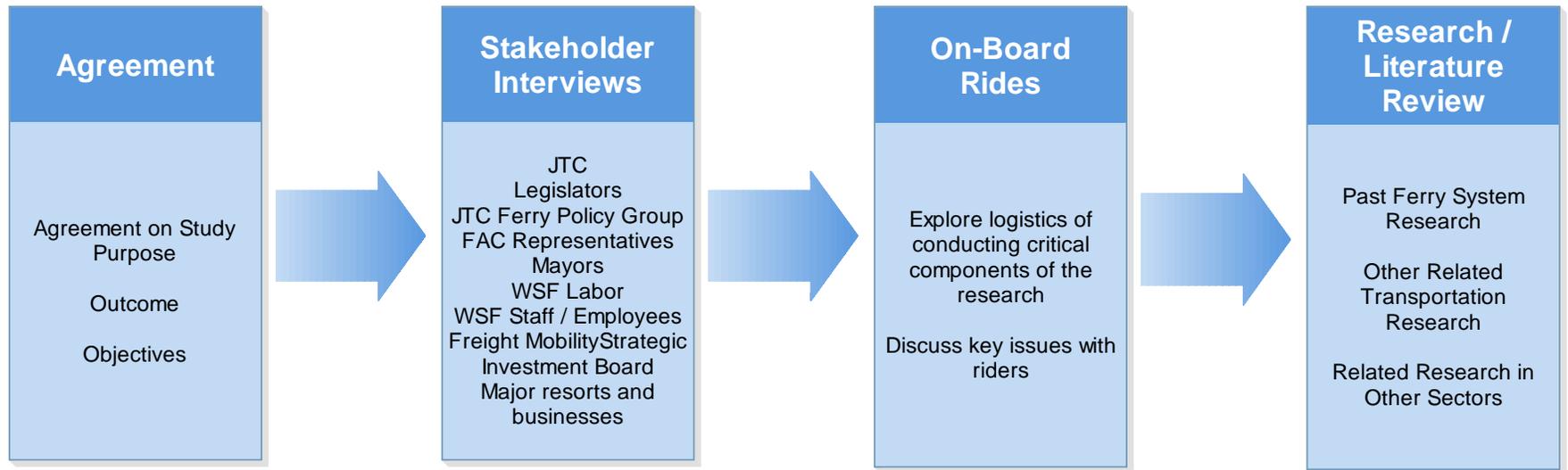


# Washington State Transportation Commission Ferry Customer Survey



**Statement of Study Purpose / Outcomes / Objectives,  
Qualitative Research Plan, and Overall Schedule  
October 30, 2007**

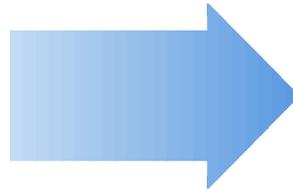
# Planning Process



# Statement of Purpose and Outcome

## Overall Purpose

To gather information from users on travel behavior and attitudes and identify operational and customer-centric strategies that could be effective in modifying demand for peak hour vehicular travel and/or increase walk-on passenger traffic while continuing to accommodate existing and future ridership



## Key Outcome

A better understanding of customer attitudes and behaviors that provides an estimate of the impact of changes in operational strategies on travel behavior and informs decisions that will increase utilization of existing ferry capacity, increase operational efficiency, reduce the need for capital expansions, and improve cost-efficiency while maintaining ferry revenues

# Objective #1

- Provide a comprehensive baseline attitudinal and behavioral profile of Washington State ferry customers, but focusing specifically on recreational, vehicle and walk-on (commuter and occasional), and freight customers that will be used to inform current decisions and that can be updated in the future. This profile will include the following critical components:
  - Existing travel behavior
  - Environmental / personal factors that influence travel behavior
  - Capabilities / willingness to modify behavior
  - Demographics
  - Understanding of how these characteristics vary by critical market segment

# Objective #2

- Identify and model data on the impact of changes to key operational strategies (overall attributes and levels of) that will inform level of service, operational, pricing, planning, and investment decisions and that could increase capacity utilization, level demand across the schedule and routes, and accommodate existing and future ridership (system wide and within individual travel sheds)
  - To what extent would changes in fare policies and other operational strategies
    - Move vehicle passengers to become walk-on passengers
    - Shift vehicle passengers from peak to fringe travel periods and push vehicle passengers from fringe to off-peak travel periods
    - Encourage higher vehicle passenger occupancy and/or increase use of other modes of accessing the system
    - Shift freight customers from peak to fringe travel periods and/or from fringe to off-peak travel periods
    - Shift vehicle passengers from over- to under-utilized routes
    - Cause any change that would have a negative impact on system revenues by actually decreasing use of the system (users no longer ride or ride less often) and/or shifting behavior to an extent to which savings in capital improvements are less than loss in revenue
  - To what extent do changes to other operational strategies that are / could be considered (e.g., implementation of a reservation system, vehicle loading options, alternative fare media, etc) affect desirable behavioral changes and/or offset the potentially negative impact of demand management pricing strategies

## Objective #3

- Provide input that can guide a review and update of WSF level of service standards and inform operational strategies that could improve capacity utilization, level demand across the schedule, and accommodate existing and future ridership
  - What are the levels of service from the customers' perspective (e.g., wait times, access to connections, loading, etc.) that affect customer use of / demand for service
  - What are customers' critical expectations for service and to what extent are these expectations being met
  - What other aspects of service could WSF or other partner agencies add to or improve that could positively impact travel behavior / system utilization and/or offset negative impacts of other policy changes

# Planning Process Schedule

<b>Task</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
Agreement on Statement of Purpose, Outcome, & Objectives	Mon 10/22/07	Tue 11/13/07
On-Board Rides	Tue 11/6/07	Tue 11/13/07
Stakeholder Interviews	Tue 10/30/07	Tue 11/20/07
On-Line Forums	Wed 10/31/07	Wed 11/21/07
Research / Literature Review	Mon 10/22/07	Tue 11/27/07

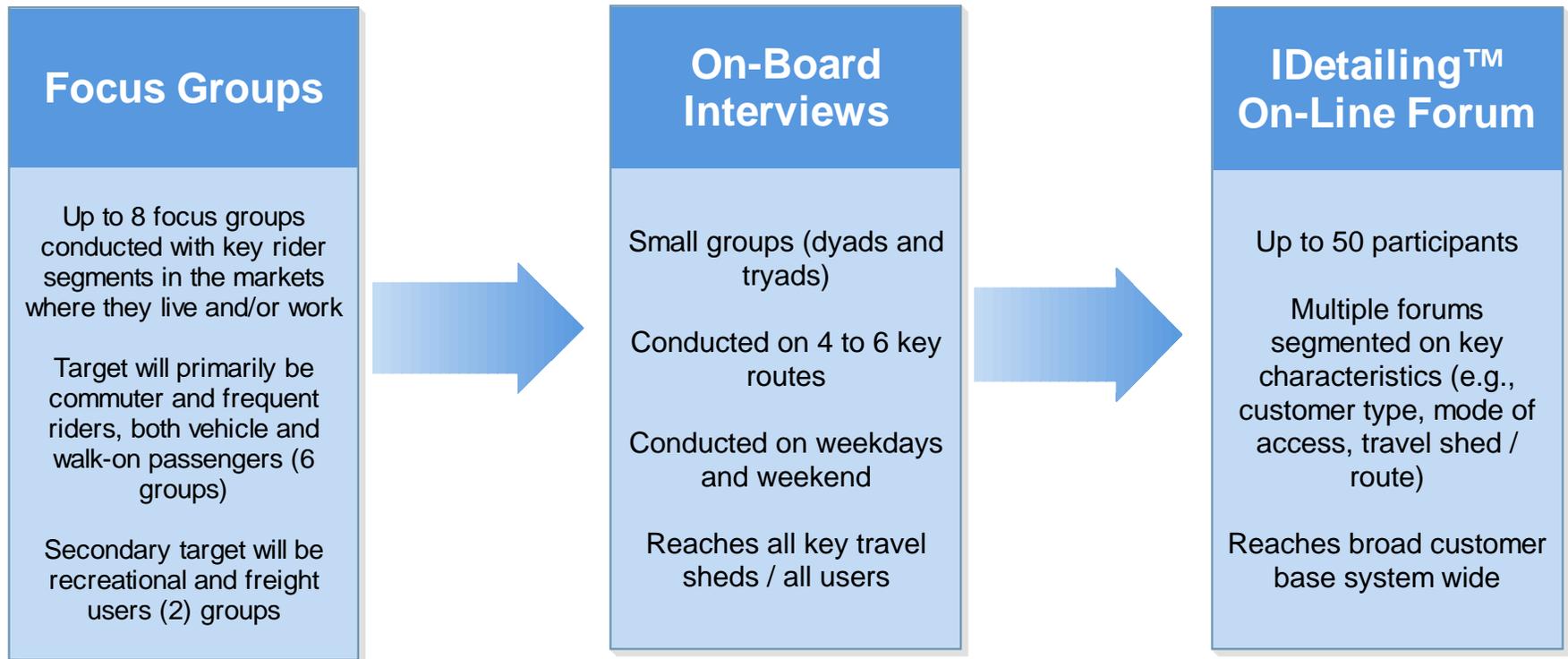
# Planning Process Outcomes / Deliverables

- Final Statement of Research Purpose, Outcomes, Objectives
- Technical Memorandum summarizing findings from Stakeholder Interviews
- Technical Memorandum summarizing findings from Secondary Research / Literature Review
  - Discussion of the implications of these findings for the final research design and implementation.
- Final Qualitative Research Plan and Schedule
- Outline of key tasks / subtasks and scheduling for these tasks / subtasks for the balance of the research
  - Schedule reflects an end date for the entire process of no later than October, 2008.

# Qualitative Research Objectives

- Explore current travel behaviors, how customers think / talk about travel, factors that influence travel decisions
- Understand current attitudes toward travel and assess preliminary impacts of pricing and operational strategies on ridership behavior
- Understand key customer characteristics and their potential impacts on attitudes, needs, and expectations for service
- Identify customer requirements / expectations for service and their willingness to trade-off some elements of service in order to encourage behavior change
- Understand current attitudes toward travel and assess preliminary impacts of pricing and operational strategies on ridership behavior
- Assess best methods for measuring impacts of pricing and operations strategies on ridership behaviors
- Provide an opportunity for commission, ferry, and other interested individuals to view the groups

# Qualitative Research Process



# Qualitative Research Schedule

<b>Task</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
Planning / Setup	Mon 10/29/07	Sun 11/18/07
Focus Groups	Mon 10/29/07	Mon 12/3/07
(Tentative Group Dates)	Tue 11/13/07	Sun 11/18/07
On-Board Dyads / Tryads	Thu 11/29/07	Sat 12/8/07
Frequent Passenger Forum	Wed 11/14/07	Tue 12/18/07
Prepare Final Deliverables	Wed 12/19/07	Mon 1/21/08

# Qualitative Research Outcomes / Deliverables

- Technical Memoranda summarizing key findings from each of the qualitative research components
  - Listing of key attributes / levels of service that impact travel behavior / demand and ultimately capacity utilization
- Final Summary Report
- Video Presentation that includes audio and video clips illustrating key findings
  - This presentation will be prepared in a format suitable for web viewing
- PowerPoint presentations specific to target audiences of interest

# Phase 1: On-Board Surveys

<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Develop and implement a quantitative research methodology that yields reliable and statistically valid results</li><li>● Use data collection method that provides reliable data at the aggregate level but also allows for reliable analysis among key subgroups</li><li>● Provide a comprehensive profile of WSF customers</li><li>● Assess extent to which customers can change travel behaviors</li><li>● Identify critical service standards from a customer perspective</li><li>● Build a customer panel for use in other research</li></ul>
<b>Approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● On-board surveys – Ensures most reliable data and gains representation of all customer groups within each travel shed and across all routes<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Two waves – February / March and May</li><li>– Stratified sampling plan – by route and/or travel shed</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Outcomes / Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 13,000 to 14,000 completed surveys (over two survey periods)</li><li>● Comprehensive analysis<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– By customer type / travel behavior</li><li>– By route or travel shed</li></ul></li><li>● Other analysis</li><li>● Reports and Presentations</li></ul>

# Phase 1: Follow-Up Fare Policy and Service Level Research

<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Identify fare policy and operational strategies that would shift vehicular traffic from peak to fringe or off-peak hours or cause those who currently drive-on to select other mode – walk-on, bike, transit</li><li>● Assess the extent to which customers can or would modify their travel behaviors</li><li>● Identify transportation components that would need to be in place to support future behavior shift</li></ul>
<b>Approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● On-line surveys<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Administered to sample of customers drawn from on-line panel developed as part of the on-line surveys</li><li>– Use of conjoint or other method</li></ul></li><li>● Actual test<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Experimental design in which customer segments actually operate under different scenarios for a period of time</li><li>– Could again use panel members</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Outcomes / Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● A potentially large number (n = 2,000+) panel to work with</li><li>● Comprehensive analysis<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– By customer type</li><li>– By route or travel shed</li></ul></li><li>● Simulation model</li><li>● Reports and Presentations</li></ul>

# Phase 1 Quantitative Research Schedule

<b>Task</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
On-Board Surveys – Wave 1	Mon 12/3/07	Fri 5/2/08
Actual On-Board Surveys	Thu 2/21/08	Sat 3/22/08
Fare Policy and Service Level Research – Wave 1	Fri 3/28/08	Wed 8/27/08
On-Board Surveys – Wave 2	Mon 10/22/07	Wed 9/10/08
Fare Policy and Service Level Research – Wave 2 (if needed)	Mon 7/14/08	Tue 9/30/08
Prepare Final Deliverables	Tue 8/5/08	Tue 9/30/08

# Phase 2 Research

- Could be qualitative or quantitative
  - Dependent on objectives
- Schedule to be determined
- Approximately \$68,000 reserved for this effort

# Opinion Research Northwest Project Team

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