

Seattle, WA

Washington State Ferries Colman Dock Mitigation Strategies



Washington State Ferries (WSF) is the largest ferry system in the United States and the third largest in the world. The Seattle Ferry Terminal at Colman Dock (Pier 52) in downtown Seattle is the busiest terminal in the WSF system and is used by over nine million riders per year, or about 28,000 trips per day. The Colman Dock Ferries currently operate at capacity for vehicles during peak commuting hours (but have a great deal of reserve walk-on and bike-on capacity). Future year 2030 ridership forecasts predict significant increases that will overwhelm vehicular capacity on ferries, on the dock, and on city streets without a significant shift to other modes.

Nelson\Nygaard was hired by WSF to help stakeholders evaluate options for accommodating the existing and forecasted capacity problems associated with Colman Dock. Central to the evaluation was recognizing the significance of Colman Dock as a major downtown multimodal hub that processes as many trips as the King Street and Westlake multimodal hubs. Simply accommodating projected vehicle traffic increases would require increasing dock storage capacity and augmenting access roadways, representing significant cost to WSF and potential environmental impacts to Elliott Bay. Furthermore, increasing the number of vehicles heading to and from Colman Dock will ultimately increase traffic in downtown Seattle.

Nelson\Nygaard led a stakeholder workshop and conducted a follow-on analysis focused on developing key demand management and multimodal access strategies. Demand management strategies included reservation systems, peak-period pricing, vanpool priority boarding, and remote queue storage. The multimodal evaluation took careful consideration of transit, pedestrian, and bicycle access, including strategies for extending transit lines closer to the dock, providing improved signal operations for transit access, terminating key transit lines at the dock to improve schedule coordination, providing hill-climbs for pedestrians, widening key city sidewalks, improving grade-separated connections, and improving protected street crossings.



Project Duration: 2006

Total Budget: \$42,000

For more information:

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