

TO: CHAIR DONOVAN AND MEMBERS OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

FROM: JOHN WARNOCK, CAITY GILDART, MIKE BRYAND AND NICK MAVODONES

DATE: JANUARY 10, 2025

RE: PEAKS ISLAND VEHICLE RESERVATIONS – FIRST DRAFT

The following outlines District staff's proposal for a vehicle reservation system to and from Peaks Island. Listed below is a summary of the components of this proposal followed by additional narrative with further explanation.

- All personal and commercial vehicles transported must have a reservation
- Reservations can be made online, in person and via telephone
- A reservation "office" and phone number will be staffed with one person Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM until 4:00 PM
- Reservations will be one way only
- There will be no charge for reservations
- Commercial and non-commercial vehicles over 6,000 gross vehicle weight (GVW), trailers and other heavy equipment, will not be permitted to make reservations online
- Vehicles cannot get in line prior to 30 minutes before departure time and no later than 15 minutes before departure time
- A fee will be assessed for any cancellations, no shows or changes
- Reservations will open 30 days prior to the beginning of each month

- When space is available, reservations are open up to one hour before departure
- There will be no standby line in Portland or at Peaks
- Determination must be made on how to handle bulk purchase of “blue tickets”

ALL VEHICLES MUST HAVE A RESERVATION

Staff believes this is would significantly mitigate congestion at the Portland Terminal and on Welch Street on Peaks Island. Only vehicles with reservations would be permitted to queue up at either location. Drivers could do so no earlier than 30 minutes prior to departure.

RESERVATIONS MADE ONLINE, BY PHONE OR EMAIL

Staff believe offering multiple ways for customers to make reservations is the best approach. Online reservations for personal vehicles could be made at any time; however, those customers who would prefer to make reservations via phone or email could do so by contacting the “reservation office” during business hours. It is proposed the “reservation office” be open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM until 4:00 PM. One staff member would be assigned to handle reservations made via telephone or in person.

RESERVATIONS WILL BE ONE WAY ONLY

In order to implement this system, it will be necessary to scan the bar code on the ticket. By doing so the reservation can be validated for that particular trip and, consequently, not be accepted again. Provided customers know the return date, they will be able to purchase two one-way tickets in order to complete their round trip; however, should the return trip date and time be unknown, the customer can simply purchase a one way ticket and, at a later date, purchase a one way ticket for the return trip.

THERE WILL BE NO CHARGE FOR RESERVATIONS

It is contemplated that there will be no charge for vehicle reservations under this proposal. It is important to note that there are currently regulations in the Tariff that allow reservations for commercial vehicles. In fact, the District generates about \$20,000 per year in revenue from commercial vehicle reservations; however, under the proposed system, we do not believe that charging a certain class of vehicles, and not another class, would be appropriate. Consequently, the recommendation is to not charge an extra fee as all vehicles would be required to have a reservation.

COMMERCIAL VEHICLES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO MAKE RESERVATIONS ONLINE

Given the various sizes and shapes of commercial vehicles, and that impact on available deck space, these vehicles will have to make reservations through the "reservation office" either in person or over the phone.

VEHICLES CANNOT GET IN LINE PRIOR TO 30 MINUTES BEFORE DEPARTURE AND NO LATER THAN 15 MINUTES BEFORE DEPARTURE TIME

The purpose of these time limitations is to reduce congestion at the Portland Terminal and on Welch Street on Peaks Island. Under this system, a fixed number of vehicles will be allowed to make reservations per trip, so the vessel crew will know how many and which vehicles are scheduled each trip. Therefore, only those with reservations will be permitted to queue up for that particular trip. The 30 minute requirement ensures vehicles are not arriving too early and, consequently, taking up space where there is very limited real estate. The 15 minute requirement ensures all vehicles will be in the staging lane in time for the crew to manage loading of the vessel in an orderly fashion.

A FEE WILL BE ASSESSED FOR ANY CANCELLATIONS, NO SHOWS OR CHANGES

A penalty fee will be assessed for any cancellations or changes in reservations not made at least 72 hours in advance of the scheduled reservations. These will be assessed to the credit/debit card used to book the original reservation. The purpose of this fee is to discourage last-minute changes or customers who decide to book several different times for convenience with the intention of only using the one that best fits their schedule. Customers that do not show up for their scheduled reservation will be assessed the entire cost of the fare.

RESERVATIONS OPEN 30 DAYS PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF EACH MONTH

It is contemplated that reservations will open 30 days prior to the beginning of each month for the following month. This would provide sufficient advance opportunities for reservations; however, at the same time, it would not allow reservations, that in some cases could be placeholders, to consume to calendar.

WHEN SPACE IS AVAILABLE, RESERVATIONS ARE OPEN UP TO ONE HOUR BEFORE DEPARTURE

This flexibility would allow someone to make a reservation on short notice on those trips where the vehicle deck is not yet full. This would provide some flexibility for those who, for whatever reason, must make plans on short notice.

NO STANDBY LINE IN PORTLAND OR ON WELCH STREET ON PEAKS

Again, we believe a reservation system will significantly reduce congestion in Portland and at Peaks. Therefore, given the limited real estate at the Portland Terminal and on Welch Street on Peaks, that any sort of standby lines should not exist. Should a standby system become desirable, we would suggest that it be located offsite.

DETERMINATION MUST BE MADE ON HOW TO HANDLE THE BULK PURCHASE OF
"BLUE TICKETS"

Currently, customers are allowed to purchase an unlimited number of tickets at the winter rate just before the summer rates commence. In accordance with the tariff, these can be used during the following 60 days. In the event they are not used, the customer can return them for a refund. Such an arrangement would not align with the vehicle reservation system as contemplated. This topic will require further discussion going forward.