What is the household income of ferry riders? Approximately half of ferry riders systemwide have a household annual income of more than $100,000, while less than a quarter make under $50,000.

What is the racial/ethnic makeup of ferry riders? While the majority of ferry riders are white (81%), many other ethnic backgrounds are represented in the ferry rider population.

What is the Origin-Destination Travel Survey? Washington State Ferries (WSF) conducts origin-destination (O&D) surveys every six to seven years as a way to accurately capture and measure the travel patterns of ferry passengers. The last survey was conducted in 2006. The surveys ask passengers about their typical routes, how they get to and from the ferry terminal, and the purpose of their trips. Survey results are being presented by service corridor.

How was the survey conducted? WSF conducted the surveys onboard ferry sailings on weekdays and Saturdays in October of 2013. The survey was a comprehensive survey, evaluating topics such as why people were traveling, what mode of transportation they used to board the ferry, and travel origins and destinations. Of the more than 70,000 passengers who rode the ferry during the surveyed periods, more than 16,000 usable surveys were completed—a sample of over 22 percent.

How does WSF use the survey results? After WSF collects and analyzes passenger responses to the survey, the results are used by the agency and decision-makers in a number of ways: Matching ferry service with customer needs; Running an efficient ferry operation; Informing WSF’s long-range service planning and travel forecasting; Providing input to capital improvement needs.

How has ridership changed since 1999? Despite a steady increase in overall population in the 12-county WSF service area (3.9 million in 1999, 4.3 million in 2006, and 4.6 million in 2013), systemwide ridership has decreased consistently since 1999 (72,200 per day in 1999, 65,300 per day in 2006, and 61,700 in 2013).
2013 Origin-Destination Travel Survey

How frequently do riders travel?
Ferry riders made less frequent trips overall compared to 2006. A smaller percentage of weekday travelers made 9 or more trips per week in 2013, while a higher percentage only made 1–2 trips per week.

Why are ferry riders traveling?
Weekday trips are still predominantly related to work and school, although the percentage of those trips has decreased since 2006 (58% in 2006 and 54% in 2013), while trips associated with personal business and recreation/shopping have increased.

How old are ferry riders?
Ferry riders are aging overall; the average age has increased from 42 in 1993, to 48 in 2006, to 49 in 2013. Roughly 18% of riders are retired and another 14% indicated they are planning on retiring in the next five years. Furthermore, for the entire 12-county population, the percentage of those aged 65 or older grew from 11 percent in 2006 to 29 percent in 2013.

How do riders board the ferry?
69% of weekday riders boarded the ferry by automobile in 2013, a decrease from 72% in 2006, while walk boardings increased from 27% to 29% and bike boardings increased from 1% to 2%.