



Year in  
Review  
2019



## Message from Amy

My third year here at Washington State Ferries sailed by! In 2019, we carried 23.9 million riders, a slight decline from 2018 likely due to the severe winter weather last February, construction in and around terminals, and increased regional ferry and transit options. Our ridership is still forecast to grow by 30 percent to all-time highs by 2040. To accommodate that growth, we started 2019 by releasing our 2040 Long Range Plan, the first in a decade that outlines priorities and recommendations for the next 20 years.



*Taking a selfie with our hard working Fauntleroy Terminal Staff!*

Last year was full of big changes. For instance, the Seattle Waterfront is [completely different](#) than it was a year ago! Our busiest ferry terminal remained open through demolition of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and we made huge progress on the new Colman Dock terminal including opening the new passenger-only terminal and the first third of our new terminal building.

In May, we welcomed a new chief of staff, Nicole McIntosh, who has worked for WSF for 25 years, most recently as director of terminal engineering.



*Chief of Staff Nicole McIntosh completed Ordinary Seaman New Employee Orientation in May 2019. All deck crews must pass this intensive training which includes firefighting, personal safety and survival, classroom time, and job duty familiarization out in our fleet.*

Nicole is working with me to advance our top priorities.

- **Workforce Development:** strengthen our workforce with more active recruitment, development, and retention.
- **Inclusion:** focus on our ongoing commitment to diversity and engagement.
- **Practical Solutions:** prioritize innovative, timely and cost-effective decisions, to operate, maintain, plan, and build our multimodal transportation system.
- **Internal Communications:** improve both how we hear from and reach out to our 2,000 employees.

- **Electrification:** invest in converting our existing diesel propulsion vessels to hybrid electric, and design new vessels to use hybrid electric propulsion with shoreside charging in order to achieve a significant reduction in fleet emissions.

I hope you enjoy this summary of our 2019 highlights and accomplishments!

---

# 2019 by the NUMBERS

**NEARLY**  
**24**  
**MILLION**  
TOTAL RIDERS

**COMPLETED**  
**160,000**  
**TOTAL TRIPS**

**444**  
**DEPARTURES**  
PER DAY



**910,000**  
**TOTAL SERVICE MILES**  
MORE THAN **37** **times**  
**around**  
**the Earth**

**18** **left a terminal**  
**every hour**  
**throughout the**  
**VESSLS** **ferry system**



**129**  
**LIFESAVING**  
**EVENTS**



**99.4%**  
**TRIP RELIABILITY**

Top reason for cancellations was vessel availability



**USED** **27,300**  
**FEWER GALLONS OF**  
**DIESEL FUEL**



**3,200**  
**MEDICAL**  
**TRANSPORTS**



**1,200,000**  
**Vehicle reservations made,**  
**a 5.3% increase**



**Customer Service**  
**answered**  
**140,000**  
**CALLS in our**  
**call center**

**145** **NEW**

**Deck, terminal,**  
**engine and Eagle**  
**Harbor employees**

**Employees completed**  
**23,000**

**HOURS OF TRAINING**  
**including 5,000 hours**  
**of First Aid/CPR**

**20+**

**Open houses, public &**  
**online community**  
**meetings held**

**Increased our Twitter social media outreach to**

**32,000**  
**FOLLOWERS**



**19,000,000**  
**IMPRESSIONS**



## 2040 Long Range Plan

Last year began with the release of our [2040 Long Range Plan](#). This is our blueprint for where we are going in the next 20 years. Recommendations fall into four main themes: reliable service, customer experience, managing growth, and sustainability and resiliency.



In 2019 we focused on implementing key recommendations from the Long Range Plan such as:

- Released our first-ever [Sustainability Action Plan](#) that outlines goals and actions to help make the ferry system greener by increasing sustainable practices and environmental stewardship and increasing [protections for Southern Resident Killer Whales](#).
- Studied fare simplification strategies to enable technology solutions that streamline operations and ease congestion at our tollbooths, improving the customer experience.
- Initiated a workforce development plan to analyze labor needs and set the groundwork for hiring and retaining a skilled maritime workforce.
- Completed passenger and ADA improvements to [Clinton's Ferry Dock Road](#), increasing safety and efficiency for customers.



*A pod of Orcas is spotted off of the Tahlequah Terminal.*

---

## **Reliable service**

We need reliable vessels, terminals, and a growing workforce to be able to keep our system running. The Long Range Plan indicates we will need 16 new vessels by 2040 just to keep the services we have in place today.

Four of the six vessels that were our most reliable in 2019 are 37 years old or older. Our dedicated crews and team at Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility are constantly making sure our fleet is operational but we'll need to make significant investments in our fleet to make sure we can continue to provide reliable service.



*In 2019 we celebrated the [Tillikum's 60th Anniversary](#). I joined crew members and staff in unveiling the first "60 Years in Service" vessel emblem.*

---

## **Workforce recruitment, training, and succession planning**

Our employees are the backbone of the ferry system. Every day we rely on highly skilled and credentialed vessel crew members, tradespeople, and engineers to maintain reliable service. However becoming a captain or chief engineer takes years of training and on-the-job experience, making workforce development more important than ever.

In 2019, we held [recruiting](#) events on board our vessels, with maritime academies, and at local events. We hired 145 new deck, terminal, engine room, and Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility employees. We also launched a major effort to improve communications with our 2,000 employees at terminals, in the fleet and at our Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility, and held our first all-staff webinar. I look forward to hearing more from our employees in the coming year!



*New employees pose for a group shot during a vessel tour.*



*Hosting an onboard recruitment event on the Seattle/Bremerton route.*



*Staff train in the proper use of a CO<sub>2</sub> extinguisher.*



*Chief of Staff Nicole McIntosh presented able-bodied seamen and brothers, Adrian and Tom Weisman, with a WSF Life Ring Award in April for their part in rescuing a man from a sinking vessel.*

---

## **Customer experience and community engagement**

We love our customers! In 2019, we hosted a number of [customer appreciation events](#) on our routes and made major improvements to our ticket refund system. We held two rounds of community meetings including our [first-ever public webinar series](#).

One of the first major accomplishments of 2019 was implementing [a brand new sailing schedule](#) on the Fauntleroy/Vashon/Southworth (Triangle Route). The new schedule improves service and better accommodates growth on the route. The schedule update was informed by extensive public outreach over two years.

We also launched our own [Facebook page](#) in response to many requests for an increased social media presence. We're excited to continue to reach out to our customers and stakeholders in new and innovative ways in the coming year.



*Blue Friday aboard the Seattle/Bainbridge route.*



*Fans of the Elwha hold up a homemade model as the vessel passes through the Hiram M. Chittenden Ballard Locks last August.*



*Finalists from the 2019 [#FerryFotoContest](#) on Twitter. Participants submitted photos to be featured on the Winter Schedule.*



A visit from the [Seattle Symphony Brass Quintet](#) performing for commuters this summer.



*Sammy the Sounder gets riders pumped up by giving away tickets to a playoff game. Great job winning [the MLS Cup this year](#), Sounders!*

---

## Building new terminals

We've made significant progress on our two major construction projects, Colman Dock and the new Mukilteo Multimodal Ferry Terminal. Both projects will better serve our growing ridership.

### Colman Dock

Operating a [fully functional ferry terminal while building a brand new facility](#) in the same space is no easy feat. Despite the challenge, we opened the first third of our new passenger terminal in September. We also joined our partners at King County in [opening the new passenger only ferry terminal](#). In 2020, we're looking forward to taking out more creosote-coated wooden pilings and installing new steel piles, rebuilding the car deck, and continuing to build the new terminal building. The new terminal is scheduled to be completed in 2023.



*Federal Transit Administration Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams, WSDOT Deputy Secretary of Transportation Keith Metcalf, King County Metro General Manager Rob Gannon look on as I make remarks at last summer's announcement of a new federal grant to pay for part of the new Seattle Terminal.*



Inside the [first third of the new passenger terminal](#) at Colman Dock.

### **Mukilteo Multimodal Ferry Terminal**

We are on track to open the [new multimodal terminal](#) in the fall of 2020! This year, in addition to finishing the passenger building roof, [we made significant progress](#) on the holding lanes, toll plaza, and maintenance building. I'm looking forward to opening a LEED Silver certified building on a site that used to house an abandoned U.S. Air Force fueling station.



*Construction team members survey progress on the new passenger terminal.*



*Marine construction at the new Mukilteo Multimodal Terminal.*

---

## **Greening the fleet**

In 2019, we kicked off an exciting new chapter in WSF history. Joined by [Gov. Jay Inslee](#), Vigor, and our many marine industry partners, we launched the Hybrid Electric Olympic Class program in September. During the 2019 session the Legislature approved funding for one new 144-car vessel and a contract extension for up to five new ferries to replace vessels scheduled for retirement. Construction on the first new hybrid-electric ferry is expected to begin later this year.



WSDOT Secretary Roger Millar, Gov. Jay Inslee, Vigor CEO Frank Foti and I kicked off a new era of ferries in September.



*Our maritime industry partners who attended the kick off of the Hybrid Electric Olympic Class program signed a board in honor of the occasion.*

We're also working on plans to [convert our biggest vessels, the three Jumbo Mark II Class ferries, to hybrid-electric propulsion](#). The ferry system is the largest consumer of diesel fuel in the state with over 18 million gallons of diesel burned each year, and the three Jumbo Mark II ferries account for 26 percent of total fuel consumption. In addition to cost savings and reduced maintenance costs, converting the Jumbo Mark IIs will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 48,565 metric tons per year – that's like taking more than 10,000 cars off the road. Planning and design for the propulsion system upgrade will continue through 2020 and construction will begin in 2021.

---

## Contingency planning and preparing for emergencies

February 2019 had [more snow](#) than we've seen in this region for years. To better prepare for future extreme weather events, we reevaluated our storm plan to provide appropriate service that matches demand. We have [new snow schedules](#) ready to go that align with other reduced transit, if needed. Customers will be informed when the snow schedules go into effect via ferry alerts and our social media channels.

We also conducted a number of important security drills in 2019. Mostly notably, our safety and security team, vessel crews and multiple federal, state and local agencies participated in a three-day active shooter drill at our Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility and aboard the *Kittitas*. The exercise involved a simulated full-scale response to a report of gunshots and an unknown number of active shooters on our Seattle/Bremerton route. In 2020, we will continue to take steps towards even better emergency preparedness.



*A simulated full-scale emergency response on our Seattle/Bremerton route. The U.S. Coast Guard event was coordinated with many federal, state and local first responders.*

---

## **Looking ahead to 2020**

Continuing to implement the 2040 Long Range Plan will be our main focus in the year ahead. We need to be innovative by focusing on new technology and best practices to better serve our customers and manage growth. I'm excited for what lies ahead and, as always, very proud of our team here at WSF.

If you want to receive updates about WSF throughout the year, be sure to follow us on [Twitter](#) and find us on [Facebook](#). You can also receive the latest news each week our [Weekly Update](#).

### **Amy Scarton**

Assistant Secretary, WSDOT/Ferries Division

---