berk & Associates

Heather suggested the following meeting dates as options: April 24, 25 or 26.

None of the dates worked for every single group member, but Wednesday, April 25 looked to be the best option. Heather said she would check the availability of the venue as well as WSF staff and get back to the group.

The next meeting will be slightly longer: 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Public Comments

No public comments.

Conclusion

David thanked everyone for coming. Meeting was adjourned.

Group Members

Present	Name of Group Member
X	Timothy Caldwell
	Bob Clay
	Nancy Conard
X	Robert Hammett
	Ian Jefferds
	Helen Price Johnson
X	David King
	Ellin Larimer
	Lisa Lynes
	Brian Martin
	Jennifer Meyer
	Josh Peters
X	Christina Pivarnik
X	Michelle Sandoval
	Diane Schostak
	Rick Sepler
X	David Sullivan
X	Tom Thiersch
	David Timmons
	Patricia Willesoft
X	Kim Younger
X	Ralph Young

Project Team

- David Moseley, WSDOT Assistant Secretary
- George Capacci, WSF Deputy Chief of Operations
- Marta Coursey, WSF Director of Communications
- Brian Churchwell, WSF IT Department
- Leonard Smith, WSF Operations Manager
- Mike Mellin, IT Project Manager
- Heather Rogers, Berk & Associates
- Rachel Waitt, WSF Terminal Engineering

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