

**Washington State Ferries Long Range Plan
Combined Technical Advisory Group and Policy Advisory Group Meeting #7
November 15, 2018
Century Square | 1501 Fourth Avenue, Seattle
Alki Conference Room
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome

Stephanie Cirkovich, Washington State Ferries (WSF) Community Services and Planning Director, welcomed attendees to the seventh and final WSF 2040 Long Range Plan combined Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and Policy Advisory Group (PAG) meeting. Attendees were asked to share some parting advice or words of wisdom during introductions.

Washington State Transportation Commission briefing update

Amy Scarton, WSF Assistant Secretary, provided an update on her briefing to the Washington State Transportation Commission. The Commission expressed interest in a few key topics, including: WSF plans to build stronger vessels, improving door-to-door customer experience and creating a more user-friendly WSF website.

Assistant Secretary Amy Scarton reiterated that the Final Plan will be a living document. The Plan provides near-term objectives for which WSF can measure and report progress after a year.

PAG and TAG members asked the following questions and provided comments:

- Russ Harvey, San Juan County, suggested his organization could help with defining performance metrics.
- Walt Elliott, Kingston Ferry Advisory Committee (FAC), said he thinks WSF needs another round of engagement so the FAC chairs can circle back with their constituents and share updates on progress during the legislative session.
- Wendy Clark-Getzin, Jefferson County, commented that WSF is a unique organization because, as a marine highway and a transit agency, they have staff on both sides and get to see issues from two points of view. They should use that to their advantage to rally support.
- Greg Beardsley, Vashon Ferry Advisory Committee, commented that WSF needs to continue to be more customer driven. He claimed that customer service is not always discussed.
- Benjamin Smith, Seattle Department of Transportation, commented that there is a fixed amount of car space, so while WSF is able to accommodate every walk-on passenger, there are only so many cars that can fit on each sailing.

Review agenda and objectives

Hadley Rodero, WSF Strategic Communications Manager and meeting facilitator, reviewed the meeting agenda and objectives, including a presentation on the Draft Plan community engagement process and a review and discussion of proposed changes to the Final Plan. Hadley noted that every TAG and PAG member should have a digital copy of the meeting materials in their email inbox.

Status update

Ray Deardorf, WSF Senior Planning Manager, reviewed the Plan development timeline and discussed recent and future events. On September 10, the Draft Plan was released for a 45-day comment period. WSDOT gathered public comments at public meetings and an online open house in September and

October. WSF finished reviewing comments on the Draft Plan and started incorporating feedback-based edits to the Plan. In the weeks following this meeting, WSF will finalize and submit the Draft Plan to the Legislature by January 2019.

Ray reviewed the four key themes the Draft Plan: reliable service, customer experience, manage growth, and sustainability and resilience. Ray also defined frequently used terms in the Plan – near term, medium term, and long term. He emphasized that while the Plan title implies a long term vision for growth, it incorporates goals to stabilize the fleet in the near term and strategies to build infrastructure over the medium term. Near term refers to the timeframe from 2019 to approximately 2021; medium term from 2021 to approximately 2027; and long term from 2027 and on.

Community engagement recap

Hadley provided a recap of the fall community engagement process. The open houses and other opportunities to comment were advertised through email blasts, weekly updates, website updates, social media, and a press release. Approximately 390 people submitted comments through the online open house, in-person open houses, postal mail, and email. WSF tried to hold at least one open house per route and serve communities that were not served during the first round of public engagement in the spring. They also increased the amount of onboard outreach on several routes.

Hadley also reviewed the main comment themes received during the comment period. The public supported prioritizing reliable service through building new vessels, enhancing technology to improve operational efficiencies and accessibility, supporting multimodal transportation through transit connections and improved amenities, providing system capacity enhancements to meet growing ridership demands, defining new metrics and implementing strategies to manage growth, and focusing on designing resilient and environmentally friendly vessels and terminal areas.

Final Plan modifications

Kristen Kissinger, KPFF, and Ray noted that they will add strategies to the Final Plan based on feedback received from advisory groups and organizations during the community engagement process.

PAG and TAG members provided the following questions and comments during this section:

- David Forte, Kitsap County and Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization, asked Ray about WSF's general maintenance ability and expressed concerns over WSF maintenance facilities.
- Wendy Clark-Getzin asked what WSF does when doing nothing is impossible. When employees are transferring to a new way of doing something, key performance indicators should be identified so everyone is successful and no mistakes are made.
- Benjamin Smith suggested WSF set up an interim run of 12 weeks to keep building new vessels.
- Walt Elliott commented that WSF mentioned performance metrics earlier when they were talking about reliability. The only performance metric in respect to reliability is high performance. He asked if missed sailings would be the metric.

Kristen and Ray discussed key additions to the Plan based on public input. PAG and TAG members provided the following questions and comments:

- Dave Hoogerwerf, Clinton Ferry Advisory Committee, rejected the idea that having additional capacity is a “nice to have” thought vs. a “need to have”. He asked if the plan identifies constraints. If there are constraints, WSF needs to clearly identify them.
- Brian Wood, Island County and Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization, concurred on adding the unconstrained requests. He spoke about the Puget Sound Regional Council's constrained versus unconstrained plan and asked if it was similar to what WSF is proposing.



- Gil Cerise, PSRC, said that PSRC has existing revenue sources, and there's an unconstrained impact for some of those. The unconstrained are above and beyond those revenue sources they expect to be available but are not identified. Constrained is based on current and future revenue sources.
- Greg Beardsley added that WSF is dealing with slow increases in passenger rates versus vehicle rates. There are routes where transit is unavailable. WSF is not going to get anyone out of their cars until they work outside of agency constraints and utilize other lines of service.
- Walt Elliott said that the Plan should clearly define the service to manage growth.
- Brian Wood stated that the Plan is financially constrained. WSF should state what is lost at each level of funding. For example, if it's not funded at tier 1, here's what could occur.
- Richard Warren, Washington State Department of Transportation, asked if the current WSF fleet can provide service if it was just maintained. It's possible a legislator might ask WSF if they can just maintain the vessels for another 20 years.
- Paul Parker, WSTC, stated that the Commission is finishing up their long range transportation plan. Their primary investment recommendation is that the whole system focus on maintenance and preservation. Their emphasis is similar to WSF. There is no money to do new things in the existing budget. They are not looking at large highway expansions as a way of accommodating future growth.
- Ian Munce, City of Tacoma, felt the Plan needed more of critical tone versus the current tone he deems passive. It needs to emphasize that the fleet won't operate as consistently in five years if nothing changes.
- Greg Beardsley suggested WSF not call it a crisis but instead educate the Legislature and public that it is no longer adequate to project that WSF can maintain ferries for 60 years. Many routes are suffering from service disruptions, so even if you fix the vessels, they cannot keep running.
- Walt Elliott added that the plan serves to inform the public as well as the departments of the ferry system. The Draft Plan does not address upland traffic congestion. It would be helpful to include these so the public knows there are some plans to address upland ferry congestion.
- Richard Warren asked if any agency is going to conduct an economic impact study done with this plan. He wondered if local communities have done any type of economic impact study when a vessel breaks down.
 - Deborah Hopkins Buchanan, San Juan Islands Visitor's Bureau, said that they don't have that kind of expertise on San Juan Island. They did a survey last summer but it was very informal.

Ray continued presenting additional modifications to the Final Plan. He noted what information WSF will clarify in the Final Plan, including incorporating a visual road map of the proposed adaptive management strategies discussed in the Draft Plan.

PAG and TAG members had the following questions and comments:

- Benjamin Smith asked for clarification about what terminal electrification entails and how WSF will work with utilities.
- Chris Hammer, City of Bainbridge Island, asked how stakeholders will stay informed on electrification from the implementation side.
- Brian Wood said that they have a study on how to support electric vehicles and it dovetails with WSF's electrification discussions. He asked WSF how they will acquire large power systems for ferry terminals.
- Kate Tourtellot, Community Transit, announced that Snohomish County Tomorrow worked with legislators to discuss infrastructure through an Infrastructure Coordinating Committee. She said

Washington State Department of Transportation may be invited to these meetings, and she wanted to bring this to WSF's attention in case it was not yet informed.

Implementation and next steps

Carmen Bendixen, WSF Senior Transportation Planner, provided an overview of the implementation timeline. PAG and TAG members had the following questions and comments:

- Walt Elliott suggested it would be helpful to have a narrative of how the items in the timeline affect different communities in a way the public will understand.
- Dave Hoogerwerf asked how WSF is limiting the number of vessels added in a certain year in the Draft Plan.
- David Forte said he liked the timeline but thought it would be nice to see how specific routes are affected in the Plan. For example, when does a new vessel come in, or when does it retire?

Carmen also reviewed next steps. WSF will finalize the Long Range Plan by the end of the year and will deliver the Plan to the Legislature in January 2019. During the first part of 2019, WSF will respond to questions from Legislature and discuss other options. As WSF works on these initiatives, they may call on the expertise of PAG and TAG members.

Hadley thanked the group for their participation throughout this process. WSF will send out the final community engagement summary on November 26 and share the Final Plan in January. The meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.

Attendance:

Meeting Attendees:

- Greg Beardsley, Vashon Ferry Advisory Committee
- Gil Cerise, Puget Sound Regional Council
- Wendy Clark-Getzin, Jefferson County
- Ed Coviello, Kitsap Transit
- Walt Elliott, Kingston Ferry Advisory Committee
- David Forte, Kitsap County and Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO)
- Chris Hammer, City of Bainbridge Island
- Russ Harvey, San Juan County
- Deborah Hopkins Buchanan, San Juan Islands Visitor's Bureau
- Dave Hoogerwerf, Clinton Ferry Advisory Committee
- Jill Lazo, U.S. Coast Guard
- Greg Lerner, King County Water Taxi
- Emily Mannetti, Downtown Seattle Association
- Karen Mesko, Sound Transit
- Ian Munce, City of Tacoma
- Paul Parker, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Benjamin Smith, City of Seattle (Seattle Department of Transportation)
- Kate Tourtellot, Community Transit
- Richard Warren, Multimodal Planning Division, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Ralph Young, Coupeville Ferry Advisory Committee



Washington State Ferries

Participating by phone:

- Jim Corenman, San Juan County FAC
- Andrew Hamilton, Southworth Ferry Advisory Committee
- John Shambaugh, Washington State Department of Transportation Northwest Region
- Brian Wood, Island County and Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO)

Project Team:

- Carmen Bendixen, Washington State Ferries
- Stephanie Cirkovich, Washington State Ferries
- Ray Deardorf, Washington State Ferries
- Charles Prestrud, Washington State Ferries
- Hadley Rodero, Washington State Ferries
- Amy Scarton, Washington State Ferries
- Carla Sawyer, Progressions
- Mike Anderson, KPFF
- Kristen Kissinger, KPFF
- Gracie Geremia, PRR
- Samantha DeMars-Hanson, PRR