

Kirkland - Seattle passenger ferry service may start as early as 2009-2010

Posted By [Rob Butcher](#) On October 2, 2008 @ 8:50 am In [Transportation](#) | [No Comments](#)



Nearly a century after a "[Mosquito Fleet](#)" of small boats linked the communities that ring Lake Washington and Puget Sound, a new King County Ferry District is up and running to operate Vashon passenger-only ferry service, year-round operation of the popular Water Taxi, and begin development of five demonstration routes. The official web site for the [King County Ferry District](#) is full of good information.

Last night at the [Norkirk Neighborhood](#) meeting at Heritage Hall, a representative of the King County Ferry District stopped by to introduce the program. The audience included Mayor Jim Lauinger and Councilmembers Mary-Alyce Burleigh and Jessica Greenway.



Here are some notes from the presentation:

- The King County Ferry District (KCFD) currently operates two routes: Vashon and Elliot Bay Water Taxi;
- Plans are in order for 5 demonstration routes: Kirkland, Kenmore, Renton, Ballard, Des Moines;
- Demonstration routes will likely be launched starting late 2009 or early 2010 and the is plan is to bring one city online each year. Service on demonstration routes use leased boats and will last for two years, with the purpose of measuring potential ridership while minimizing capital expenses;
- The likely Kirkland route would be from Marina Park (where the Argosy boat docks) to The University of Washington. Trips to South Lake Union would take too long given the long stretch on "no wake" water through the Montlake cut;
- Each ferry would hold a maximum of 150 passengers and the initial plan is for 2 ferry trips departing each morning and two each evening - passenger only and bike friendly;
- Funding for the ferry service is already in place: a property tax of \$22 per \$400,000 in assessed value. Concessions and advertising are also planned to augment revenues;
- Fare box recovery for the ferries is projected to be 40%. This compares favorably with Metro's dismal 20% of cost recovery from rider fees;

- The travel time to the UW is about 22 minutes, when you include boarding time it makes the cross-lake trip about 30 minutes;
- Parking (rather lack thereof) is the number one issue in Kirkland. The KCFD has funds to provide shuttle vans to and from the dock which would make the plan better suited to Kirkland's needs.

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