

**TO: PRESIDENT FLYNN AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD**

**FROM: CAITY GILDART & NICK MAVODONES**

**DATE: MAY 17, 2019**

**RE: VEHICLE RESERVATION UPDATE**

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## BACKGROUND

At its March 29, 2019 meeting, the Board of Directors directed “staff to analyze vehicle reservations and report back at the May meeting.”

## RESEARCH

Staff has researched ferry systems throughout the country in order to gain a better understanding of various vehicle reservation policies. These systems include Washington State Ferries; Wood’s Hole, Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority; Cape May Lewes Ferry; Cross Sound Ferry; Block Island Ferry; Bridgeport Port Jefferson Steamboat; Fishers Island Ferry (NY); Alaska Inter-Island Ferry; North Ferry; South Ferry; Love City Ferry; Beaver Island Ferry; Lake Champlain Ferry; Madeline Island Ferry; Washington Island Ferry; and, Maine State Ferry.

## FINDINGS

It became clear during this research that whether or not vehicle reservations are utilized or what types of policies are in place at those companies that do utilize reservations that these decisions are clearly based upon the uniqueness of each operation. Several systems do not utilize reservations at all. A number of others, particularly the larger systems with larger vehicle capacities, utilize different types of reservation systems.

Although the systems may employ reservations in different ways, all seem to have several similar general policy areas; however, it is important to note that these policies appear to be tailored specifically to each individual operation. The specific general policy areas include the following:

- dates when reservations become available
- means to make and pay for reservations (web based or via telephone)
- hard cut off times for arrival
- proof of ticket purchase
- standby lines

## DISTRICT SPECIFIC TOPICS THAT WILL WARRANT FURTHER RESEARCH

As a result of this work, several topics arose that will need further investigation and discussion. These include, but are not limited to, the following items:

- further research of web based reservation software and associated expenses
- revisions to tariff and Public Utilities approval
- personnel impacts, including potential for staffing on Peaks Island
- evaluation of Wednesday reduced fares and whether those should be spread out

## RECOMMENDATION

Based upon preliminary research to date, our recommendation is to continue to analyze the possible implementation of a vehicle reservation system. We believe such a system can have a positive impact on congestion management efforts in Portland and at Peaks Island. We would recommend that this project follow the usual Board process that includes staff bringing its recommendation forward to the Operations Committee, Finance Committee and ultimately, should the committees make a recommendation, to the full Board of Directors for consideration.