



**Washington State Ferries
Long Range Plan Policy Advisory Group Meeting #3
January 18, 2018
Washington State Ferries | 2901 3rd Ave, Seattle
Rainier Conference Room
12:30 – 2:30 p.m.**

MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome

Stephanie Cirkovich, Washington State Ferries (WSF) Community Services and Planning Director, welcomed the group to the third WSF 2040 Long Range Plan Policy Advisory Group (PAG) meeting. Stephanie facilitated introductions and welcomed WSF Assistant Secretary Amy Scarton. Amy thanked the group for representing rider's interests in the planning process and providing feedback on the Long Range Plan's priorities and goals.

Stephanie welcomed KPFF, the consultant team hired to develop the Long Range Plan. Mike Anderson, KPFF Director of Marine Transportation, introduced himself, reviewed the team's qualifications and experience, and expressed enthusiasm for working with the PAG throughout plan development.

Laura LaBissoniere Miller, meeting facilitator, reviewed the meeting agenda and objectives, which included providing a recap of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, reviewing the draft work plan, presenting ridership forecast results, and providing an overview of the WSF budget planning process.

SWOT Analysis Recap

Stephanie thanked the group for participating in the SWOT analysis at their last meeting. She reviewed the top strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats the group identified during the exercise.

The most common strengths were the reservation system, dedicated staff and crew, safety record, and picturesque views. Weaknesses included real-time customer information, funding, aging fleet, and service disruptions. Common opportunities were transit connections, public/private partnerships, data collection and use, and fare collection technology. Threats included aging workforce, high fare prices, maintenance funding, and lack of consistent governance.

The full summary of the SWOT analysis can be found in the September 21, 2017 PAG meeting summary.

Long Range Plan Work Plan

Ray Deardorf, WSF Senior Planning Manager, reviewed the Long Range Plan work plan and discussed the proposed plan approach. The work plan includes the following phases, with the final plan due to the Legislature by January 1, 2019.

- Phase 1: Data Collection (January - February 2018)
- Phase 2: Review, Assessment, and Development (March - May 2018)
- Phase 3: Draft Plan (June - August 2018)
- Phase 4: Comment Incorporation and Further Analysis as Needed (September - December 2018)

PAG members asked the following questions:

- Demi Allen, Squeaky Wheels, reflected on the SWOT analysis and asked about how the issues identified will be reflected in the work plan.
- Dave Hoogerwerf, Clinton FAC, expressed concern about the project timeline and opportunity for PAG input before plan elements are finalized. Dave noted previous changes to level of service standards included a lengthier review process.
- Blake Trask, Cascade Bicycle Club, asked WSF to clarify the PAG's role and expectations at each phase of plan development, particularly at the March meeting.
 - Hadley Rodero, WSF Communications, clarified the PAG plays an important role in reviewing plan elements from the rider's perspective, and helping to shape how the plan is presented to the broader public.
- Walt asked if WSF is relying on PAG members to engage elected officials and regional organizations.
 - Ray clarified no, we have convened an Executive Advisory Group and are briefing regional organizations separately.
- Jim Corenman, San Juan County FAC, asked if WSF captures people who visit the reservations page but don't book a trip.
- Andrew Hamilton, Southworth FAC, asked if the plan will address terminal expansions.
- Walt asked WSF to provide status updates on plan deliverables and opportunities for input before elements are finalized.

Ridership Forecast Results

Ray reviewed ridership forecast results and shared key findings, demographic trends, and ridership forecasts by route.

PAG members provided several questions during this presentation.

- Blake asked if the ridership forecast counts total passengers or a breakdown of vehicle type.
- Rex Oliver, Bainbridge Chamber of Commerce, commented that cruise ships account for a surge in recreational ridership on the Bainbridge Island route and asked if they are included in the ridership forecast.
- Demi asked Ray to explain WSF's approach to determining bicycle ridership forecasts.
- Walt asked if the model is constrained for vehicles and noted some passengers opt not to take the ferry when they see how long they will need to wait. He also asked how the current model plans for adaptive management.
- Walt asked if WSF collected information about income and commented some low-income riders are unable to afford ferry fares.
- In response to Whidbey Island key findings, Dave noted growth may be constrained because the Mukilteo/Clinton route is at capacity.
- Blake asked Ray to clarify if bicycle riders are included in total riders.
- Walt expressed concern about whether WSF did coordinated planning with other divisions of WSDOT to ensure smooth connections to ferry service.

Ferry Budget Planning

Rick Singer, WSF Director of Finance and Administration, presented a WSF financial overview. He reviewed background and challenges, revenue sources, expenses, and requirements for the 2040 Long Range Plan.

PAG members provided the below questions and comments:

- Demi asked Rick to highlight opportunities for new revenue sources. He also asked Rick to explain the relationship between increased ridership and increased operating costs.
- Tony Kurdy, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, said his organization looks for opportunities to save money, make process improvements, and facilitate the sharing of information between public and private shipyards to reduce costs. Tony encouraged WSF to communicate steps taken to reduce cost when presenting budget information to the public.
- Walt expressed concern about the growing portion of WSF's operating budget for deferred vessel maintenance. He also commented riders pay a significant portion of ferries operating budget compared to other WSDOT divisions.
- Dave noted fuel cost has decreased over the last 5-7 years and asked how WSF has reallocated that portion of the budget. He also asked Rick to clarify the portion of WSF capital budget that comes from transfers and the \$.25 rider surcharge.

Additional Questions and Comments

Participants provided the following additional questions and comments:

- Walt asked if PAG meeting materials will be posted on the WSF Long Range Plan website. Walt also commented that the current website is difficult for people to find and should be made more prominent on the WSF website.
- Dave asked WSF to report back on how feedback from the PAG is incorporated in the plan.
- Walt asked WSF to follow-up to his email requesting a breakdown of how the Long Range Plan addresses existing legislative requirements and RCWs.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Ray reviewed next steps, including analyzing pedestrian and bicycle forecast data, recreational traffic, and total annual forecast. The next PAG meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 15. Agenda topics will include reviewing plan elements and updated ridership forecasts as well as previewing public meeting materials.

The project team thanked the group for their time and contributions to the discussion. The group adjourned at 2:30 p.m.



Attendance:

Meeting Attendees:

- Demi Allen, Squeaky Wheels
- Jim Corenman, San Juan County FAC
- Walt Elliott, Kingston FAC
- Jacqueline Gruber, Downtown Seattle Association
- Andrew Hamilton, Southworth FAC



- Dave Hoogerwerf, Clinton FAC
- Deborah Hopkins Buchanan, San Juan Islands Visitor's Bureau
- Tony Kurdy, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard
- Rex Oliver, Bainbridge Chamber of Commerce
- Paul Parker, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Nicole Summers, U.S. Coast Guard
- Blake Trask, Cascade Bicycle Club
- Patrick Yearout, Ivar's

Participating by phone:

- Janet Ray, AAA Washington

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
- Rick Singer, Washington State Ferries
- Mike Anderson, KPFF
- Laura LaBissoniere Miller, PRR
- Samantha DeMars-Hanson, PRR