

ANDERSON ISLAND CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Ferry Committee Report

May 15, 2006

Meeting with Pierce County Public Works Department
2702 s. 42nd st
Tacoma, WA 98409
3rd Floor Conference room

Attendees:

Pierce County Public Works
-Don Peterson, P.E.,
Pacific Navigation
-Steve Caputa
-John Sainsbury
Anderson Island
-Ed Stephenson
-Elmer Brown
Ketron Island
-Ed Litz + 4 others

Don Peterson reported status on some of the ongoing issues and events:

New Ferry Construction

Although some parts of the construction have slipped, the overall delivery date is still being promised as the middle of October. The end sections are due to arrive at Whidbey Island the end of May and begin integration to the middle section.

Drydock Maintenance

Cost and scheduling conflicts forced the recent drydock maintenance schedule for the Christine Anderson to be shortened. Incomplete maintenance items will be readdressed after the new ferry is in service; therefore, no operating schedule impact is expected and normal ferry operation will not be interrupted. Pacific Navigation reported that the temporary parking spaces provided at the Oberlin church in Steilacoom during the drydock period were used 100%, most being assigned on the first day.

Future Parking Area at Steilacoom Dock

While it is recognized that parking on the Steilacoom side will become critical in the future as the number of riders on the ferry increases, the County has no money in the budget or the long range plan to acquire a site. There is no known commercial site available and the ferry operation is already borrowing from the road fund to acquire the

new ferry and to maintain the status quo. The County council members not affiliated with the ferry have little incentive to approve more capital budget for such a small contingency.

Ferry Schedule vs Pierce Transit Bus Schedule

The incompatibility between the ferry schedule and the Pierce transit bus schedule has been studied several times by the County but no solution appears practical at this time. This could change in the future if the number of riders on the bus increases significantly.

School Bus Parking on A.I.

The County has no solution to the problem created by the school bus blocking traffic during loading and unloading at the ferry dock. The suggestion to allow the bus to enter the parking lot from the upper end and load/unload in the parking lot was not accepted due to safety reasons..

Future Growth in Ketron Riders?

Ketron representatives indicated that “a developer has proposed an increase on Ketron island of up to 250 homes which would significantly change the way the ferry is now operated”. The probability of this occurring in the next 20 years was considered very small by all but the Ketron representatives.

Schedule Changes Revisited

Ketron is still lobbying for a revision to the sailing schedule to change the 5:10pm triangle run (now A.I. then to Ketron) to a 4:10pm triangle run (Ketron then to A.I. arriving 10 minutes later). After much discussion, the county responded that the schedule will remain as it is, probably for the next year and a half.

Ketron Special Runs

For special events, Ketron has asked that “special” runs be made to accommodate a large increase in Ketron riders. Such an event is planned for Friday, August 25 on the 3:10pm ferry, when as many as 50 Ketron riders (unknown how many cars) is expected. Might want to put that run on your calendar as one to avoid. It will be crowded and arrive at A.I. approximately 10 minutes late.

Summer Peak Period

No changes in traffic control for the stacking lanes are planned over that provided during the peak period last year. As before, a traffic director will be available on the ground for weekends, after Memorial day, weather permitting. Since the number of altercations in the loading lanes are already increasing, this should be an interesting summer and more courtesy (and tolerance) by all is going to be required. Since the Ferry personnel have no official jurisdiction in the loading lanes, they suggested that the A.I. Crime Task Force take a more active role on the A.I. side. On the Steilacoom side, call 911 if necessary, since the ferry personnel can not intervene.

The long range plan calls for increasing the capacity in the stacking lanes; however, this will be several years out. No space or right of way is currently available at either dock.

Regarding a question that comes up daily for the ferry crew, i.e., how many empty spaces to leave on the triangle ferry runs for Ketron car pickup, the county will look into some form of communication from the Ketron dock to the ferry office in Steilacoom. Ketron drivers would have to call the dock at least 15 minutes before the ferry leaves Steilacoom to let them know how many spaces Ketron needed and thus avoid leaving unfilled spaces on the ferry. There are many details to be worked out if this procedure is implemented.

New Anderson Island Ramp Pontoon

The ramp pontoon replacement bids are in and installation is currently expected to be the last part of October. The exact schedule will be published as soon as it is available. There will be no ferry service over the weekend that the installation takes place. Mark your calendar with the tentative dates of October 21 & 22, 2006.

Second Loading Ramp at Steilacoom

The second loading ramp on the Steilacoom side is still in the planning stage. This ramp is required to accommodate the new ferry and the increased traffic to all three islands. The State (McNeil Island) is being asked to share the cost but no agreement has been made.

Ferry Ticket Sales

Bids for an automated ticket machine to be located at the Island General have been received and are under review at this time. The money for the kiosk has not yet been approved by the County Council. Action on this proposal was put off until the next council meeting. If approved, installation will probably be sometime this fall at the earliest. It will accept VISA and MasterCard but not cash for payment.

The county reiterated that in the near future all tickets will be barcoded and scanned when boarding the ferry. The scanner will be connected directly to the county computers and the amount of the fare automatically deducted from the ticket. This will allow commuters to use a single printed ticket for all commuter trips instead of the current 5 tickets. When used 5 times, the ticket would have no residual value and could be kept as a receipt. As currently planned, the bar-coded tickets can be used only once for each sailing, preventing use of the same ticket by others on the same ferry, i.e., each vehicle and each rider must have a separate ticket. (*Can't share commuter tickets*). Pacific Navigation indicated that where this system has been put in place, they have been able to prevent as much as 10% misuse of tickets resulting in lower fares for all.

Commuter Ticket Books

We were reminded that regular commuter tickets are **void** if removed from the stapled booklet. Misuse of commuter tickets is becoming more prevalent and riders are advised to "not tear the tickets from the book" lest they be rejected by the ferry personnel. Let everyone be warned. *This does not apply to senior or disabled tickets.*

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