



Save a Spot Application
Washington State Department of Transportation

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
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Project name



The new Save a Spot vehicle reservations system (VRS)

Potential award category

- Improving State Operations
- Digital Government: Government to Business (G to B)
- Information Communications Technology (ICT) Innovations
- State CIO Office (or equivalent) Special Recognition

Brief description of problem and solution

During peak sailing times, vehicle space on ferries is a scarce commodity. Sailings often overload, resulting in congestion in and around ferry terminals and long wait times for customers. At the same time, there is excess vehicle capacity on off peak sailings, resulting in the need to manage and spread demand for vehicle space on the ferries.

The 2009 Washington State Department of Transportation Ferries Division (WSF) Long-Range Plan proposed a **reservation system** as the primary strategy to manage demand, spread peak vehicle traffic, and improve asset utilization, thus reducing customer wait times, community traffic congestion due to queuing, and minimizing the need for costly terminal and vessel expansion projects.

Vehicle Reservation System:

The Save a Spot website went live on June 4, 2012, and redemption began at terminals out of the new system on June 17, 2012. Since then, several software updates have been rolled out to improve performance, fix bugs, and add features.

Some of the defining features of Save A Spot include:

- **Multiple methods for managing reservations.** Customers are able to make, change, and cancel reservations online using the Save A Spot website and by phone. (Mobile phone based app developed and will be launched this year)
- **Flexible change and cancelation policies.** Customers can change or cancel reservations online or by phone. They are allowed one free change in the 24-hour window before their sailing.

Project benefits

- Vehicle reservations system as a high-quality service for demand management strategy to avoid the need to expand ferry terminals and holding areas to accommodate projected increases in vehicle traffic
- Save the State of Washington \$280 million in capital improvements, by avoiding the need to expand ferry terminals and holding areas to accommodate projected increases in vehicle traffic
- Provide predictable and convenient travel
- Increase business in ferry-served communities
- Reduce air pollution from idling vehicles

- Save money by mitigating the need for terminal expansion and/or added service
- Reduce traffic control costs and holding area maintenance costs.

The following screen capture is from the Washington State Ferries Vehicle Reservations site, found at:

<https://secureapps.wsdot.wa.gov/Ferries/Reservations/Vehicle/default.aspx>.

The screenshot shows the Washington State Department of Transportation's "SAVE A SPOT" vehicle reservation system. The page title is "Washington State Ferries Vehicle Reservations".

Navigation and Breadcrumbs:
 Washington State Department of Transportation
 You are Here: [Home](#) > [Ferries](#) > [Reservations](#)

Left Sidebar (Manage a Reservation):
 Manage a Reservation:
 ▶ [Make a reservation](#)
 ▶ [Cancel, Change, or View a reservation](#)
 ▶ [Create an account](#)

Main Content Area:

1 Select route:
 Departing From: [Dropdown]
 Arriving At: [Dropdown]

2 Select your travel date:
 [Date Picker]

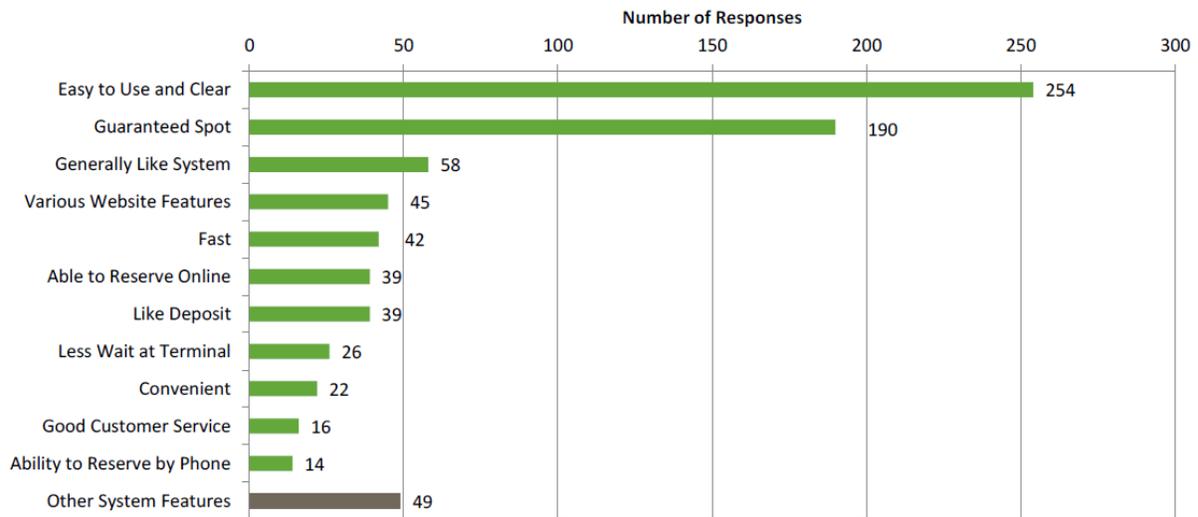
3 Select your vehicle size:
 Vehicle Length: [Dropdown]
 Show Availability [Button]
 Clear Selection [Button]

4 Select a sailing:
 A map shows the ferry routes. A blue line highlights the route from Sidney to Anacortes. Other locations shown include Friday Harbor, Port Townsend, and Coupeville. Highway markers for 17, 20, and 101 are visible. A north arrow is also present.

Reservations Cart:
 Reservations [Shopping Cart Icon]
 No vehicle reservations selected.

Analysis of Customer Input Survey Results

What Respondents Like Best about the Reservation System



Highly Satisfied Customers

"We had never traveled with Washington State ferries, and we were delighted with it from start to finish! The online site was extremely easy to use... and the employees were very friendly"

"I like that I know exactly which boat I will be on regardless of lines... makes life much easier to plan."

“Reservations are a huge win for Port Townsend - ferry traffic can go downtown, eat, sightsee, and not fill the roadway with idling cars for hours”

WSF carried 3% more vehicles in 2012 with the new reservation system.

The number of overloaded sailings decreased by 18%.