

## Puget Sound Regional Council

# Regional Passenger-Only Ferry Study Project Status Report

April 11, 2008

### Request for the Study

In the spring of 2006 the PSRC Transportation Policy Board asked staff to evaluate the current status of passenger-only ferries in the Central Puget Sound Region and explore the need for a coordinated regional approach to planning for passenger-only ferries. Initial presentations were given to the Board in April. After numerous discussions, the Board decided there was a need for coordinated regional planning around the issue of passenger-only ferries, and found it was appropriate for the Regional Council to undertake a study. The Board asked staff to prepare a scope of work and budget estimate for a Regional Passenger-Only Ferry Study. In consultation with staff from Washington State Ferries, King County DOT, Kitsap Transit, Cascadia Center, and the Legislature's Joint Transportation Committee, PSRC staff prepared a scope of work and budget for the study, which were approved by the PSRC Executive Board in June 2006. A consultant was selected and work began in early 2007.

### Outcomes Sought by the Study

The study will provide the technical basis to strengthen **Destination 2030** policies, programs, projects, and criteria by improving:

1. Coordination of state, regional, and local ferry system investments
2. Integration of ferry operations with transit, roadway, and non-motorized improvements
3. Guidance for ferry-oriented development and land use near ferry terminals
4. Planning to address local land use and transportation impacts in ferry terminal communities
5. The technical capabilities in the area of ferry system demand forecasting, and travel demand modeling and analysis, that will aid in prioritization of projects and programs

### Planning Tasks and Status

The following are the planning tasks to be accomplished by the study:

**TASK 1: Project management and coordination** – This task established roles and responsibilities and methods of communication between the consultant and PSRC.

**Status:** Ongoing.

**TASK 2: Synthesis of existing information** – This task reviewed and synthesized key findings from numerous past and ongoing POF studies in the Puget Sound region.

**Status:** Complete. See PSRC website: [www.psrc.org/projects/ferry/index.htm](http://www.psrc.org/projects/ferry/index.htm)

**TASK 3: Summary of issues and trends of the auto and passenger-only ferry system** – Task 3 included a synthesis of information from Task 2 and preparation of a white paper explaining the state of POF in the region and identifying obstacles and opportunities.

**Status:** Complete. See [www.psrc.org/projects/ferry/index.htm](http://www.psrc.org/projects/ferry/index.htm)

**TASK 4: Policy analysis and assessment of PSRC roles in passenger-only ferries** – Task 4 reviewed the existing regional planning, policy, and funding context for POF and identified possible expanded regional roles to support POF.

**Status:** Complete. See [www.psrc.org/projects/ferry/index.htm](http://www.psrc.org/projects/ferry/index.htm)

**TASK 5: Market analysis and preparation of POF demand forecasts** – Task 5 reviewed current models used to forecast travel demand (PSRC and WSF models), and developed refined regional demand forecasts for POF. The task produced forecasts in four major POF market areas: South Sound, Central Sound, North Sound, and Lake Washington.

**Status:** Complete (report combined with Task 6). See [www.psrc.org/projects/ferry/index.htm](http://www.psrc.org/projects/ferry/index.htm)

**TASK 6: Regional POF travel demand modeling** – Using the output of Task 5, this task produced updated regional model results for potential POF routes. Building on the results of the POF advisory committee meetings in July and December 2007, this task evaluated 32 existing and potential future POF routes. The initial list of 32 routes were evaluated and reduced to 14 for more detailed analysis. A set of route evaluation criteria were then applied to test the feasibility of routes on a wide range of factors, such as daily ridership; highway, transit, bike and pedestrian access; parking; terminal siting; land use and community factors; navigational issues; cost; and environmental issues.

**Status:** Draft report complete (report combined with task 5). Results of the route evaluation process will be discussed at the next Project Advisory Committee meeting, scheduled for Wednesday April 16. See [www.psrc.org/projects/ferry/index.htm](http://www.psrc.org/projects/ferry/index.htm)

**TASK 7: Peer assessment:** Review other passenger ferry systems and evaluate how they might be applied here in the Central Puget Sound Region.

**Status:** Draft report complete. Results will be discussed at the next Project Advisory Committee meeting, scheduled for Wednesday April 16. The report presents comparative information for the following passenger ferry systems: (1) Sydney, Australia; (2) Casco Bay – Portland, Maine; (3) San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA); (4) Vallejo, California Bay Link; (5) NY Water Taxi; (6) Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority; (7) Kitsap Transit Bremerton-Port Orchard-Annapolis foot ferry; (8) Vashon-Seattle POF; and (9) Elliott Bay Water Taxi. See [www.psrc.org/projects/ferry/index.htm](http://www.psrc.org/projects/ferry/index.htm)

**TASK 8: Develop regional POF strategy** – This report will examine and recommend POF routes and landing sites as well as vessel and terminal needs required to support them.

**Status:** Draft report underway. Preliminary results will be discussed at the meeting on April 16. See [www.psrc.org/projects/ferry/index.htm](http://www.psrc.org/projects/ferry/index.htm)

**TASK 9: Integrate POF strategy with Destination 2030** – This task will evaluate and develop strategies for integrating POF service into the regional transportation plan – **Destination 2030**.

**Status:** Preliminary work is underway to identify landside access issues and improvements needed to support the most promising POF routes identified in Tasks 6 and 8. Meetings were held in Kitsap County (March 19) and King County (April 8) with transit agencies, city and county staff, ports, and others. (Report is not yet available on PSRC website).

**Project Completion Target:** June 30, 2008

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