

# **WSDOT Ferries Division Reservation System Update**

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**Washington State Transportation Committee  
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# Why Implement a Reservations System?

2009 Legislative directive to manage demand:

- Plan for efficient growth
- Make better use of limited resources
- Shift vehicle traffic to underutilized sailings

⇒ Vehicle Reservations



# Reservation Benefits



## WSF Customers:

- Guaranteed Spot
- Predictability
- Minimal wait time



## Ferry Communities:

- Reduced queuing on streets
- Continued access to businesses & attractions
- Reduced air pollution



## WSF / Taxpayer:

- More efficient use of existing assets
- \$\$ Savings

# Developing Reservation System Policies & Practice

## San Juan Island Community Partnership

- Formed Reservations Partnership group in 2012
- Goal to develop program that might work for the San Juan Islands
- Held 13 meetings over two years
- Who is the San Juan Island Partnership?
  - 25 members representing each of the islands
  - Ferry Advisory Committee
  - Representatives from commercial and tourism industry
  - Frequent riders and residents

### 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

# San Juan Islands Public Outreach

- 50 Days of outreach in the San Juans (July – Nov '14)
- Spoke with 3,300+ residents & tourists
- 2,500+ new reservation accounts created
- 25 blog posts & newspaper articles published between May and November 2014
- Hung posters at terminals and vessels, including video on vessels
- Banners hung at each terminal and in Anacortes
- 5 media buys for summer 2015



# SJI Save a Spot Features & Policies

- Mobile Website
- 24 hour reminders
- Terminal Status with drive-up space
- 90% of vehicle space may be reserved
  - Tall space available upfront
  - Tiered release for regular space
- No cost to make a reservation
- Flexibility
  - Cancel/change up to 5pm day prior; one free change after 5pm
  - Arrival window 30-90 minutes, may forfeit if <30 minutes

## RESERVATION AVAILABILITY



# SJI Save a Spot Benefits

## Customer

**Predictability:** Reservation customer knows when they will travel. (2,000 per day travel with reservation)

**Reduced time waiting at the terminal:** Arrive at the terminal 30 minutes prior to sailing.

**Last minute reservations available:** 24% of reservations are made the day before or on date of travel.

## Ferries

**Reduced congestion at terminal:** lines approaching tollbooth at Anacortes are typically less than 15 minutes.

**Reduced overloads:** 4<sup>th</sup> of July had 80% fewer drive-up vehicles not able to get on their desired sailing.

**Maintain ridership:** WSF was able to maintain 2014 ridership with vessel capacity reduction in spring.

# SJI Save a Spot Challenges

## • Reservation Space Availability

- Tiered release of space is confusing, creates surges that are difficult to manage, and can complicate round-trip bookings
- Hospitality industry needs more space available earlier
- Locals want more drive-up space for flexibility

## • Website Usability

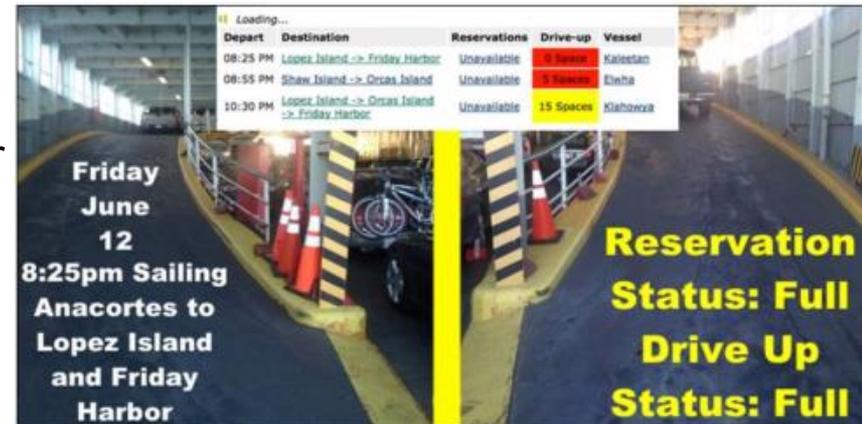
- Flow is not customer friendly, which increases phone calls
- Some customers not completing reservation process due to confusion

## • No-Show Fee

- Customers making multiple reservations and then cancelling day prior
- Low fees allow customers to make “insurance” reservations
- 10% avg no-show rate impacts our ability to communicate available space

## • Customers Arriving Early

- Customer wants to travel standby on earlier sailing. Not charged a fee but have to forfeit guaranteed space due to terminal logistics.



# SJI Ridership 2014 - 2015

SJI Vehicles	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	YTD Total
2015 Vehicles	52,919	53,881	64,485	70,999	78,615	89,154	410,053
2014 Vehicles	52,603	49,660	63,097	69,881	78,302	87,750	401,293
Difference	316	4,221	1,388	1,118	313	1,404	8,760
	0.6%	8.5%	2.2%	1.6%	0.4%	1.6%	<b>2.2%</b>
Systemwide	0.3%	4.9%	2.7%	2.1%	3.0%	n/a	n/a

SJI Passengers	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	YTD Total
2015 Pax	40,910	46,054	54,766	70,875	95,189	120,496	428,290
2014 Pax	39,527	38,996	50,709	67,372	85,525	107,875	390,003
Difference	1,383	7,058	4,057	3,503	9,664	12,621	38,287
	3.5%	18.1%	8.0%	5.2%	11.3%	11.7%	<b>9.8%</b>
Systemwide	1.5%	5.5%	4.9%	3.2%	5.8%	n/a	n/a

- 2,000 reservations used per day on average
- 80%+ of travelers have a reservation  
(where available)

# SJI Ability to Travel

## June Non-Holiday Travel Week

### 125 Anacortes sailings

- Red - 90% reserved
- Yellow - 80-90% reserved
- Green - less than 80% reserved

- Same day reservations available for those that need predictability.
- Travel on busy days with some lead-time.
- Sailings available for drive-up for those that need more flexibility.

Sailing Time	Destination	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
4:15 AM	FH		T	T	T			
6:00 AM	Lo, Sh, Or							
6:15 AM	Lo							
6:25 AM	FH		T	T	T			
7:25 AM	Sh, Or							
9:10 AM	FH	T						
9:35 AM	Lo							
10:20 AM	Sh, Or							
11:55 AM	FH							
12:35 PM	Lo, Or							
2:00 PM	FH							
3:45 PM	Sh, Or							
4:45 PM	FH							
5:10 PM	Lo							
6:45 PM	Lo							
7:20 PM	Sh, Or							
8:20 PM	FH							
9:00 PM	Lo, Sh, Or							
11:00 PM	Lo, Or, FH							

Note: 'T' means tall space was fully reserved.

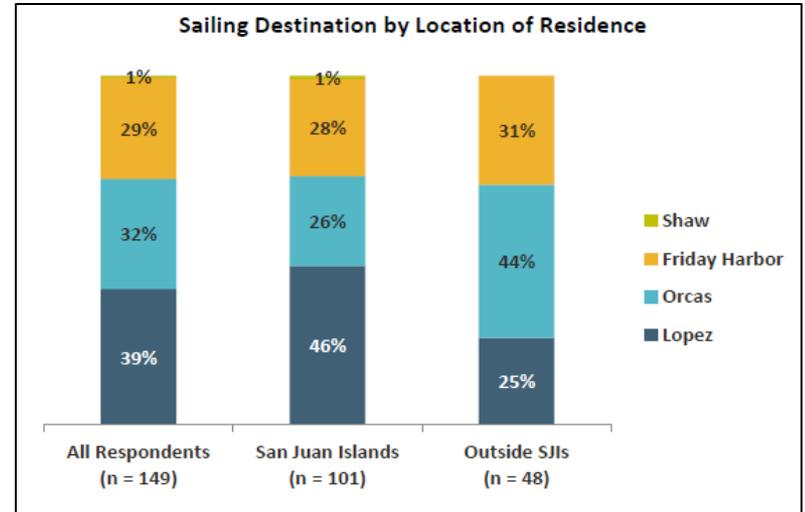
# SJI Reservation Survey

- 4,247 Reservation holders took online survey.
- Best attributes of Save a Spot:
  - Guaranteed spot
  - Easy to use
  - Can plan ahead
  - Can arrive later; avoid long waits
  - Lowers stress level
- >75% of survey respondents found the website easy to use with 10% finding the website difficult
- >80% found the check-in process good or excellent

*“Wonderful to know ahead of time that you have a spot - no longer need to show up 2 hours in advance to secure a spot. So much easier to plan.”*

# SJI Drive-up Survey

- 149 customers without reservations surveyed
- 67% residents of SJIs
- >95% were aware of vehicle reservations to the SJIs
- Top reasons people didn't make a reservation:
  - Uncertain when traveling (21%)
  - Did not need for low-volume sailing (16%)
  - Made plans too late to secure (16%)
  - Change/cancellation policy concerns (9%)



# Questions?

For additional information on WSF Reservations,  
please contact:

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