

Washington State Ferries

JANUARY 2023

System facts

- Created June 1, 1951
- Largest ferry system in the United States
- Steady growth in ridership in 2010s with an average of 23.4 million customers/year (17.4 million in 2022)
- Second largest ferry system in the world for vehicles carried with an average of 10.3 million/year in 2010s (8.6 million in 2022)
- Fleet of 21 auto-passenger vessels
- Operates 20 terminals on 10 routes
- Nearly 2,000 employees
- 16 unions and 13 collective bargaining agreements

Key functions

Transit agency

- Third largest transit system in Washington (#1 King County Metro, #2 Sound Transit)

Marine highway

- Part of state highway network, serving eight counties and British Columbia, Canada
- Vital connection for emergency medical services on and off several islands

Link in region's multimodal connections

- Priority loading for freight, bicycles, vanpools and carpools
- Vehicle reservations on two routes

Mover of freight and goods

- Ferries specially constructed to accommodate commercial vehicles

Tourism, economic development

- Major tourist attraction and icon of Washington state
- Critical link between more affordable housing on the west side of Puget Sound and key employment centers on the east side

Safe, secure travel

- Enforce procedures to ensure the safety and security of passengers by working with the Washington State Patrol and U.S. Coast Guard
- As a port of entry and border crossing, ensure the security of the U.S. border by working with U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Challenges

Operations and Maintenance

- Aging fleet with nearly half of fleet over 30 years old
- Ferries in service 20+ hours a day, so it is difficult to find time for adequate maintenance
- Drydock capacity in Puget Sound limited and difficult to adjust for emergency repairs

Workforce development

- Succession planning a critical priority
- Approximately half of vessel employees are 55 years old or older and may qualify for retirement in the next five to 10 years

New construction

- Constructing multimodal terminal at Seattle's Colman Dock (terminal building opened in 2022, entry building and walkway connecting terminal to Alaskan Way set to open in 2023)
- Replacing overhead wooden walkway at Bainbridge terminal with a concrete and steel one built to current seismic code
- Gathering community input in the planning and design of upcoming Fauntleroy Terminal Trestle and Transfer Span Replacement project
- Building up to five hybrid-electric Olympic-class ferries
- Converting the fleet's largest Jumbo Mark II-class vessels from diesel to hybrid-electric propulsion

2040 Long Range Plan

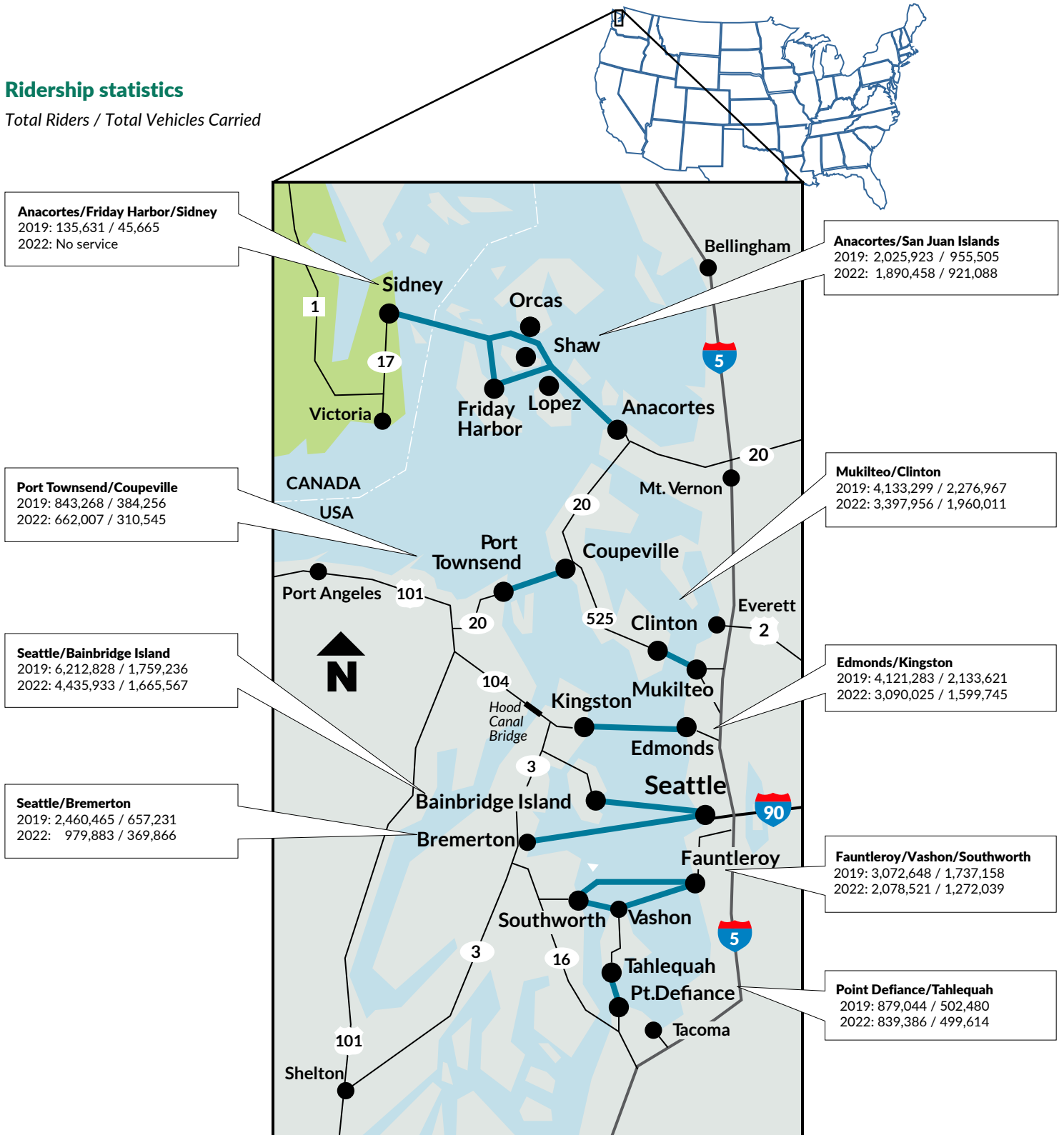
- Plans for the future of the ferry system through 2040
- Calls for 16 new ferries to replace aging vessels and help stabilize the fleet
- Considers ridership growth of 30% over the next 20 years



WSDOT Ferries Division – Nation’s Largest Ferry System

Ridership statistics

Total Riders / Total Vehicles Carried



Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information: This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the Office of Equity and Civil Rights at wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov or by calling toll free, 855-362-4ADA(4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.

Title VI Notice to Public: Transportation’s policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT’s Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR). For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact OECR’s Title VI Coordinator at (360) 705-7090.