

WSDOT Ferries Division Operational Strategies, Vehicle Reservations and Fare Setting Process

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**Washington State Transportation Commission
December 10, 2014**

Presentation Outline – Op Strategies

- Background
- Legislative direction
- Current status
- Next steps

Operational Strategies Background

- In 2007, the Legislature directed WSDOT Ferries (WSF) to develop, and the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) to review, operational strategies “to ensure that existing assets are fully utilized and to guide future investment decisions.”
- WSF and the WSTC responded to this legislation with a jointly developed evaluation and prioritization of operational strategies.
- Broader aspects of ESHB 2358 pertaining to adaptive management strategies were also addressed, including pricing. The report listed several priority operational and pricing strategies.

Operational Strategies

RCW 47.60.327 directs WSDOT and the Transportation Commission to work jointly on Operational Strategies:

(1) The department shall develop, and the commission shall review, operational strategies to ensure that existing assets are fully utilized and to guide future investment decisions. These operational strategies must, at a minimum:

(a) Recognize that each travel shed is unique and might not have the same operational strategies;

(b) Use data from the current survey conducted under RCW [47.60.286](#);

(c) Be consistent with vehicle level of service standards;

(d) Choose the most efficient balance of capital and operating investments by using a life-cycle cost analysis; and

(e) Use methods of collecting fares that maximize efficiency and achieve revenue management control.

Operational Strategies (continued)

(2) After the commission reviews recommendations by the department, the commission and department shall make joint recommendations to the legislature for the improvement of operational strategies.

(3) In developing operational strategies, the following, at a minimum, must be considered:

(a) The feasibility of using reservation systems;

(b) Methods of shifting vehicular traffic to other modes of transportation;

(c) Methods of improving on-dock operations to maximize efficiency and minimize operating and capital costs;

(d) A cost-benefit analysis of remote holding versus over-water holding;

Operational Strategies (continued)

(e) Methods of reorganizing holding areas and minimizing on-dock employee parking to maximize the dock size available for customer vehicles;

(f) Schedule modifications;

(g) Efficiencies in exit queuing and metering;

(h) Interoperability with other transportation services;

(i) Options for leveling vehicle peak demand; and

(j) Options for increasing off-peak ridership.

(4) Operational strategies must be reevaluated periodically and, at a minimum, before developing a new capital plan.

Operational Strategies - Status

Reservation System

- The vehicle reservation system is a key operational strategy. Phase 1 involved consolidating updating the reservation system on routes that had older legacy systems.
- WSF is about to implement Phase 2 of the new system later this January. Phase 2 will expand the system to all vehicles in the San Juan Islands.
- A potential phase 3 would expand the system to either all vehicles or commercial vehicles on all the other remaining routes in the system with the exception of the routes serving Vashon Island and Mukilteo/Clinton.

Operational Strategies – Status (cont.)

Transit Enhancements

- WSF modified its sailing schedule on the Edmonds/Kingston route to meet a series of objectives; one was to connect with the commuter rail Sounder better in Edmonds.
- Discussion with regional transit partners on facilities to enhance ferry/bus connectivity have been primarily focused on downtown Seattle.

Operational Strategies – Status (cont.)

Fuel Conservation

- WSF has instituted selected vessel slowdowns on strategic off peak sailings with success in reducing fuel consumption.

Differential Vehicle and Passenger Pricing

- The concept of increasing the spread between vehicle and passenger fares, making it relatively more financially attractive for riders to travel as a passenger than as a vehicle driver, was discussed and evaluated with the Ferry Advisory Committee on Tariff (FAC-T). A modest first step in this direction was implemented in the last fare setting cycle.

Operational Strategies – Status (cont.)

Reservation System Pricing

- The concept of charging extra for vehicles with reservations was evaluated at the reservation system pre-design phase and discussed with a community partnership group created to help WSF define the system.
- In order to achieve maximum efficiency in implementing reservations, they should be available at no additional cost above and beyond what a rider would pay for the fare without reservations.

Fuel Surcharge

- Language prescribing a fuel surcharge formula was proposed by WSF and adopted by the WSTC with the fall 2011 tariff cycle. Due to relatively stable fuel prices and successful hedging, this automatic mechanism has not come close to being triggered.

Other Lower Priority Strategies

The report identified several other lower priority strategies that have had action since the report was published:

- **Enhanced User Information** - WSF has added “best times to travel” information to each sailing schedule for each of the four seasons. WSF is also piloting a “Terminal Conditions” feature which lets customers see how full the next sailing is.
- **Seasonal Surcharge** - The WSTC proposed a “peak of the peak” summer surcharge during the 2009 tariff outreach.
- **Small Car Discounts** - WSF proposed, and the WSTC adopted, a fare schedule which gives vehicles under 14 feet in length a favorable price compared to standard length vehicles. Phased in over three years from 2011 to 2013, the smaller vehicles travel for 30% less than standard cars (as calculated from the vehicle portion of the vehicle/driver fare).

Next Steps

- WSF will begin the process of working on an Operational Strategies update with the Commission in early 2015.
- The Commission's Ferry Subcommittee will be asked to engage on a regular basis in this process.

Reservations Status Report

Outline:

- Existing Reservations Program & Impacts.
- Next Phase.
- Operational Policies & Procedure Details.



Reservations Now

International Route:

- Vehicle Reservations since the 1970s.
- 80% of available tall space reservable.
- 46% of Commercial Customers travel with a reservation.
- Routine. Accepted. Expected. Highly utilized.



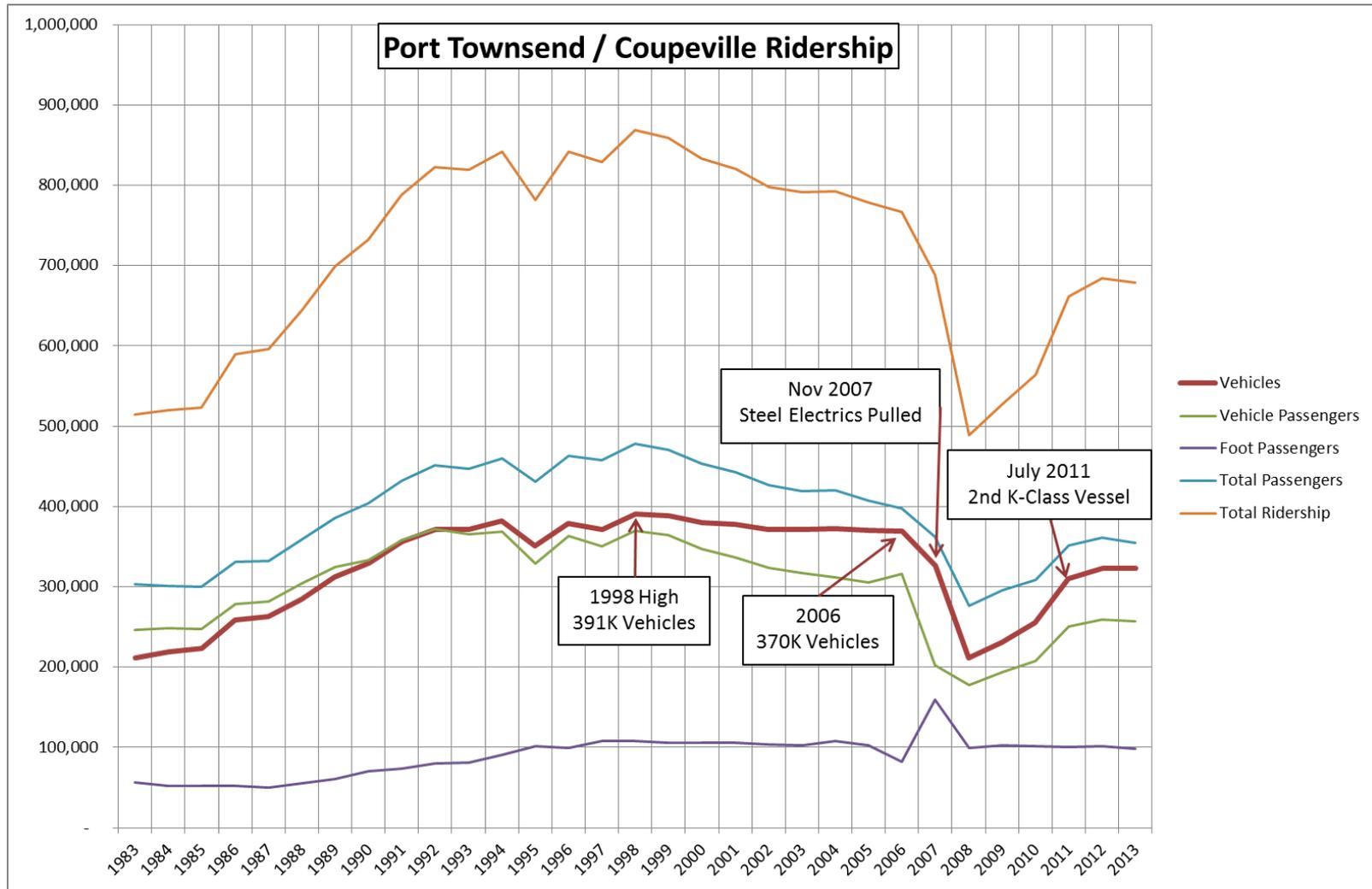
Reservations Now

SJI Commercial Customers:

- Vehicle Reservations since the late 1970s.
- 98% of available space reservable.
- 81% of International Customers travel with a reservation.
- Routine. Accepted. Expected. Highly utilized.



Port Townsend - Coupeville 30 Year Ridership

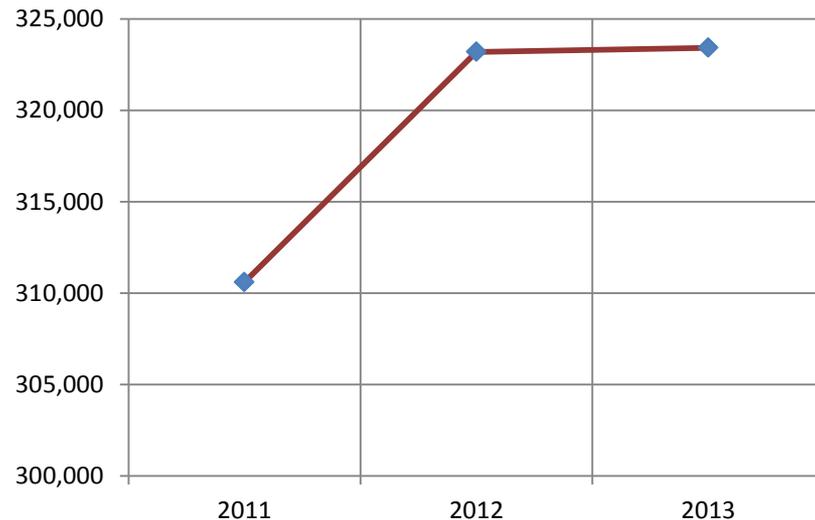


Port Townsend - Coupeville 2011 – 2013 Vehicle Ridership

- 2011 2nd PT/CV vessel July 1 (late start)
- 2012 1st full year with 2 K-Class Vessels
- 2013 Negligible increase

PT/CV		
Year	Total Vehicles	% change
2011	310,605	
2012	323,192	4.1%
2013	323,416	0.1%

PT/CV Total Vehicles



Reservations Now

2013 - 2014 PT/CV Vehicle Ridership Up 5.6%

- System overall 1.4% YTD.
- PT/CV 5.6% increase YTD.
- PT/CV quadruple system wide % increase.
- On pace for 340K in 2014.

Total System Vehicle Ridership					PT/CV Vehicle Ridership				
	2013	2014	Diff	%		2013	2014	Diff	%
Jan	712,542	742,469	29,927	4.2%	Jan	17,384	18,688	1,304	7.5%
Feb	658,996	680,084	21,088	3.2%	Feb	16,245	17,220	975	6.0%
Mar	812,551	810,926	-1,625	-0.2%	Mar	22,099	22,165	66	0.3%
Apr	797,972	837,073	39,101	4.9%	Apr	22,106	25,157	3,051	13.8%
May	906,745	889,517	-17,228	-1.9%	May	29,036	29,326	290	1.0%
Jun	902,340	915,875	13,535	1.5%	Jun	32,970	33,135	165	0.5%
Jul	1,011,969	1,019,053	7,084	0.7%	Jul	41,808	43,564	1,756	4.2%
Aug	1,036,394	1,038,467	2,073	0.2%	Aug	42,892	45,980	3,088	7.2%
Sep	867,411	884,759	17,348	2.0%	Sep	33,448	37,629	4,181	12.5%
Oct	823,679	834,387	10,708	1.3%	Oct	24,164	25,179	1,015	4.2%
Total	8,530,600	8,652,610	122,010	1.4%	Total	282,152	298,043	15,891	5.6%

Reservations Now

Port Townsend - Coupeville:

- Customers with a reservation (out of 100%):
 - YTD = 53% (the norm).
 - July/Aug 2014 = 58%.
 - Peak: Thanksgiving week = 68%.
 - Low: last week of 2 boat schedule (Oct 6-13) = 39%.
- Portion of vessel reserved (max 80%):
 - Peak: summer weeks & Thanksgiving week = 60% of all vessel space (out of 80% available).
 - Thanksgiving Wed-Sun only = 68%.
 - Lowest: last week of 2 boat schedule, Oct 6-13 = 30% of all vessel space.

Reservations Now

Port Townsend - Coupeville

Measured against goals:

- 1) Spread Demand: *Success.*
Ridership is up, significantly during the busiest month.
- 2) Reduce queues: *Success.*
Communities and terminal staff continue to report shorter lines and wait times.
- 3) Provide Greater predictability: *Success.*
 - a) Customers make a reservation, show up and travel at a guaranteed time.
 - b) Reservation rates are growing steadily, and growing the most at the busiest travel times.
 - c) Traveling with a reservation is now the norm.

⇒ Routine. Accepted. Expected. Highly utilized.

Information Now

Best Times to Travel (historic):

Mid-Fall Sailings for Anacortes-San Juan Islands (November 1-30)

	Dest.	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Spaces
4:15	F								139
5:30	S, O								139
6:20	L, F								139 ¹
7:30	S, O								139
8:30	F								139
9:30	F								139 ¹
10:35	L, S, O								139
12:35	L								139 ¹
1:55	O								139
2:40	F								139 ¹
3:40	S, O								139
4:30	L, F								139
6:00	L, F								139 ¹
6:30	S, O								139
8:25	L, F								139
8:55	S, O								139
10:30	L, O, F								81

Leaving Anacortes (Westbound) to:

L = Lopez

S = Shaw

O = Orcas

F = Friday Harbor

Information Now

Terminal Conditions (real time):

WSF Anacortes Ferry Terminal



WSF Anacortes Ferry Holding



WSF Anacortes Ferry Terminal Rd



Terminals

Anacortes Terminal and Cameras

Last Refresh: 7/31/2014 4:58:28 PM

Refresh Rate: 15 sec ▼

Terminal Conditions

Approximate Vehicle Spaces Available in Holding Area [Provide Feedback](#)

Note: Vehicles in line that have not been processed through a tollbooth are not counted here. Please [view cameras](#) for additional vehicles queued outside the terminal holding area which will subtract from the listed available space.

Depart	Destination	Drive-up	Vessel
05:10 PM	Lopez Island	0 Space	Kaleetan
06:45 PM	Lopez Island	129 Spaces	Hyak
07:20 PM	Shaw Island -> Orcas Island	71 Spaces	Kaleetan
08:20 PM	Friday Harbor	113 Spaces	Elwha
09:00 PM	Lopez Island -> Shaw Island -> Orcas Island	135 Spaces	Hyak

Space Availability Legend

■ 60%-100%
 ■ 10%-60%
 ■ 0%-10%
 ■ Cancelled / Unavailable

Ferry Alert Bulletins

Anacortes – 4:45 pm to Friday Harbor full – Staging 8:20pm to Friday Harbor

The 4:45 pm sailing from Anacortes to Friday Harbor is full for vehicle traffic. The Anacortes terminal is now staging the 6:45 pm to Lopez, the 7:20 pm sailing to Shaw and Orcas, and the 8:20 pm to Friday Harbor. Drivers are advised to arrive 60 to 90 minutes in advance for afternoon departures. Updates will occur as more information becomes available.

Location

2100 Ferry Terminal Road Suite A
Anacortes, WA 98221

- [Directions](#)
- [Map Link](#)
- [Chamber of Commerce](#)

Important Links

- [Vessel Watch](#)
- [Best Travel Times](#)
- [Ferry Alert Bulletins](#)
- [Security](#)
- [FAC](#)
- [Tourist Information](#)
- [Terminal Features](#)

SAVE A SPOT



Anacortes - San Juan Islands Introduction to Vehicle Reservations

(From Community Outreach
Presentation)



Washington State Ferries

Community Partnership

San Juan Islands

- Community Group formed 2012
- 25 members
 - FAC Members
 - Business owners
 - Hospitality industry
 - Individual users

FAC-Partnership Members

- John Whetten, Lopez Island
- Larry Vandermay, Orcas Island
- Jim Corenman, San Juan Island
- Deborah Hopkins, San Juan Island
- Pat McKay, San Juan Island
- John Brantigan, Shaw Island

Community Partnership

San Juan Islands

Outreach by the numbers

- 12 Partnership meetings over two years.
- 11 WSF Community Meetings
- 47 Outreach events
 - All four islands
 - Attended by 3,000+ residents & tourists
 - 2,200+ new accounts since July
- Marketing
 - Banners at terminals
 - Posters, brochures & videos on vessels & at terminals
 - Information sent to local media.
 - Post cards sent to all residents.

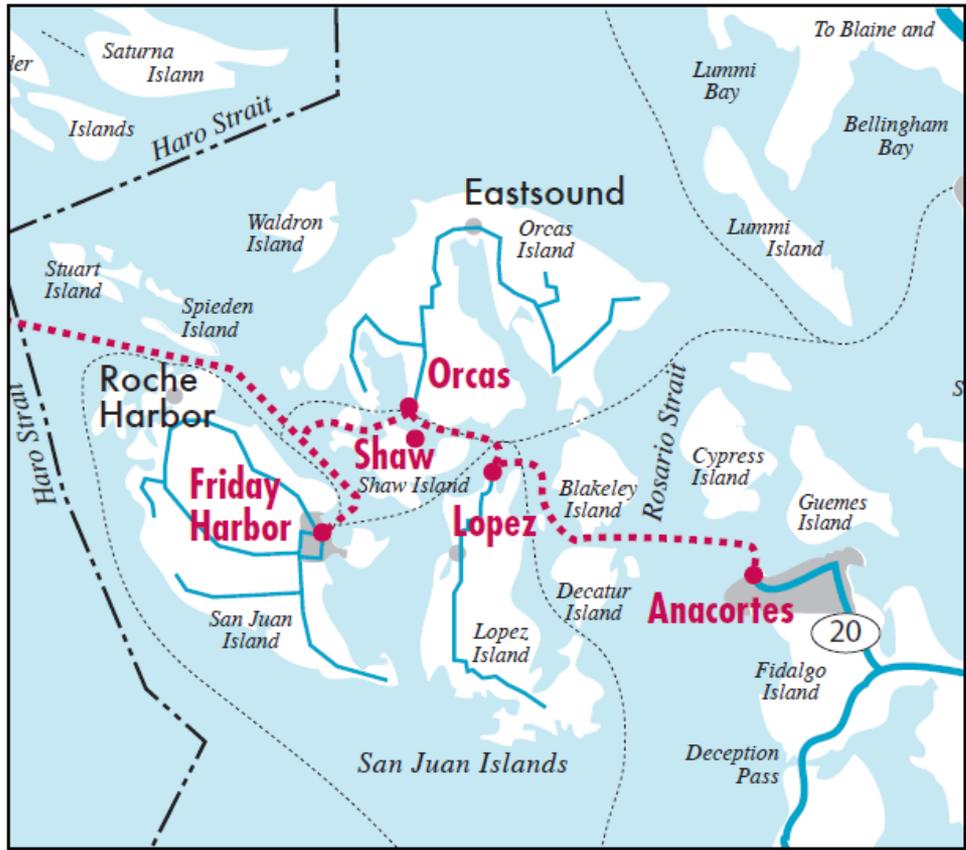
Next Phase: San Juan Island Routes

Starting **December 2nd**, customers may make vehicle reservations for travel on or after **January 5th**.

Note: Reservations are available westbound to Lopez, Shaw, Orcas, and Friday Harbor from Anacortes.

Reservations are available eastbound to Anacortes from Friday Harbor and Orcas.

There are no reservations available from Shaw and Lopez eastbound, and no interisland reservations.



Features & Policies

Availability. Up to 90% of the vehicle spaces are reservable. Reservations will be available through tiered releases to accommodate all ferry customers, including residents, tourists, and businesses.

- Release 1. 30% 2 months before the start of the season
- Release 2. 30% 2 weeks before a sailing
- Release 3. 30% 2 days before a sailing

No fee. There is no fee to make a reservation.

Flexibility. You can change or cancel your reservation any time without penalty up until 5 p.m. the day before your reserved sailing. There is one free change between 5 p.m. and 3 hours before sailing.

Speedy Transactions. Your account profile makes it easy to make a reservation online or on the phone. Barcoded confirmations make transactions at the terminals fast.

RESERVATION AVAILABILITY

Medical preference, emergency vehicles under WAC 468-300-700



Differences SJI Routes vs. PT/CV

Anacortes & San Juan Islands	Port Townsend - Coupeville
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiered 30/30/30 release of Regular Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All space released at 2 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will not pull res holders out of line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will pull res holders out of line
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 hour lock down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hour lock down
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handheld redemption at FH & sometimes Orcas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tollbooth redemption only
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anacortes next sailing reservation at the tollbooth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No tollbooth reservations

Sidney does not change.

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- [Use your pass \(ORCA\)](#)

Schedules

Select a Fall 2014 route

Select a Winter 2015 route

- [Current Schedule](#)
- [Fall Schedules 2014 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Route Maps: Where we sail \(PDF\)](#)
- [Getting to Your Terminal](#)

Other Travel Info

- [Visitor Center: Tourist Information](#)
- [Travel to Canada](#)

SPOTLIGHT



And the winner is... Chimacum! [The Washington State Transportation Commission](#) announced the name of the third Olympic Class ferry on Wednesday, Nov. 19. Runner-up names included Cowlitz, Sammamish, and Suquamish. Construction on our newest ferry is expected to be complete in 2017. Learn more about our [Olympic Class vessels](#).

Stay Connected

TRAVEL CONDITIONS

Ferry Alert Bulletins

Tuesday, December 2, 2014 9:28 PM

Ana/SJs - Vehicle Reservations Available for Jan. 5 through Mar. 21

[View more ferry alerts](#) [Receive ferry email alerts](#)

Current Status

- [VesselWatch](#)
- [Terminal Conditions](#)

Newsroom

- [WSF Weekly Update](#)
- [New ferry schedule, off-peak fares highlight fall sailing season](#)
- [Federal officials approve plans to replace aging Mukilteo ferry terminal](#)
- [Bon Voyage sailing for WSF's oldest ferry, the Evergreen State, is June 29](#)

[More News](#)



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Reservations Landing Page



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Washington State Ferries Vehicle Reservations Home Page

Overview	Announcements	Guest Users
<p>Convenient and Predictable Travel on Washington's Marine Highways.</p> <p>Planning to travel by ferry? Save A Spot vehicle reservations can help make your next ferry trip a smooth sailing. It's easy to get started. Simply click the "Make a Reservation" button on the right.</p> <p>Current Routes Accepting Reservations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Port Townsend/Coupeville2. Anacortes/Sidney B.C.3. Anacortes/San Juans <p>Anacortes / San Juan Islands (now accepting Guest and Universal reservations for travel beginning Jan. 5, 2015)</p> <p>Click here to learn more</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We are currently accepting reservations for the Fall 2014 Sailing Schedule (September 21- December 27) and the Winter 2015 Sailing Schedule (January 5 - March 21).• Pt Townsend/Coupeville route reserves 80% of each sailing which limits the number of drive-up vehicles.• Reservation holders are prioritized. Limited spaces per sailing are available for drive up customers. If you don't have a reservation, at busy times you may wait multiple sailings for a space.• Additional information is available by tuning to the Highway Advisory Radio as you approach the terminal.• Anacortes/Sidney B.C. - ORCA is an acceptable form of payment in Anacortes (west-bound only). ORCA is not accepted at the Sidney B.C. terminal or within the San Juan Islands and cannot be used to make a reservation. <p>Call Center Hours: 7:00am until 6:45pm , 7 days a week (Statewide: call 1-888-808-7977; Out of State: call 206-464-6400)</p>	<p>Make a Reservation</p> <p>Change, Cancel or View My Reservation</p>



For More Information

www.takeaferry.com



[Email update](#)

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Washington State Ferries - Take a Ferry

The lines end, reservations begin January 5, 2015.

Starting in January 2015, our [Save A Spot](#) reservation system will make it easy to book vehicle reservations to and from the San Juan Islands.

- Sign up for a reservation account [online](#).
- View [handouts](#) presented at fall 2014 San Juan Islands vehicle reservations events and meetings.



Please click on the map (PDF 518 kB) to enlarge.



Presentation Outline – WSF Fare Setting

- Process
- Actions taken last cycle
- Potential issues this cycle
- Timeline

Tariff Review Process

Roles and responsibilities:

- The Transportation Commission is responsible for adopting fares through the rulemaking process. The Commission may adopt by rules fares that are effective for more or less than one year, and may increase fares by a percentage that exceeds the fiscal growth factor.
- WSF is responsible for conducting review of fares, and developing a fare proposal for submittal to the Commission for their consideration.
- The Ferry Advisory Committee on Tariff (FAC-T) was created in 2010 to provide guidance to WSF as it develops its fare proposal for the Commission. The FAC-T membership includes Ferry Advisory Committee chairs or their designees. Modal interests such as transit, freight and tourism are represented as well.

2013/14 Tariff Cycle – Issues Addressed

Changes implemented last time:

- Phase 3 of implementation of small car fare category and elimination of motorcycle oversized surcharge fare category
- General fare increase (based on 2013 legislative session revenue requirements that would have resulted from 2.5% annual increases)
- Market screen for Sidney fares resulted in 4.1% increase to keep on par with BC Ferries' 2013 increase
- Collapse Sidney oversize vehicle fares into one set of fares by eliminating the “commercial” fares
- Re-evaluate the pricing of all trips to/from the San Juan Islands to Vancouver Island
- Offer multi-ride passenger cards on ORCA
- Passenger/vehicle fare ratio – modest change of half a percent spread in each of the 2013 and 2014 fare changes
- Youth fare discount increased from 20% to 50%

2015/16 Tariff Cycle – Potential Issues

Potential issues for this tariff cycle:

- Evaluation of the passenger/vehicle fare ratio – continue the spread?
- Re-examine the methodology of oversized vehicles for consistency in the way the driver portion of the fare is treated
- International route market screen
- General fare increase (dependent upon legislative action)
- Revisit distance based fare travel shed issue

Planning for future replacement of fare collection system

- “Back-end” frequency discounts
- Congestion or time of day pricing
- Vehicle fares – charging length based by foot
- These would not likely be part of the 2015/16 fare proposal; they could be part of a 2017/18 fare proposal if a new fare collection system is on the horizon

2015/16 Tariff Cycle – Timeline

- December – May: FAC-T meetings
- NLT April 22, 2015: file CR 101 notifying the opening of the tariff WAC sections
- Late April: conclusion of regular legislative session and establishment of fare revenue target
- Mid/late May: WSF fare proposal to Commission
- NLT June 17, 2015: file CR 102 form with Commission fare proposal

2015/16 Tariff Cycle – Timeline

- July 2015: Public comment period for Commission fare proposal
- July 21, 2015 or later: Commission holds adoption hearing on tariff proposal
- NLT August 30, 2015: file CR 103 with final amended tariff
- October 1, 2015: New tariff in effect

Questions?

For more information, please contact:

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