



Pierce County Waterborne Transportation Study

WTS Advisory Committee Meeting



May 27, 2015



Meeting Purpose

TODAY'S MEETING WILL FOCUS ON:

- **Preliminary recommendations:**
 - Overall Policy Recommendations
 - Short-Term (3-5 Years)
 - Long-Term (Future Growth)
- **Requesting feedback on:**
 - Package of recommendations
 - Priorities
 - Thoughts on the “how to”



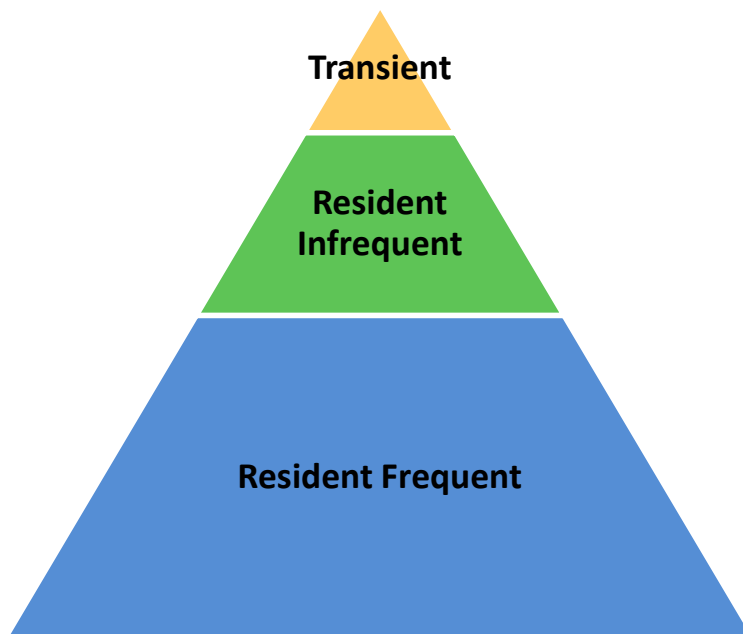
Meeting Purpose

WHERE ARE WE IN THE PROCESS:

- **Today: Advisory Group feedback on preliminary recommendations.**
- **June 11:** Public feedback on preliminary recommendations
- **July 1 (Tentative):** Advisory Group (new meeting) meeting on final package of recommendations and near-term action items
- **Mid-July:** Draft recommendations presented to County Executive
- **End-July:** County Council presentation

Challenge: Maintain a base of year-round residents who have a sustainable mix of travel patterns.

Fare Revenue Contribution (conceptual)



- It can take 5-10 households with infrequent travel patterns to replace a single household with a frequent travel pattern.
- Current demographic trends and the Island's rural designation will likely create continued shift to more infrequent traveling residents.
- When a larger share of trips become discretionary, then ridership could become more sensitive to fare changes.



Preliminary recommendations come in three categories:

Overall Policy Recommendations

- General recommendations to improve operational and financial sustainability

Short-Term Strategies (3-5 Years)

- Strategies to address today's challenges

Long-Term Strategies to Address Future Demand

- Investments and strategies for future growth scenarios



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Long-Term Financial Sustainability

DRAFT

A key overarching objective of this study is to develop a framework that will support the long-term financial sustainability of Pierce County Ferries. Our preliminary recommendation for Pierce County is to:

Overall Policy Recommendations

Short-Term Strategies (3-5 Years)

Long-Term Strategies to Address Future Demand

- a. **Implement a Formula-based fare revenue target.** To provide predictability and funding reliability for ferry operations, this would be a one-time assignment of costs to fare and non-fare revenue sources.
- b. **Work to Broaden Funding Base.** With County ferry operators group, seek changes to Ferry District statute to allow a District to operate a passenger-vehicle service.
- c. **Pursue other Non-Fare Operating Revenues.** Explore opportunities to grow non-fare operating revenues.
 - i. Establish charter and lease rates for 2nd vessel
 - ii. Advertising income
 - iii. Concession opportunities during the summer peak season



Level of Service

The policy-defined Level of Service is an important target towards which the Ferry service is managed. The current LOS states that services should be calibrated to meet winter weekday demand. Our preliminary recommendation for LOS is to:

Overall Policy Recommendations

Short-Term Strategies (3-5 Years)

Long-Term Strategies to Address Future Demand

- a. **Add flexibility to LOS language.** To meet the winter weekday standard through adding capacity or implementing operational or pricing demand management strategies
- b. **Develop a summer Level of Service standard.** The vitality of the islands is significantly driven by visitors, retirees and 2nd home owners. The standard should not seek to support any and all seasonal growth, but rather reflect the nature of the community that Pierce County is serving. Options could be based on:
 - Number of vehicles that are overloaded
 - Average vessel utilization throughout the day
 - Percent of vessels that are leaving full



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Technology and System Investments

DRAFT

Technology and system investments can improve service and utilization without added sailings.

Overall Policy Recommendations

Short-Term Strategies (3-5 Years)

Long-Term Strategies to Address Future Demand

- a. **Acquire new fare collection system.** The new fare collection system should be specified to allow:
 - i. Reservations. While there are significant concerns among Island communities about reservations, there are many ways in which reservations could be deployed to great benefit.
 - ii. Account-based system. A fare collection system that can offer an account-based approach would add significant flexibility to better tailor pricing to discrete customer groups.
- b. **Communications system improvements.** A robust communications system can reduce congestion, support increased vessel utilization and improve customer satisfaction. Possibilities include:
 - i. Alerts, on-line, apps, and push technologies, terminal cameras
 - ii. Signage, both static and variable message
 - iii. Terminal area and highway radio messages



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County Ferry Operators Group

DRAFT

The recently launched County Ferry Operator's group is an ideal platform for sharing costs and leverage resources. Our preliminary recommendation is for the County to raise the following opportunities with the group:

Overall Policy
Recommendations

Short-Term
Strategies
(3-5 Years)

Long-Term
Strategies to
Address Future
Demand

- a. **Lease the 2nd boat for dry-dock maintenance periods if the vessel is not otherwise in use.**
- b. **Explore opportunities to share in some system investment costs, such as the backbone fare collection system or core communications platforms, such as mobile apps.**
- c. **Formalize emergency vessel replacement plans, including options to tap other resources outside the three County operators.**



Group Discussion

- Which preliminary recommendations are a priority to you? Which are not?
- Thoughts on implementation of these preliminary recommendations?
 - Timing
 - Groups to involve
 - Other considerations

Overall Policy Recommendations

Short-Term Strategies (3-5 Years)

Long-Term Strategies to Address Future Demand



Fares

Our preliminary recommendations include the following structural changes to align pricing with customer and service needs:

Overall Policy
Recommendations

Short-Term
Strategies
(3-5 Years)

Long-Term
Strategies to
Address Future
Demand

- a. **Add small car fare category.** Consider ways to “prequalify” to expedite terminal processing
- b. **Standardize oversize fares on a linear per foot basis.**
- c. **Increase summer surcharge on vehicles from 25% to 30%**
- d. **Gradually increase the vehicle-passenger fare ratio over time from 3.4:1 to 4.0:1**
- e. **Change youth fare to 50% of full passenger fare**
- f. **Maintain current value pass until back-end discounting capacity and account-based system allows better tailored discounting**
- g. **Introduce monthly passenger pass**
- h. **Develop a fuel surcharge policy.** To allow Pierce County to adjust fares to mitigate the impacts of a rapid increase in the price fuel.



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Service

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The preliminary recommendations advise the County to consider the following service refinements:

Overall Policy
Recommendations

Short-Term
Strategies
(3-5 Years)

Long-Term
Strategies to
Address Future
Demand

- a. **Add early morning weekday service**
- b. **Add a new triangle run to improve frequency of service to Ketron Island in the afternoon**
- c. **Create a “Summer Schedule” by adding 2-boat service in July and August**
 - i. Fridays add 1 8-hr shift to run between 12pm & 8pm
 - ii. Sundays add 1 8-hr shift to run between 12pm & 8pm



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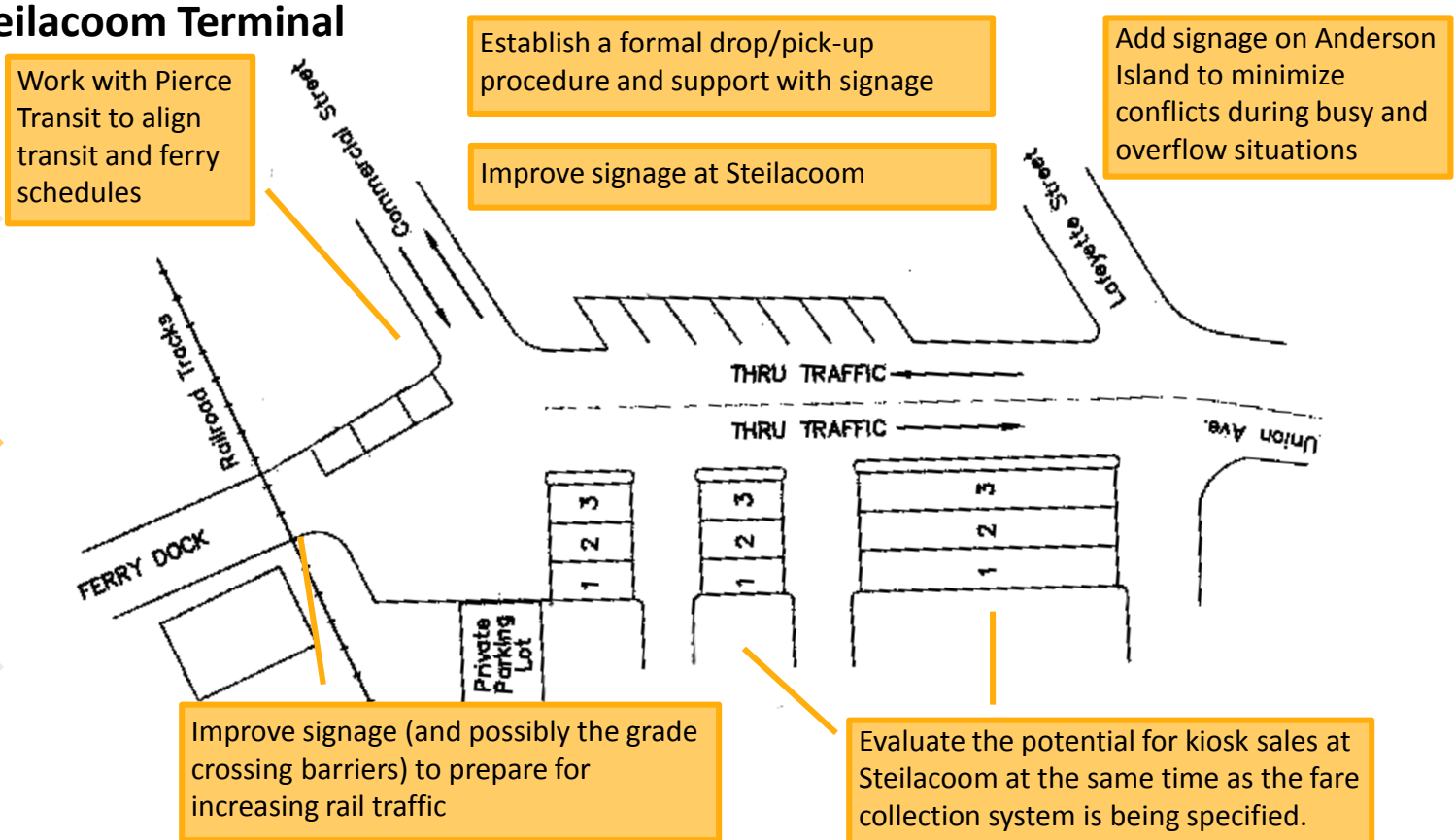
Other Short-Term Preliminary Recommendations

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Additional preliminary recommendations can improve customer satisfaction in the short-term:

Steilacoom Terminal

- Overall Policy Recommendations
- Short-Term Strategies (3-5 Years)
- Long-Term Strategies to Address Future Demand





Group Discussion

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- Thoughts on implementation of these preliminary recommendations?
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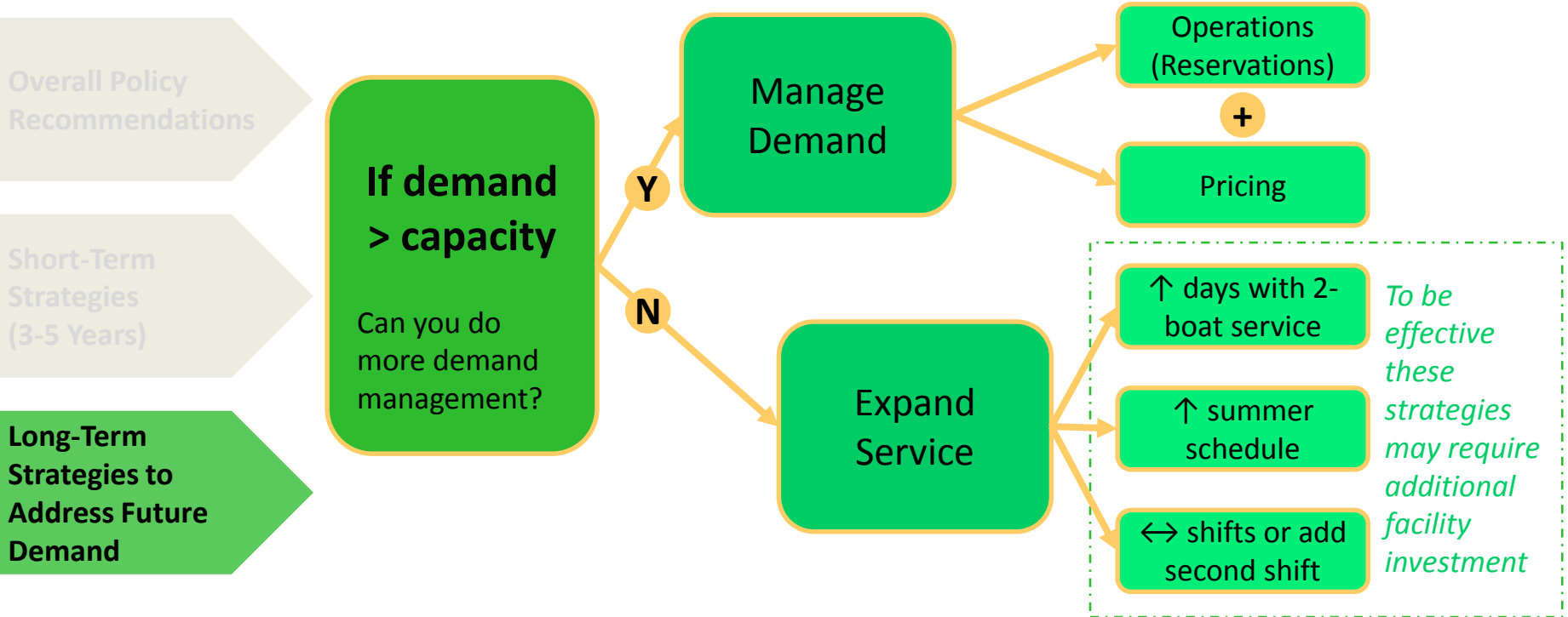
Overall Policy Recommendations

Short-Term Strategies (3-5 Years)

Long-Term Strategies to Address Future Demand

Future Demand

If demand exceeds capacity (according to the stated LOS policy) the County should first attempt to manage demand with existing service and assets, then consider service expansion as a second resort:





Future Demand

In the event that ridership demand does grow beyond the capacity of the system to meet the adopted level-of-service standards then Pierce County should take a two-step approach to addressing increased congestion:

Overall Policy Recommendations

Step 1: Manage demand. As congestion grows, the County should deploy pricing and operational strategies to alleviate it.

- a. **Operating strategies.** The primary operating strategy at this time is likely to be targeted or more widespread introduction of reservations
- b. **Pricing strategies.** Modify the pricing structure to encourage mode shifts and/or changes in travel patterns.

Short-Term Strategies (3-5 Years)

Step 2: Expand Service. In the event that demand outstrips demand management options, consider adding capacity. Examples could include:

- a. **Add days with 2-boat service during the summer schedule**
- b. **Extend the summer schedule beyond July-August**
- c. **Add a longer shift (or a second shift) to the 2nd boat and extend higher frequency service to more of the peak day**

Long-Term Strategies to Address Future Demand

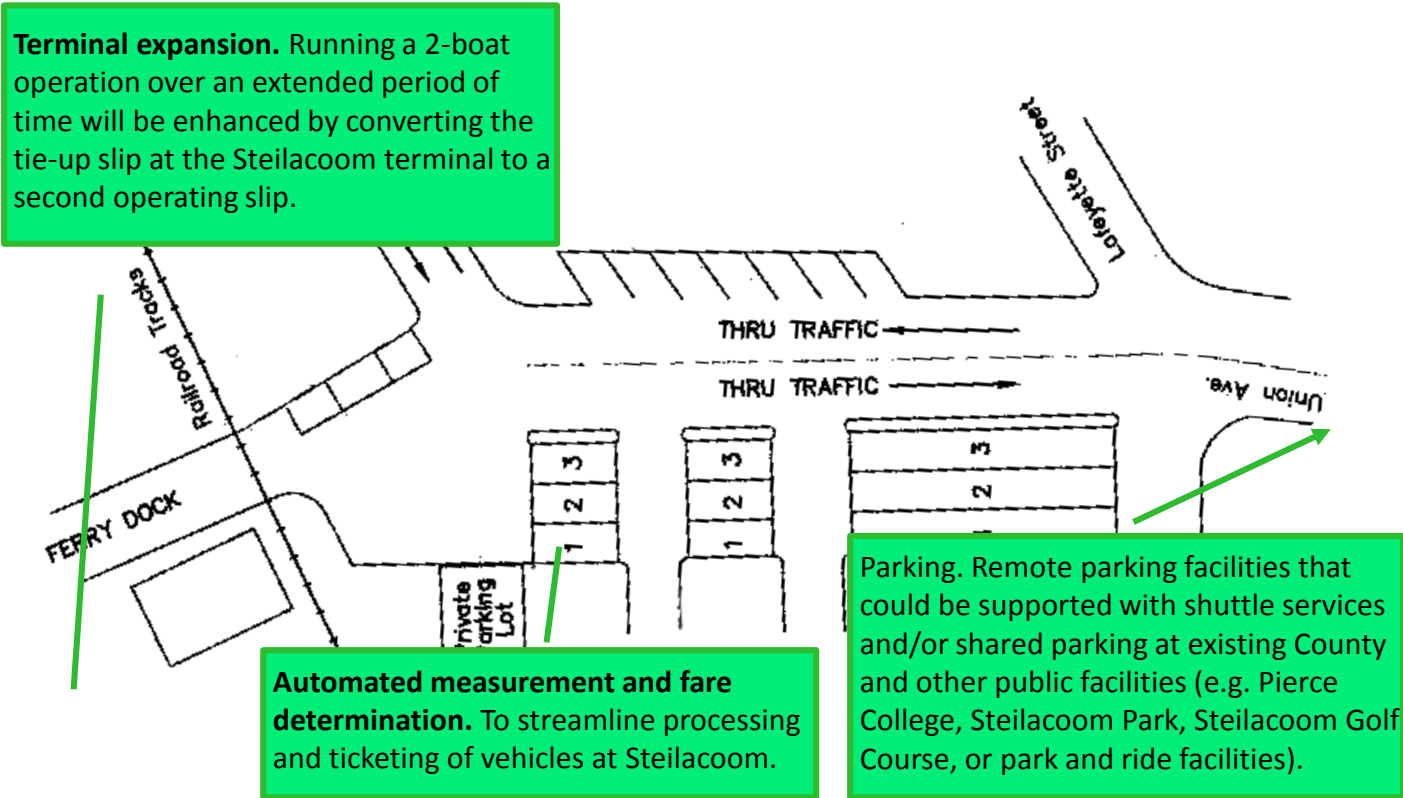
To be effective these strategies may require additional facility investment

Investment Needs

The following investments are not necessary in the short-term, however, there may come a day where these investments may be in the interest of the County:

Steilacoom Terminal

- Overall Policy Recommendations
- Short-Term Strategies (3-5 Years)
- Long-Term Strategies to Address Future Demand





Group Discussion

- Which preliminary recommendations are a priority to you? Which are not?
- Thoughts on these preliminary recommendations and future growth possibilities?

Overall Policy Recommendations

Short-Term Strategies (3-5 Years)

Long-Term Strategies to Address Future Demand



Next Steps

NEXT STEPS INCLUDE:

- **Revise preliminary recommendations**
- **Develop financial/fare implications of recommendations**
- **Final Public Meeting**
 - **Thursday June 11, Anderson Island Elementary, 7:00 PM**
- **Final AG meeting**
 - **July 1 (tentative); to discuss final package of recommendations, including near-term action items**