

WSDOT Ferries Division Long Range Plan Update

Ray Deardorf
Planning Director
Ferries Division

**Washington State Transportation Commission
July 16, 2014**

Presentation Overview

- Background
- Goal of 2014–2015 WSF Long Range Plan update
- Components of the 2009 plan
- What's been implemented from the 2009 plan
- Role of Transportation Commission in Operating Strategies
- Initial comments on process
- Next steps and timeline

Background – WSF Modal Plan

- WSF has produced two long range plans in the past 20 years:
 - 1999 – this plan looked to the year 2015 and was geared toward system expansion
 - 2009 – this plan looked to the year 2030 and focused on how best to utilize the system’s assets more effectively and preserve existing service
- Part of WSDOT’s modal plans, most recent updates are Freight and Public Transportation (in process), Rail (complete) and Aviation (just starting).
- The 2014–2015 update will extend the planning horizon to 2040.

Goals for WSF Plan Update

Initial thinking discussed at June/July WSF Community Meetings:

- Market Understanding – how have demographics shifted?
- Review and Update Adaptive Management Practices – lessons learned and identify new strategies.
- Operational Paradigms – service frequencies and vessel replacements as some of the largest vessels in the fleet begin to retire after 2030.
- Technology Assessment – what could be applied to reduce operating and/or capital costs?
- Key Cost Drivers and Best Practices – what are the drivers of capital and operating costs and what could be done to reduce them? What are the opportunities to apply least cost planning principles ?
- Financial Sustainability – update the long-term financial outlook.

2009 Plan Summary

Development was guided by ESHB 2358 from 2007 legislature. The plan:

- Identified adaptive management strategies (such as vehicle reservations, transit enhancements and pricing) for further analysis and implementation.
- Adopted new level of service standards consistent with the policy goal of managing vehicle demand – moved away from PM peak measurements to overall utilization.
- Proposed a capital program that included a vessel replacement plan to address the aging fleet.
- Identified near and long term funding needs for continuation of current service levels and to fund the capital program. The plan identified a large unfunded portion.

2009 Plan – What's Been Implemented?

Several key components of the 2009 plan have been funded and are complete or in process for implementation:

- Vehicle reservations – Phase I implemented, Phase II (San Juan Islands) on track for January 2015.
- Four new vessels completed, two additional vessels under construction or funded.
- Pricing strategies, including widening the gap between vehicle and passenger fares, small car discounted fare, and lowering the youth fare.
- Improved customer communications via the web site to allow easy planning to avoid congested time periods – best times to travel and terminal conditions.
- Colman Dock and Mukilteo terminal environmental and design processes.

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)

RCW 47.60.327

(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)

RCW 47.60.327

(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.

- Need to begin work with Transportation Commission's Ferries Subcommittee on this task.

Comments on Planning Process

This has been a key agenda item at WSF's June/July Community Meetings. Some common themes heard so far include:

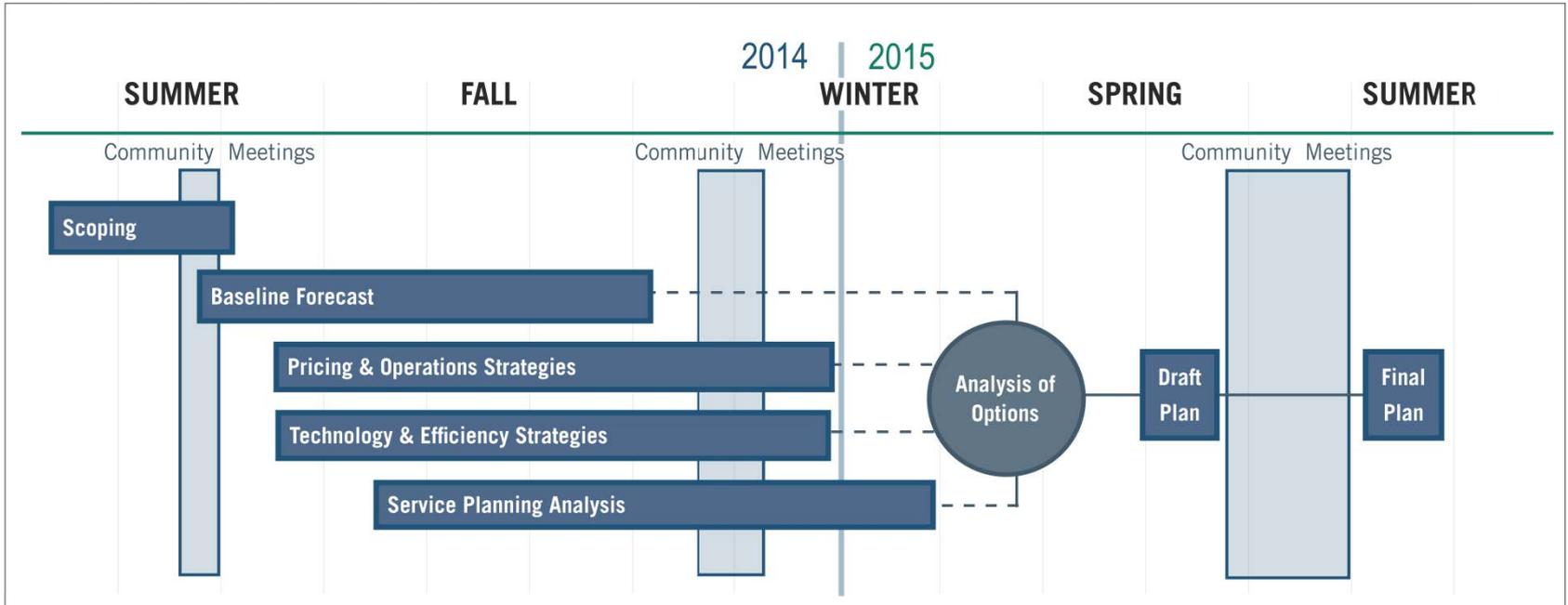
- Transportation and intermodal connections have emerged as the most consistent theme. These were primarily focused on transit but also planning for increases in bicycle travel.
- Roadway capacity was also discussed, including the train crossing at Edmonds.
- The concept of smaller, more frequent vessels on routes to replace retiring large vessels is well received.
- Alternative vessel service life (both shorter – as low as 40 years, and longer – as long as 70 years) should be looked at.
- The process should ensure that local governments have ample opportunity to participate in the process.
- Sustainability measures in fuel and other aspects of operations.
- Planning should be done based on communities' needs.

Next Steps and Timeline

- Continue with technical work – utilizing survey data as a base, update long range forecasts.
- Similar process as with the 2009 planning effort including working with the Ferries Subcommittee of the Commission. Various technical and policy teams would be engaged, including a new one consisting of Ferry Advisory Committee Executive Council members.
- Identify specific public involvement opportunities – suggested ferry long range planning forums in each community.
- Components of the plan would be developed this year, including an update of Operational Strategies with the Commission. A draft plan would be developed subsequent to the 2015 legislative session.
- Final plan as early as summer 2015.

Next Steps and Timeline (continued)

Preliminary Update Schedule



Questions?

For more information on the WSF Long Range Plan update, please contact:

Ray Deardorf, Planning Director
WSDOT Ferries Division, at
(206) 515-3491 or deardorf@wsdot.wa.gov.