



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Kitsap Transit, King County Marine Division work together to launch fast-ferry service between Kitsap Peninsula and downtown Seattle

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SEATTLE – King County Executive Dow Constantine welcomed elected officials from Kitsap County today at Colman Dock in Seattle after the ceremonial first sailing of Kitsap Transit’s fast ferry, setting the stage for the launch of fast-ferry service this summer between Bremerton and downtown Seattle.

Just before 11 a.m. today, Constantine welcomed Bremerton Mayor Patty Lent and Kitsap Transit Board Chair Rob Putaansuu to Seattle as their Kitsap County delegation arrived on the Rich Passage 1. The 118-passenger foil-assisted catamaran is the first of six Kitsap Transit vessels envisioned to support fast-ferry service on three routes between the Kitsap Peninsula and downtown Seattle.

In November, Kitsap County voters approved a local sales-tax increase to support fast ferries. Since then, Kitsap Transit has been working to develop an agreement with King County Marine Division to operate and maintain the Rich Passage 1 and future vessels. Both parties anticipate their legislative bodies will execute an agreement in the spring.

“King County Marine Division has demonstrated its expertise through its operation of the King County Water Taxi and has the marine infrastructure to support passenger-only ferry services,” said Putaansuu, who is also Port Orchard’s mayor. “With a strong operating partner, Kitsap Transit can continue to deliver reliable service to our commuter base and usher in a new chapter for inter-county transit in Kitsap County.”

The King County Water Taxi connects West Seattle and Vashon Island to the Seattle waterfront and hit a new record for ridership in 2016. Unimpeded by road closures, the water taxi operates with 99.9 percent trip reliability and on-time performance of more than 98 percent. The 278-passenger Sally Fox serves the Vashon Island route, while the 278-passenger Doc Maynard and 147-passenger Spirit of Kingston serve the West Seattle route.

“The new Kitsap fast ferry will knit together Central Puget Sound counties across our vast inland waters, just as light rail will soon unite the region by land,” Constantine said. “The same talented King County

marine staff that delivers safe, fast and reliable service each day to Vashon Island and West Seattle will soon connect both sides of Puget Sound.”

During Wednesday’s media event, elected officials from both counties toured the Marine Division’s water taxi moorage and maintenance facility at Pier 48, just south of Colman Dock.

Built by Portland, Ore.-based Vigor Shipyards, the facility began operations in 2013. Up to four vessels can be moored to the barge. King County employs a licensed marine engineer and oilers to do maintenance work, including engine repairs, oil changes, and passenger-cabin upkeep; the maintenance staff is expected to grow as Kitsap Transit rolls out its fast-ferry service.

Both agencies will work closely to ensure Kitsap Transit’s fast ferries don’t disrupt the King County Water Taxi’s operations. The Rich Passage 1, which had four months of trial service in 2012, is anticipated to make the trip in about a half-hour, which would cut in half the time it currently takes to make the crossing on large auto ferries operated by Washington State Ferries.

“It’s taken us well over a decade to reach this point of launching fast ferries again between the Kitsap Peninsula and King County,” said Bremerton Mayor Lent. “I am so proud of our Kitsap County voters for their foresight in funding a locally controlled fast-ferry service.”

Kitsap Transit plans to launch fast-ferry service from Kingston in July 2018 and from Southworth in July 2020. There are no existing ferry services connecting Kingston and Southworth with downtown Seattle.

Kitsap Transit does not have vessels yet for those routes and anticipates putting out a request for bids in the spring to design and build bow-loading vessels that can pull directly into the same slips used by Washington State Ferries.

Both agencies are coordinating closely with Washington State Ferries, which this year will begin replacing old and seismically vulnerable parts of Colman Dock, WSF’s largest ferry terminal.

In August, the King County Water Taxi will temporarily shift operations to the north edge of Colman Dock to allow construction of a new Water Taxi facility on Colman Dock’s south edge. The new facility, which is expected to open in 2019, will include a shelter capable of queuing about 500 passengers and be connected to Colman Dock via an overhead pedestrian bridge (see enclosed renderings from King County by architecture firm SRG).

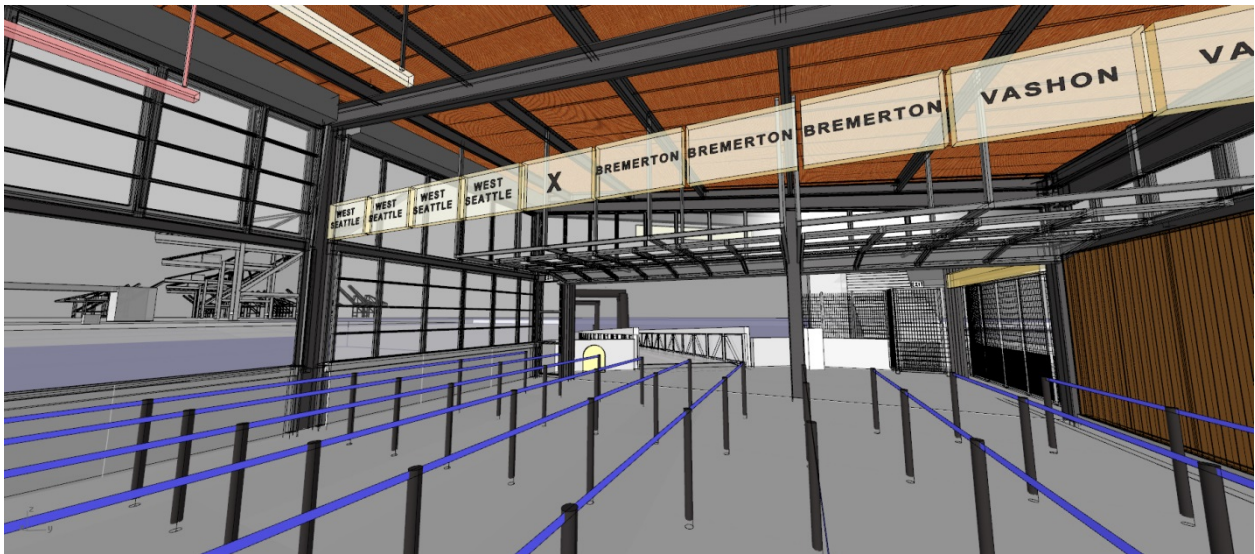
The Colman Dock project is a critical piece of the region’s transit infrastructure: In 2015, more than nine million total riders traveled through Colman Dock with an additional 500,000 riders using the King County Water Taxi.

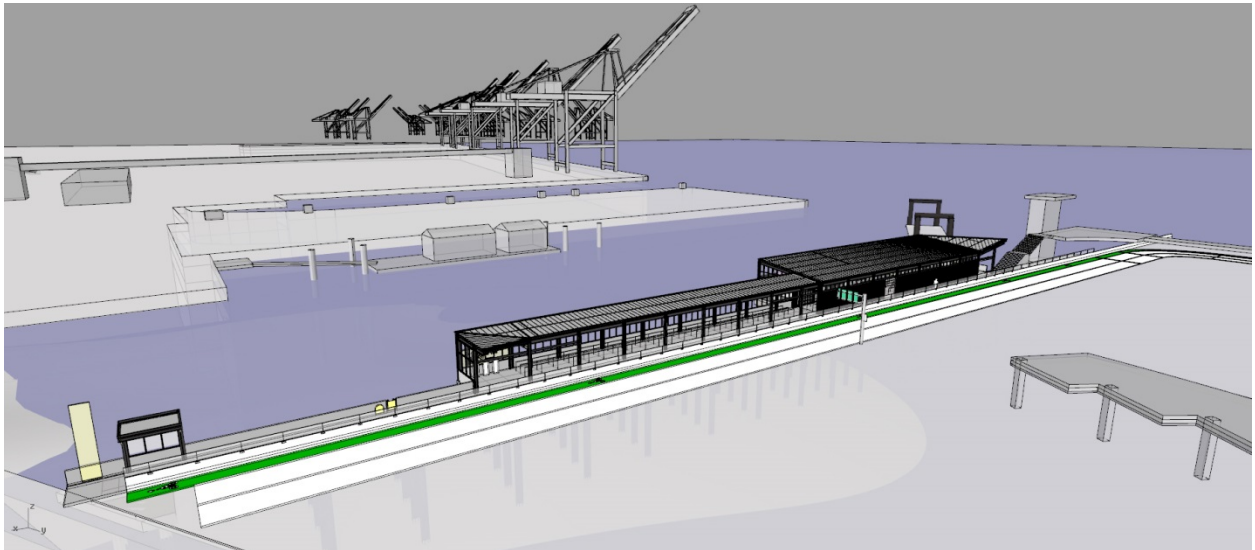
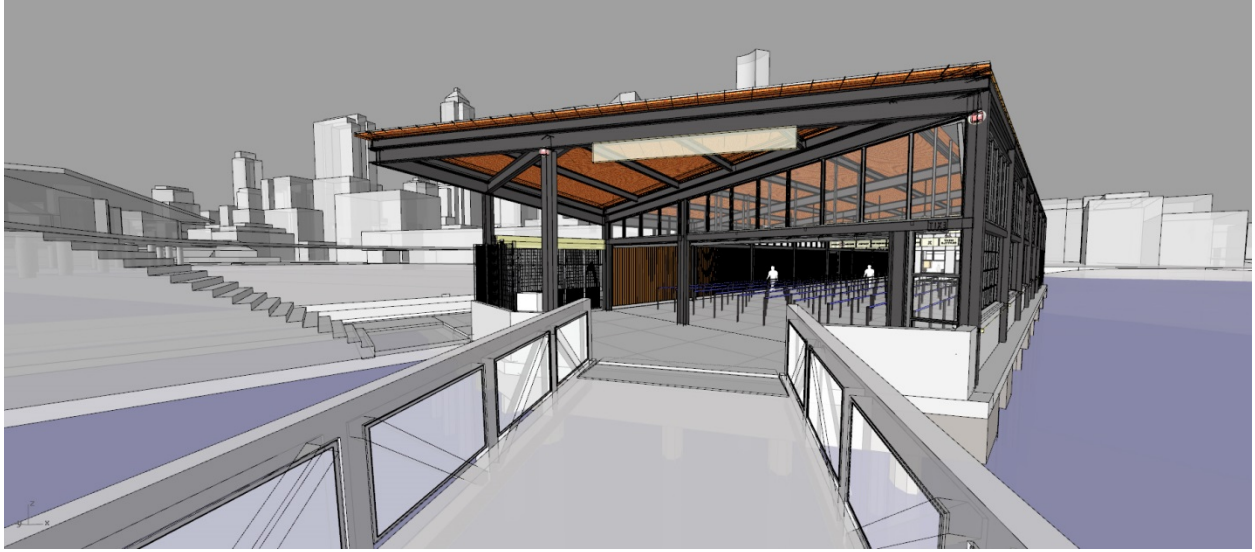
Combined with the new partnership between King County and Kitsap Transit to launch fast-ferry service, ferryboats will become an even bigger mode of travel in the Puget Sound region, relieving pressure on the region's roadways.

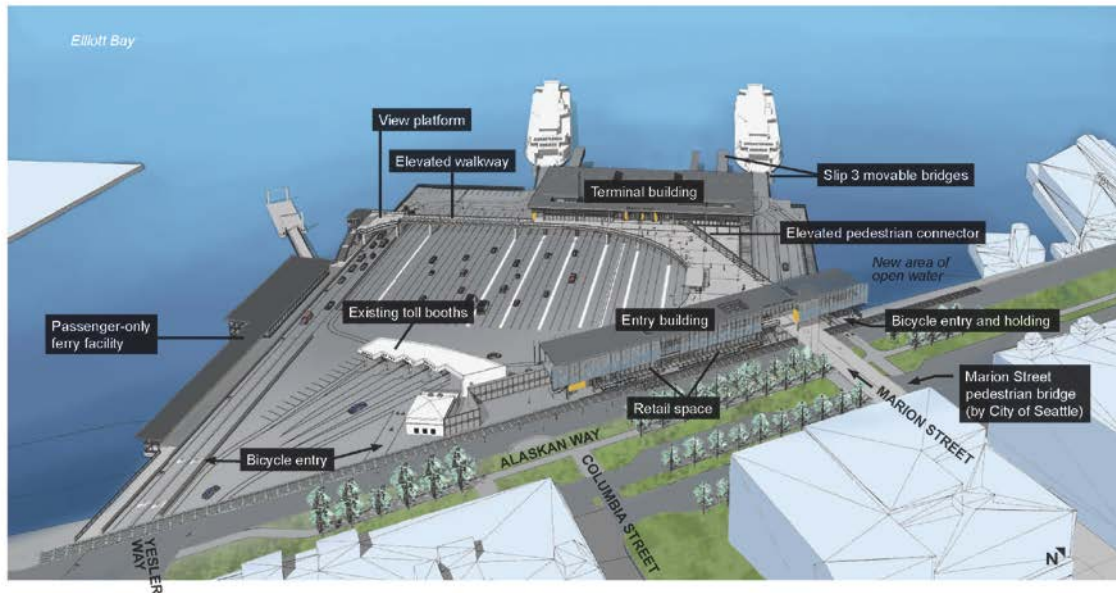
Washington State Ferries (WSF) is the nation's number-one urban ferryboat agency by ridership, according to data compiled by the American Public Transportation Association. In 2015, WSF carried nearly 24 million riders.

Local agencies also are among the nation's busiest urban ferryboat operators: Last year, King County carried nearly 602,000 riders on its water taxi, while Kitsap Transit logged more than 494,000 riders on its foot ferries running between Bremerton, Port Orchard and Annapolis in Sinclair Inlet.

If Kitsap Transit meets its projected ridership on its three planned fast-ferry routes, the agency's total ferryboat ridership, including its local foot ferries, will surpass 1.2 million riders annually.







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About Kitsap Transit

Kitsap Transit has been operating friendly, convenient public transit since 1983. The Bremerton-based transit agency for Kitsap County carried more than 3.8 million riders last year across a multi-modal system of routed buses, paratransit shuttles, vanpools, worker/driver buses and a passenger-only ferry service.