

# **ATTACHMENT E**

John Clauson, executive director of Kitsap Transit started the meeting with a thank you to all who came out to join in a discussion to help them improve on the systems in place as we move forward.

He said given the # of attendees it was not practical to begin with a free-flowing discussion. Ultimately, they want to have discussions on the hot button issues, and from that discussion hopefully have that lead to productive solutions to focus on.

Through the feedback they've been receiving they identified 6 main topics for discussion and posters were placed around the room for each of those topics. Each of the attendees pick a topic of most interest to them to have discussion on ideas and concerns. Each attendee was given a set of 3 stickers to use on each of the topic posters to "vote" on which was the most urgent/pressing topics to address. You could place as many of your stickers on any topic poster you chose, and placing the sticker does not mean that you support the topic, just that you feel it is a hot button issue that needs to be addressed

The 6 topic posters were:

1. Penalizing No Shows
2. No reservations (getting rid of a reservation system)
3. Reservation Software (should Kitsap change to a different software)
4. Cancellation Window (should the window be shortened)
5. Convenience Fee (should a fee be charged to make reservations)
6. Allocation of Reservations (should reservations be allocated in a different way)

There was also a "Parking Lot" board – which was a blank sheet where those who wanted to bring up issues or points of discussion that don't fall under the 6 suggested categories.

John Clauson said at the end of this, they will get a summary sent out to the attendees

John Clauson said with the arrival of the 2<sup>nd</sup> vessel, what we are waiting for is a paperwork issue with the manufacturer. They had paperwork sent in that certified the vessel as a different class than it needs to be. So, they are working on getting it recertified as the correct class of vessel. After that is complete, they have to get the Coast Guard to come out to approve the certification of the crew that operates the vessel. Coast Guard requires on each vessel that MSA's (the staff/crew) demonstrate proficiency to operate the vessel and execute emergency procedures. Once that is complete the Reliance will become the primary vessel and the RP1 will be the back up

John said this summer the Lady Swift arrives. On this vessel they won't have to go through some of the documentation issues for class like they are currently doing with the Reliance but will still need to have the Coast Guard approval process completed with the crew on this vessel. As soon as they have the fleet of 3 they will take RP1 out of service to get it into the shop. We have been running it very hard, although the maintenance crew has been doing a phenomenal job to keep it safe and running, it is due for some extra TLC. In addition to mechanical maintenance they will be doing some cosmetic repairs and refreshing the paint so it will have the same paint job as the other vessels. Once it is out of the shipyard and repairs are complete, that is the point that we will put the 2<sup>nd</sup> vessel into operation. The bottom line is that we have too many riders for too few seats. We are hoping that adding the second vessel will help with that to some degree. But we predict it still won't be enough. When you look that the last

Bremerton foot ferry operation, they had a boat that carried 350 passengers, but still had to turn away riders. The obstacle we face today is due to the erosion concerns in Rich Passage, we are limited on the # of seats that are even possible to have on the vessels approved for high speeds in Rich Passage. The scientists that work with transit have been studying wakes in rich passage and they are the ones who can approve how many trips in a week we can make with our vessels. They will be expanding their scope with wake gauges to get more detail and better monitor the impacts of 2 vessels running at once. First and foremost, we want to ensure we aren't damaging environment with these ferry runs. Secondly if someone does try to claim we are doing damage or doing something wrong, we need to be able to show we've done due diligence and have the science to demonstrate we're watching the impacts of our operations.

We have 88 reservable seats, which is 75% of the ferry's capacity. 440 users compete for 264 seats each month It is no wonder we are having problems. As soon as reservations are opened for the month, within 5 to 10 minutes they are gone. Despite demand we are still seeing too many seats left empty. Out of the 15K seats available almost 1000 were not filled on peak sailings. We are at 95% capacity on peak sailings. 40-50% of reservations not redeemed. Currently no incentives or penalizations for no shows.

We have a high rate of empty seats when the ferry leaves the dock, despite having all reservations booked and a long walk up line – likely due to high no show rate.

John said they became aware of a particular rider who had somehow booked 6 seats for one sailing, but only checked in with 3 people. We need to come up with a method to reduce the # of empty seats. We're not saying that you are all "bad" - but there are situations like this that may be part of the problem. Then there is the issue of when customers check in without a barcode. Unfortunately, the way the system is set up right now they can't reconcile the reservation list against the list of check ins. Without that info we can't look at patterns or users that are causing the high no show rate. This is something that is being worked out right now so that the two lists will be able to be blended together to show which are the no shows. Crews will be able to manually check in people to get a complete and accurate accounting of the no shows to help identify the problem.

John went through several slides of data, including some comments from surveys they've taken. There have been a number of suggestions on how to handle the problems with this system, including getting rid of the reservation system, or charging a convenience fee.

\*At this point, while John showed a slide about Discontinuing the Reservation System a rider in the meeting called out "How many of you want reservations to stay?". Many hands shot up- John Clauson asked that we please hold all questions or comments for the moment, as open discussion will come later.

Clauson said what they seem to be hearing is that the people who can never seem to get reservations want to cancel the system and the folks who use the reservation system are adamant about keeping it.

Since there are some who are for getting rid of the reservations, maybe that is something that they can test when adding the 2<sup>nd</sup> ferry sailing in peak times. Maybe don't do reservations for the 2<sup>nd</sup> sailing to test how that works.

Other feedback we are getting says the cancellation window should be shortened to less than 2 hours and there needs to be an easier way to cancel single reservations without the risk of accidentally cancelling multiple reservations at once.

We know we won't have the perfect system- and may never have the perfect system because the needs for our system are so unique. When you buy a concert ticket or game ticket it is for a 1 day event not five days a week for a whole month at the same time. They looked at other systems, but at the time Rocket Rez was the best system they could find to address the specific needs. They were originally set up for dinner cruise reservations and have really tried to work with us and adapt to our needs. Part of what needs to be determined going forward is should we continue to work with what we have, or should we scrap it and do something different?

Curtis Pierce is the principal in charge of the FourNines project. The project was engaged last year to do a study of reservation system. Curtis said one of the first things that John mentioned is that people focus a lot on the reservation system but the fundamental problem we really have is the lack of seats. Hopefully the 2<sup>nd</sup> vessel will relieve a fair amount of that, but it won't meet demand. That fundamental problem will not solve that problem. Technical improvements may improve the user experience, but they don't result in more people getting reservations. If you change the process you need to recognize that all that is changing is who gets the reservations not the # of people who get on the boat.

Research quickly showed that off-the-shelf systems don't seem to fit. Ticketmaster can handle mass reservations that scales really well for large venues and events, but they don't have users booking 20 of the same seats every day, at various times, every month. That is the problem they run into applying traditional reservation systems. Booking a ticket/seat for a single day event vs a single user making 20-40 bookings a month is a very different process, and requires very different software. One critical difference from other reservation sites is that they are designed to sell the ticket at time of booking the reservation. You actually purchase at the same time you book your seat with most models. It is a very different thing to have a reservation system like this that doesn't connect to purchase. They looked at vendors that were possible replacements for Rocket Res, but nothing fit without significant expense for customizations. So, it was recommended that Kitsap Transit focus spending such funds on increasing service vs building custom software.

One of the results of the FourNines project was that they did recommend a convenience fee. The public service is the ride. The reservation is a value on top of that service. It is value added above public service of just the ride. It just gives the certainty to the rider. A convenience fee recognizes the value of that certainty of a seat. This value is recognized enough amongst riders that even those whose transit costs are paid by employers were willing to pay out of pocket for the value of service

The opposite of that was penalizing no shows. The only way to do that would be to have a card on file for the charge. The whole system is not in PCI scope and as soon as you have to bring the system into the PCI scope, it becomes extremely more expensive. (Payment Card Industry) A hundred-thousand-dollar system becomes a Million dollar system very quickly with the addition of that ability to take & store payment information. Also, because the card information on file must be held, it further increases risks with personal data, and then you run into issues with expiring cards that can't be charged when a fee is due, etc. Then if someone doesn't get properly checked in and gets charged for no-show, then they have to figure out refunds.

Carla Sawyer Moderated the following discussion:

(Note: **each bullet point is a comment summary from a rider/attendee at the meeting**):

The top “hot topic” from the 6 was: Reservation System.

Carla asked the group how many a “for” keeping the reservation system? What looked like a majority of hands went up, and then she asked: how many think we should do walk –ups only and get rid of the reservations? A small handful of hands went up

- The reservation system only benefits those who can consistently get reservations.
- When looking at the allocation of reservations – it is affected by all the site delays and issues. You may increase fairness with a more user-friendly site
- We need to recognize that even the people who do regularly use the reservation system don’t get it all the reservations they need. You might get as many as 3 weeks, but rarely does anyone get all the sailings they need. And some months are worse than others. Once I only got 1 week, 1 way for the whole month
- When you are in the walk-up line, it’s hard to tell if it’s worth it to wait, as many wait only to be turned away but you don’t know where that cut off will be with no-shows.
- I get 1 or 3 weeks most per month, often only getting one direction.

Carla asked, is it fair to say then that you are not opposed to a reservation system entirely, it’s that the current system in place should go because it doesn’t work? The attendees who were against the reservation system seemed to agree with this statement.

Carla Sawyer then asked the group – for those of you who do use the reservation system, do you agree that most of you do not get the reservations you need for the month? Majority of hands went up to agree that most people don’t get consistent reservations that they need each month. Carla then asked the group, when that happens, what do you do to fill those gaps for days you don’t have a reservation?

- Make another choice - usually take the WSF because I can’t gamble on a walk up.
- It depends on the day whether you try WSF, or if you have time to wait for a walk-up spot, or if you’re able to ask another rider for their reservation.
- Depends on the day, but usually try for WSF so I don’t risk not making a walk up

Curtis Pierce said he wanted to clarify in response to the feedback about the FourNines, study there is nobody who thinks the reservation system is working as it should. They spent a lot of time monitoring it and looking at it. They also went online on reservation day trying to get tickets to see what users are experiencing, so we apologize if that message didn’t come across. They also apologize for the word “hoarding” as that was not meant to be used to imply the riders are wrong or bad. But when there are empty seats they need to solve that – the demand is there, so we need to make sure the seats are being filled.

- We see turn-aways more often than empty seats. So, it is strange to hear you say we have so many empty seats on sailings, because riders are not seeing empty seats except on Fridays.

- I take the 645 and it is not full all the time – there are often a couple of seats open, but not many. The 625pm there always seems to be a couple of seats. But the 510 is always full.
- It's frustrating to wait in the walk-up line and see there are no available reservations online, yet there are empty seats on the 625p. It shouldn't matter if it's a Friday - If there is 100 percent demand then regardless of some no shows then seats should be full.

John Clauson said he rides the ferry occasionally and in talking to those in the no reservation line it seems riders have this magic point in line length where they assume they won't get in line. If they see the line is to a certain length, then they walk away rather than wait. There is only so many ppl in the queue who are ready to take an empty seat from a no show

- One of the things to consider in reducing empty seats is timing of the sailings. Why wait for the 645 walk up when you can take the WSF 620. To stand a good chance of getting in the walk-up line you'd have to show up around that time anyway, so makes sense to just take the FREE WSF ride that arrives at basically the same time. it's not just about reservations it's also about timing of the ferries
- When you are talking about this topic in particular it seems like you are focusing on the wrong goal and using the wrong words. Instead of talking about penalizing no shows, the focus should be about improving/increasing rider experience to reduce empty seats.

Carla Sawyer read some of the Post-it note suggestions from the poster: "create an upfront CC account to charge for no shows", "reward high show riders with priority on reservations", "why not charge orca cards with reservation site"

- The site is not secure for even the basic personal information we put into it currently, so how could we trust the site to do any of that? The server apparently can't even handle the reservations being booked how can we trust it to process charges associated with reservations? There are too many concerns about accuracy and security to be ok with that
- It's about confidence in software. And accuracy in knowing who is a true no-show. You can't tell currently with any accuracy who are the no show people - so how are you going to charge people accurately?

John Clauson said they are actively working on that system to improve accuracy of knowing the no show rate, and seeing a list of people who aren't using their reservations. Perhaps the word choice of penalizing is not the right word, we are not trying to villainize you.

- Back to the magic point in the walk-up line - We walk up and see the length of the line then we assume we are not going to get on the boat. There's no magic solutions for that – people are going to be discouraged by long lines with no guarantee of boarding, so we may always have some of that – which may mean we do have empty seats because people give up
- Here we are talking about ways to fix certain problems, but we don't have real data on what is causing the empty seat issue: there is no reporting available from Rocket Res to be able to draw the right conclusions. We're left to make assumptions that Rocket Res is even recording the reservations made accurately. I know some of us are willing to bet that Rocket Res isn't actually giving out as many reservations as the system shows – showing "Walk Ups Only" when there ARE reservations available.

- We can't even identify a no-show user with the current system, and cross check the rider list with the reservation list for each sailing - that is a huge tech problem
- If you shorten the Cancellation window and make it easier to cancel you will be able improve the no-show rate.
- If you made it easier to cancel you will get more same day reservations made. 2 hours is way too long of a window
- I can't log into the site on my phone- for some reason it blocks me. So, if someone did cancel last minute, I couldn't pick up the reservation from my phone.
- Perhaps a standby notification for cancelled reservations could go out? If you couldn't make a reservation for a particular sailing maybe it gives you the option to enroll in notifications for that specific time/date – and when a cancellation is made a notification goes out to the standby list so they could grab that open reservation
- Seems like all of these issues we are describing could easily be solved by technology, so I don't understand the statement claiming the Fast Ferry issues can't be solved with Tech

Curtis Pierce said that what was said about technology not being able to fix the fast ferry issues may have been misinterpreted. He said what he had intended to communicate with that was that technology is not going to fix the fact that we don't have enough seats- which is the root of the problems.

Technology absolutely can fix many user experience issues we are describing.

- If I realize my bus is late or I have to work late 30 minutes before my sailing there should be an easy way to release that reservation so someone is able to grab my seat online.
- We have to be able to penalize the bad actors. People aren't showing up when they have no skin in the game. I recently saw 25 reservation people show up for a fully booked 625pm sailing. It was a Friday, but that shouldn't matter. The fact these reservations are not being canceled so someone else can use them is unacceptable.
- It seems that, sure, there are probably some truly bad actors in all of this causing some problems. But it seems strange seeing that all of us know just how valuable those reservations are, how prized they are, but somehow so many are not being used?
- I don't trust the cancellation system right now. I've tried to cancel a single reservation before, only to find it cancelled a whole week's worth of reservations – then I couldn't get them back. I won't risk that again.
- I think even most of us who don't trust the system for cancellations, or miss the cancellation window, do try to keep those reservations in circulation by giving them to another rider. We know they are valuable so it doesn't seem accurate that so many are really just not bothering to show up.
- A rider said he tracked and tallied his own missed reservations. Over 75% of the reservation he missed were completely outside of his control. 50% of the time was due to a Kitsap transit bus being late, and even a failure of the Kitsap transit bus driver to communicate to the dock about having a reservation rider on board. Others he missed due to work escalations or sickness well within that 2 hour window.
- Going back to the reservation system not working for a lot of riders needed, it is easier to book consistent sailing times for a whole week rather wasting time picking individual days. The system caters to those who need consistent days rather than picking specific days, and so there

may be folks who go on and book whole blocks of reservations where they really only need a couple of those days

- Also, when you are rushing to make reservations before they sell out if you are trying to book specific times, you can easily accidentally get confused on which days or times you've already booked, then you go back and realize you have duplicates you don't need.
- There should be a Calendar view under "My Account" to view your reservations. Then you could see more easily what you do and don't already have booked, rather than sifting through the list in "my account".
- I've also cancelled reservations and then the system still shows me as "maxed" out for the day, even though I really only have 1 reservation for the day – but the system won't let me make another. Tried to follow up to resolve it with Kitsap to fix it the right way, but when that went nowhere created a dummy account, secondary account. A lot of the things we are doing like creating dummy accounts or sharing reservations is just so we can solve our own issues since we aren't able to effectively do it with in the system

Carla Sawyer asked the group how many have 2 reservation accounts to work around system limitations? Several folks raised their hands.

- We're not making these accounts to hoard reservations, it's just so we can actually get reservations we need when the system doesn't work
- I'm almost always arriving close to the 10-minute reservation cut off for the 625 and 75% of the time we are at 35 or 42 of the 88 reservations at that 10-minute window. There is clearly something wrong.
- I'm also one of those ppl who barely makes the 10-minute cut off – and the 60s seems to be the highest I've ever seen for reservations redeemed on the 355pm. Which is why the walk on line gets so long. Rocket Res shows no last-minute reservation available, and without fail the last reservation boarding pass claimed is no higher than 65
- That goes back to having a software that will allow reporting, and will allow last minute cancellations
- We don't believe the system is truly booking 88. And when people do cancel in time, I don't think the system is necessarily processing those cancellations properly to open it up for another rider to take
- I go for the 645am reservations and within 3 seconds it shows "walk ups only" – then you go back and –wait now suddenly some are available. Makes it easy for accidental double bookings and makes you wonder how often Rocket Res shows us "walk ups only" when there are reservations available.

Carla Sawyer asked the group to clarify: you are saying that part of the problem might not be actual no-shows – that Rocket Res never actually gave out all 88 reservations? How many suspect that is a factor? Several people raised their hands

- I've also notice that the 3rd week of the month is a common error loop we get stuck in. Where you try to book for the 3 week, but it loops you to the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the month instead and you can easily accidentally end up booking the 2nd week twice



- And there was one month where it seemed none of us had reservations. In talking together and on the FB group it seems like no one had reservations for a certain period- how were they sold out then? Who had them?
- Many of us try to share to put them back into the pool of users when we can't use the reservations we have. We do try to keep the reservations in use
- From a taxpayer stance we need to be collecting a fee for empty seats. Money should be collected for this service, so people who aren't showing up should be paying for that lost revenue.

John Clauson before this meeting wraps up, let's take a moment to look at the "Parking lot" of comments for things that weren't in the main topic posters we tried to cover. One of the big ones written on that board is about Southworth. To give you an update, the boats are under construction – things are moving forward but we don't yet have firm dates to provide. It will be 2020 – but won't say yet what month to expect that as delays and setbacks can happen.

John said in response to the comments that were made about security in taking payments, and processing Orca with reservations. The orca system is very secure, so secure in fact we don't get to even look at the orca data, so the 2 systems can't be linked

Clauson thanked everyone for taking time out of their day to come out and participate in this discussion. He thanked Chris who shared with him some different options and information and thank you to Jerry who sent an email that laid out a very well thought comments on the whole system. Lastly, we do apologize again for villainizing riders in the terms we've used like "hoarding" - that was not our intent. We do value you and the efforts you make to have your voices heard.