

San Juan Islands Task Force

FAC Discussion

December 16, 2016



San Juan Islands Outreach Process

- August outreach
 - Meetings with local officials, FAC, and tourism industry reps.
 - Community meetings on San Juan, Orcas, Shaw and Lopez islands attended by 200+ people.
- Internal task force formed to respond to comments
- Ongoing discussions with FAC
- Draft recommendations presented to Lynne and directors on 12/15



Task Force Goals and Guidelines

Goal:

To determine operational and/or policy changes that can be implemented in time for spring 2017 season

Guidelines:

- Consistency
- Easy to communicate
- Transparency
- Budget constrained
- Focus on “quick wins” now



Task Force Work To Date

- Mtg #1: Categorized comments from community
 - Issues requiring further discussion
 - Issues related to sailing schedule
 - Issues to be answered in a FAQ
- Mtg #2: Identified priority issues
- Mtg #3: Review data and develop draft recommendations



Priority Issues

Issue	What we heard from the community
30-minute arrival window	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is lingering frustration with the 30-minute arrival policy• Concern over commercial vehicles having to adhere to 30-minute rule
Standby space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase standby space for last minute travel needs. Specifically, consider allocating 20% of sailings for standbys in off-season.• Residents not utilizing standby space due to lack of predictability, time to wait for next sailing is too long if they don't get on.
Customer reservation experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Call center challenges including difficulty getting through by phone when new reservations are released and long wait times.• Frustration over ongoing problems with reservations website and mobile app.
Email alerts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the policy on email alerts when a boat breaks down? Accuracy and timeliness of alerts is inconsistent.

Customer reservation experience

What we heard from the community:

- Call center challenges including difficulty getting through by phone when new reservations are released and long wait times.
- Frustration over ongoing problems with reservations website and mobile app.

Problem Statement:

The San Juan Island community has expressed concern about long wait times preventing customers from reaching the WSF call center by phone, particularly when a new tier of reservations are released. Related to this is frustration with the reservations website and mobile app—it can take up to 30 minutes to make a reservation at busy times, with some customers getting booted out of the system mid-transaction.



Customer reservation experience

Call Center volume:

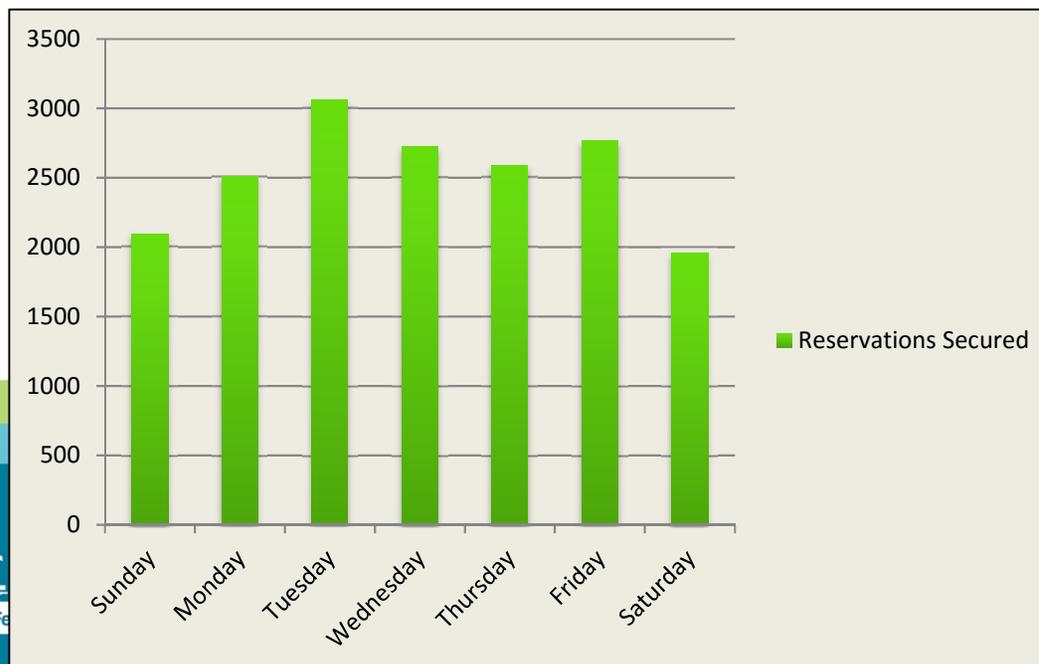
- Call volume increased by 185% since 2014 due to reservations in San Juans.
- Call center staffing was increased by only 33% in 2014 but that increase will be lost in fiscal year 2017 due to call center not being fully funded.
- Limited information available on why people call.



Customer reservation experience

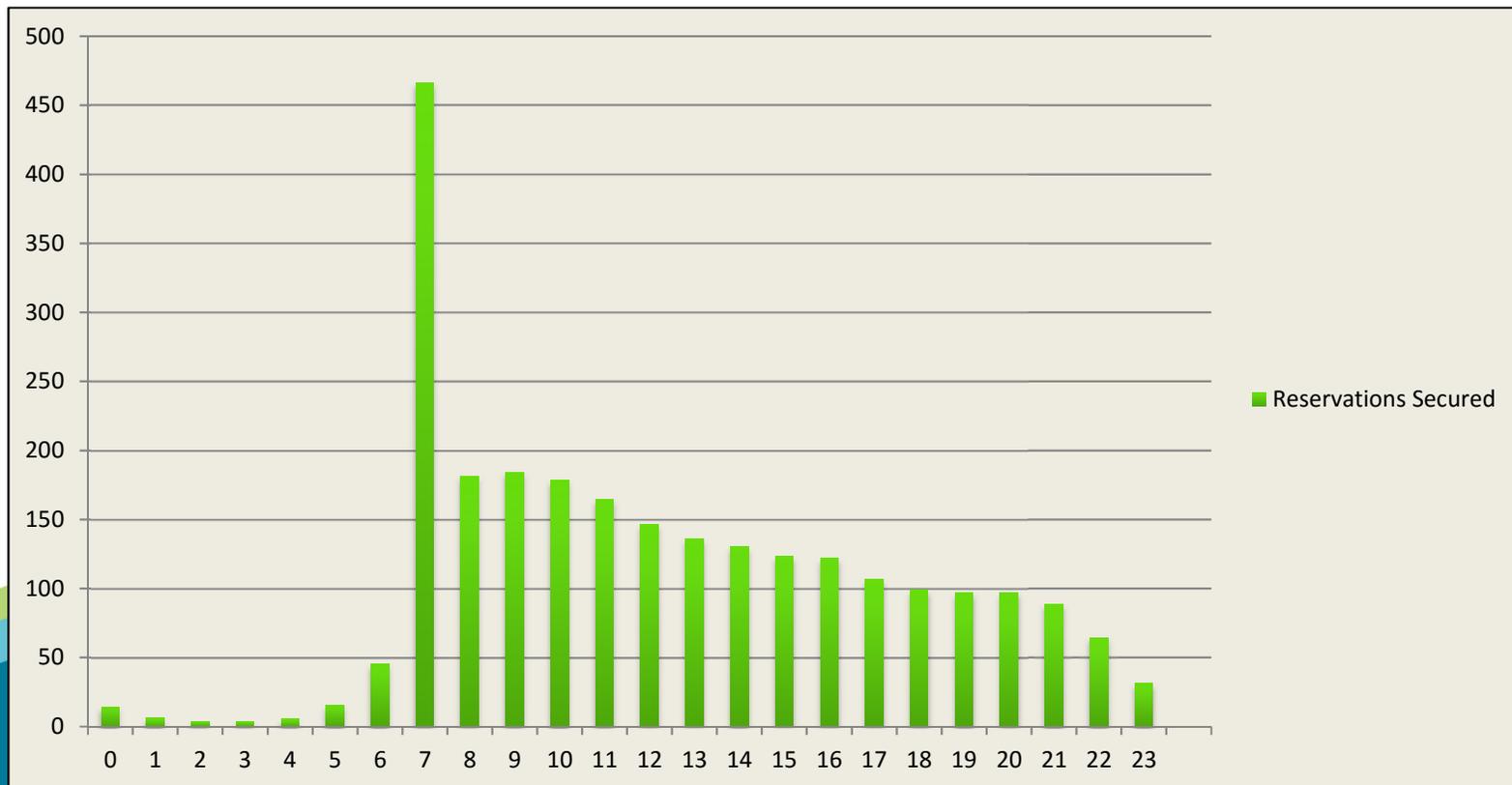
Phone and website reservations secured (April 12 – Sept 4):

- Tuesday is shown as busiest day due to 13,406 reservations being made when we released summer 2016 reservations.
- Wednesdays are typically the busiest for Friday reservations and Fridays for Sunday reservations.



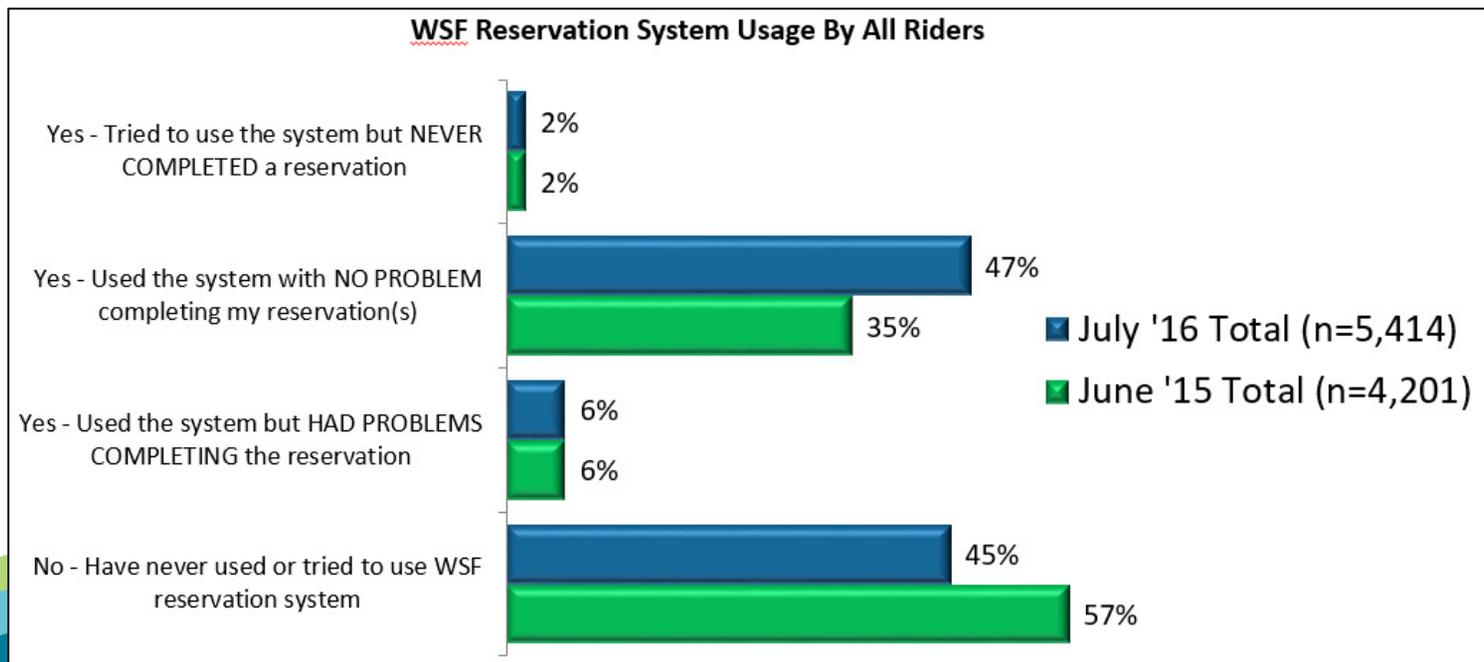
Customer reservation experience

Phone and website reservations secured on average by time of day (April 12 – September 4).



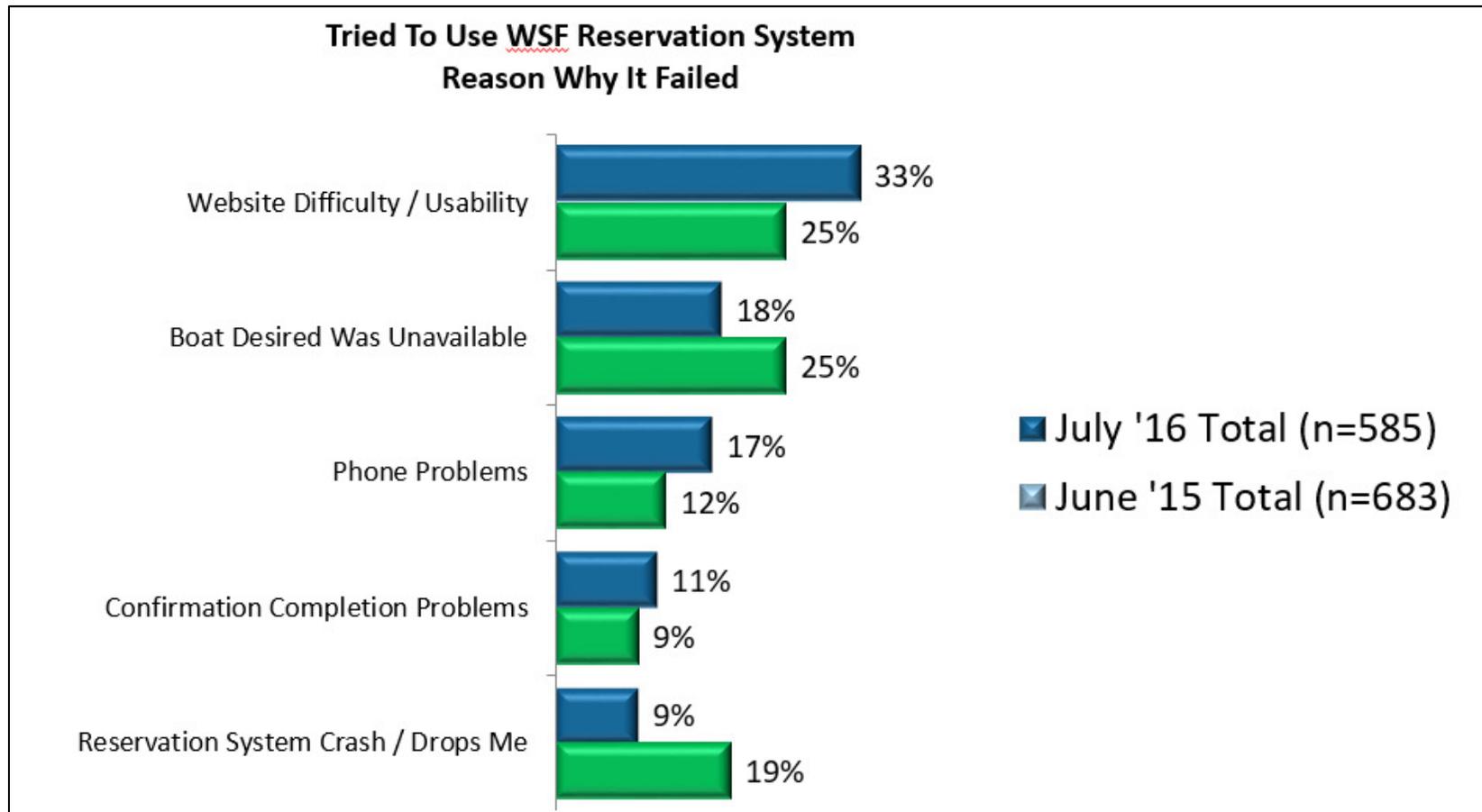
Customer reservation experience

- 86% of those who used the reservation system had no problems completing their reservations.
- 11% of those who used the reservation system had problems completing their reservations.



Source: 2016 FROG Survey

Customer reservation experience



Customer reservation experience

Key findings:

- Lack of data on phone system to analyze call statistics.
- Call center staffing has been severely cut
- Tiered release creates spikes in activity
 - Almost 3x as many reservations are made at 7am than the rest of the day.
 - Over 5x as many reservations made during the release of the summer season than the average made in a single day.
- In 2016, Microsoft reviewed our reservation website and found the below issues:
 - The VRS site currently makes too many requests to the database, which degrades the user experience.
 - The size of each individual VRS web page is too large, causing pages to load slowly.



Customer reservation experience

Recommendation(s)	Timeline	Actions	Requested Exec Decisions
(Short-Term) Realign call center staffing according to call volume and demand	Completed (on-going effort)	n/a	n/a
(Short-Term) Improve phone system to improve customer experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place SureConnect closer to front Evaluate phone center database software capabilities to help with forecasting, staffing levels 	2 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telephony resource to reconfigure SureConnect Engage WSF and WSDOT IT for phone center database evaluation Look at Tolling Division resources 	Concurrence and prioritization of this project
(Short-Term) Develop “makeshift” manual data collection system to gather call center data.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data to inform a white paper requesting additional funds. 	Concurrence and resources
(Short-Term) Implement Microsoft recommendation to improve website client and backend to better utilize existing CPU resources with scalability as the main goal	By spring 2017 sailing season (14 weeks development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development effort by existing IT resource 	Concurrence and prioritization of workload
(Mid-Term) Evaluate reservation demand to identify if the tiered release of reservation space can be spread out over time to eliminate the competitive spikes	6 months to 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify internal resource to lead effort and it fits into the organization RFQ to hire data analyst to review reservation demand Communicate changes to FAC & public prior to implementing 	Concurrence, prioritize workload, and provide funding

Customer reservation experience

Recommendation(s)	Timeline	Actions	Requested Exec Decisions
(Long-Term) Implement Microsoft recommendation to develop new website user interface to better use current technologies and conform to industry standards	18 weeks development + usability testing (as needed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development effort by existing IT resource • Hire testing resource • RFQ for usability testing 	Concurrence, prioritize workload, and provide funding
(Long-Term) Fully fund the WSF reservations program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase call center staffing to meet demand • Reinstate Reservation Mgr to better facilitate online reservations and operations at the terminal • Reinstate Reservation Supervisor at Anacortes to answer customer questions and resolve issues on-site • Fund appropriate technology (phone, website, etc.) so that it is responsive to current needs 	FY 2019 and on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop white paper for FY2019 supplemental budget request • Begin legislative outreach and supporting materials 	Concurrence and support white paper

Standby space

What we heard from the community:

- Increase standby space for last minute travel needs. Specifically, consider allocating 20% of sailings for standbys in off-season.
- Residents not utilizing standby space due to lack of predictability, time to wait for next sailing is too long if they don't get on.

Problem Statement:

Is the current standby allocation at an adequate level or should it be modified?



Standby space - % full in off-peak

In May, our average month for the year, only 21% of our sailings are departing full, which means there is sufficient space available for additional drive-up vehicles during those less busy times.

Anacortes- San Juan Islands (does not include A-Sid)	May			Vessels
	Full Sailings	Total Sailings	Percent Full	
Full Sailings (80%)	169	450	37.56%	Elwha, Chelan, Samish, Klahowya, Hyak, Yakima
Full Sailings (90%)	130	450	28.89%	
Full Sailings (95%)	111	450	24.67%	
Full sailings (100%)	95	450	21.11%	

Source: Traffic Stats



Standby space - % full in peak

In August, our busiest month, only 22% of sailings are departing full leaving room for more vehicles.

Anacortes- San Juan Islands (does not include A-Sid)	August			Vessels
	Full Sailings	Total Sailings	Percent Full	
Full Sailings (80%)	274	545	50.28%	Yakima, Samish, Chelan, Elwha, Klahowya
Full Sailings (90%)	209	545	38.35%	
Full Sailings (95%)	172	545	31.56%	
Full sailings (100%)	118	545	21.65%	

Source: Traffic Stats



Standby space - % reserved in peak

August 8-14 reservation statistics (Average all day).

	Mon (8/8)	Tue (8/9)	Wed (8/10)	Thu (8/11)	Fri (8/12)	Sat (8/13)	Sun (8/14)
% of Vessel Reserved	53%	56%	62%	68%	75%	62%	56%
Sailing Reservation No-Show %	11%	16%	14%	14%	18%	14%	14%
% Available for Standby	53%	53%	46%	42%	38%	47%	52%

Source: Reservation Stats



Standby space - % reserved in peak

August 8-14 reservation statistics (Average 9am-9pm).

	Mon (8/8)	Tue (8/9)	Wed (8/10)	Thu (8/11)	Fri (8/12)	Sat (8/13)	Sun (8/14)
% of Vessel Reserved	63%	70%	74%	81%	89%	71%	77%
Sailing Reservation No-Show %	11%	15%	13%	14%	17%	15%	13%
% Available for Standby	44%	41%	30%	31%	27%	40%	37%

Source: Reservation Stats



Standby space

Key findings:

- There is sufficient standby space during the off-peak seasons.
- Staff says there are few complaints related to the lack of standby space; more complaints that there are no reservations to provide customers' desired predictability.
- Terminal staff has voiced that there is typically available standby space on most sailings but customers aren't taking advantage of the current standby allocation; vessels departing with space available.
- Daily average sailing no-show rate of 11-18% increases available standby space beyond originally designed 10% standby levels.
- 10% standby level originally based on medical priority demand. Terminal staff has observed that many medical priorities are now making reservations but no data to validate.



Standby Space - Recommendations

Recommendation(s)	Timeline	Actions	Requested Exec Decisions
(Short Term) No change to current standby allocation through summer 2017	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine how to better communicate available standby space 	Concurrence
(Mid-Term) Evaluate peak season medical priorities and no-show % rates to better identify the demand for non-reserved space	Summer 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify method and staff to head up analysis; Provide specific costs and resources for exec approval 	Concurrence and provide resources
(Long-Term) In an effort to reduce the no-show rate, require customers to purchase their vehicle fare when making a reservation (industry standard)	FY2017 RFP development, implement when Wave2Go system replaced	Add requirements to Wave2Go RFP	Concurrence

30-minute arrival policy

What we heard from the community:

- There is lingering frustration with the 30-minute arrival policy
- Concern over commercial vehicles having to adhere to 30-minute rule

Problem Statement:

How effective was the 30-minute arrival policy for summer 2016 and is it necessary to effectively load our vessels?



30-minute policy – FAC Concerns

FAC key issues with existing policy:

- 1) End-of-line arrival versus ticket-booth
- 2) Clock based versus some event (e.g. start of loading, or previous first-standby)
- 3) If it must be clock-based, how to make allowance for late boats
- 4) To the extent that tall commercials are impacted, how to mitigate that. (Start-of-loading, or first-standby as previously done, would largely resolve that).



30-minute arrival policy

Summer 2016 arrival statistics show that customers continue to arrive late for their sailing.

Terminal	30+ minutes prior to sailing	10-29 minutes prior to sailing	< 10 minutes prior to sailing
Anacortes	84%	14%	2%
Friday Harbor	75%	18%	8%
Orcas	89%	10%	1%

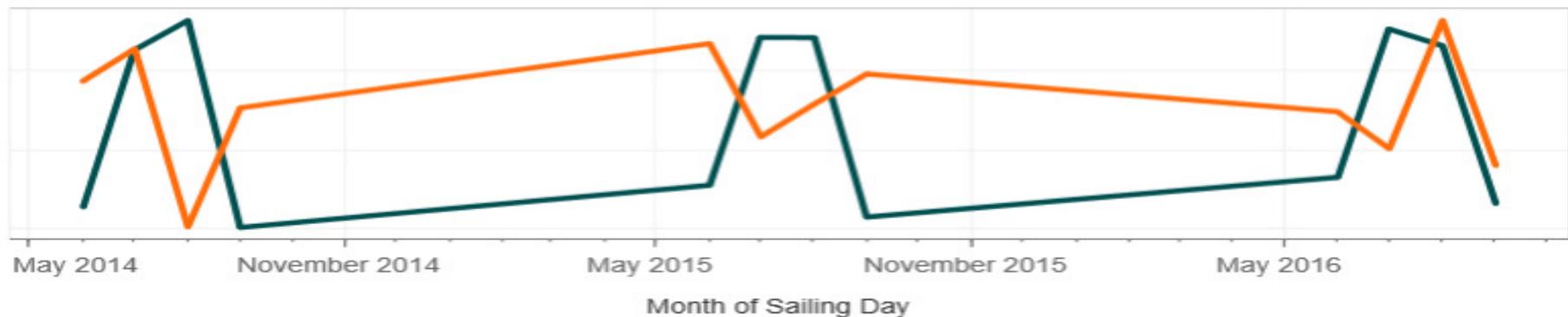
Source: Reservation Stats June-September 2016



30-minute arrival policy

On-Time Performance (OTP) goes down each summer as vehicle ridership increases. OTP has improved with the implementation of the 30-minute arrival policy.

Traffic vs. On Time Performance



On Time (10 Min) Vehicle Traffic



30-minute arrival policy

On-Time Performance (OTP) shows that we have areas of the schedule with insufficient dwell time to manage the demand.

By Time of Day - 2016

Day Of Week	Gran..	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	0
Grand Total	88%	98%	98%	99%	92%	88%	84%	77%	83%	80%	84%	91%	88%	88%	74%	84%	86%	84%	91%	91%	93%	96%
Monday	91%	100%	100%	97%	91%	84%	82%	80%	89%	84%	81%	89%	89%	96%	80%	93%	88%	98%	100%	100%	100%	
Tuesday	91%	100%	100%	99%	91%	80%	75%	78%	86%	85%	81%	99%	97%	91%	97%	100%	96%	88%	100%	93%	93%	
Wednesday	84%	93%	93%	99%	89%	88%	81%	64%	75%	63%	79%	91%	86%	71%	71%	93%	94%	90%	93%	90%	86%	
Thursday	77%	93%	93%	99%	90%	76%	69%	41%	59%	56%	66%	82%	70%	81%	67%	77%	79%	80%	76%	88%	93%	
Friday	88%	100%	100%	99%	89%	93%	90%	84%	82%	80%	90%	87%	94%	94%	69%	88%	85%	81%	70%	83%	90%	
Saturday	95%	100%	100%	100%	98%	96%	95%	91%	93%	95%	95%	93%	97%	93%	89%	91%	94%	95%	100%	85%	89%	96%
Sunday	88%	100%	100%	100%	97%	100%	94%	100%	98%	94%	98%	93%	86%	89%	46%	48%	63%	56%	100%	97%	100%	

30-minute arrival policy

Dwell times (June 12 – September 17, 2016).

- Anacortes Tag Shack communicates load on vessel approach.

Arrive Ana Time	Depart Ana Time	Route	Vessel	Schedule Dwell	Avg Actual Dwell
8:40	9:05	Ana-FH	Samish	25	25
9:10	9:35	Ana-Lo	Elwha	25	23
9:55	10:20	Ana-Sh-Or	Yakima	25	26
11:25	11:55	Ana-FH	Elwha	30	29
12:05	12:35	Ana-Lo-Or	Samish	30	31
13:10	14:00	Ana-FH	Yakima	50	44
14:10	14:50	Ana-Sid	Chelan	40	40
15:10	15:45	Ana-Sh-Or	Samish	35	32
15:20	16:45	Ana-FH	Elwha	85	80

30-minute arrival policy

Key Findings

- Fall 2015 staff surveys identified that late arrivals impact the loading process; some vehicles left behind for multi-destination sailings when space was available.
- 84% of reservation holders are arriving at least 30 minutes prior to sailing.
- On-Time Performance (OTP) decreases as traffic demands increase; need vehicles to arrive earlier in the peak-season to minimize impact on OTP.
- Tourism / Hospitality group prefer having the 30-minute arrival policy as it is easier for them to communicate to the tourists.
- 30-minutes may not be necessary at Friday Harbor & Orcas due to less complicated loading process.



30-minute arrival policy

Terminal & Vessel Crew Feedback

- The 30 minute arrival policy helps vessel crew to prioritize their load with reservation holders, for each destination (for multi-destination stops), tall space and medical priorities (restrooms and elevators).
- More planning time is needed for multi-destination sailings at Anacortes.
- Policy allows terminal to call vehicle counts as vessel approaches.
- Fewer issues of leaving standby vehicles behind for multi-destination sailings due to improved efficiencies.
- Afternoon international sailing will at busy times hold up our domestic reservation customers if they arrive too close to the 30 minute policy (or less).
- Frustration over inconsistency of policy enforcement.



30-minute policy – FAC recommendation

FAC suggested policy:

Customers arriving at the ticket booth after vehicle loading has begun will have their guaranteed space forfeited and be placed in the back of the standby line. To avoid this, reservation holders are urged to arrive at the back of the line approaching the ticket booth 30-90 minutes prior to the scheduled departure time. During the busiest part of the summer schedule, arrival 45-90 minutes in advance of the sailing time may be necessary.



30-minute arrival policy

Recommendation(s)	Timeline	Actions	Requested Exec Decisions
(Short Term) Continue to require 30 minute arrival policy westbound from Anacortes	February 2017 (for spring reservations being released)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update website communication Ongoing monitoring to ensure policy is being consistently followed Better communicate reason for the policy 	Concurrence
(Short-Term) Evaluate whether Friday Harbor and Orcas could go to a shorter arrival policy (e.g. 20 minutes)	February 2017 (for spring reservations being released)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get concurrence from Orcas; confirm with Friday Harbor Consider future implications of this policy change (i.e. ridership increases, changes to sailing schedule) Update website communication Communicate publicly on policy change and reason for change 	Concurrence
(Mid-Term) Evaluate the San Juan Island sailing schedule to create more realistic schedules and dwell times for the vessels that will be operating on this multi-destination route, including looking at more separation in the international and domestic sailings.	Fall 2017 for implementation summer 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create Sailing Schedule Strategy Team to evaluate schedule Reevaluate 30-minute policy 	Concurrence and convene strategy team
(Mid-Term) Develop/clarify policy for commercial vehicles	Spring/Summer 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task force conduct focus group discussions with commercial operators 	Concurrence

Email alerts

What we heard from the community:

- What is the policy on email alerts when a boat breaks down?
- Accuracy and timeliness of alerts is inconsistent.

Problem Statement:

The SJI community wants to be better informed when vessels are running late, particularly because they are required to arrive at the terminal 30 minutes prior to their scheduled reservation time.



Email alerts

Current alert process:

- Vessel or terminal crews notify Ops Center of a late running vessel
- Ops Center notifies the Web Agents
- Web Agents send out email alert

Key Discoveries:

- Vessel crew mistakenly believed that On Time Performance stats automatically generated an alert when a vessel is running late.
- Ops Center is inconsistently notified
- Vessel Watch is not an accurate tool to generate alerts



Email alerts - Recommendation

Recommendation	Timeline	Actions	Exec Decisions
<p>Develop a better procedure for notifying the public when vessels are running late.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have vessel crew notify the Ops Center via 800 mHz when the vessel is running 15 or more minutes late and can't make up the time• Ops Center to notify the Web Agent on duty, who sends email alert to the public	Immediately	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Send Quick Notice to vessel crews• Communicate policy change to Ops Center and Web Agents	Concurrence



Email alerts – 30-minute arrival

Key Discoveries:

- Operationally, shifting the arrival window is difficult to execute, and there is no reliable, consistent and uniform way to communicate a shift in the arrival window to everyone who may be affected.
- A shifting of the arrival window was never clearly codified or communicated to all customers in writing, even though it was communicated to some verbally and an informal “shifting” was taking place at the terminals.



Email alerts – 30-minute arrival

Challenges:

- While a vessel may arrive late to its destination, accurately predicting when the vessel will depart after adequate dwell time is extraordinarily difficult.
- Inaccurate predictions will lead to inefficiencies and extra delay at the terminals.
- There is no reliable, consistent uniform way to execute a shift in the arrival window internally.
- Even if the arrival window was shifted, not all reservation holders would be made aware of this fact.



Email alerts – 30 minute arrival recommendation

Recommendation	Timeline	Actions	Exec Decisions
Do not formally adopt any shifting of the 30-minute arrival window.	Spring 2017 (1 season's advance notice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Communicate the policy and rationale to the public	Concurrence



Next Steps

