

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/opinion/313881_ferryed.html

Ferries: It floats our boat

Last updated May 1, 2007 5:36 p.m. PT

SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER EDITORIAL BOARD

King County Council's plan to take over the Vashon foot-passenger ferries and downtown water taxi ... sorry, can't resist ... floats our boat. Specifically, we're excited to hear about the possibility of additional water taxis and foot ferries. If we can make water taxis work -- finding vessels that are fast and are scheduled wisely (frequent enough and timed to connect with ground transportation) -- the plan could lessen the number of vehicles on our roads.

As far as funding goes, we're not against some funds coming from property taxes -- after all, everyone in the region, even those who don't use ferries and water taxis, will benefit from living in a place with good public transportation. We do believe, however, that relying solely on property taxes for funding the ferries and future water taxis is folly.

Homeowners might resist having additional property taxes slapped on them without a vote. Also, the funding model ought to depend, at least somewhat, on fares. Bump the \$3 fare for the Elliott Bay/West Seattle Water Taxi up to \$4 and maybe run it year-round, or at least more than five months out of the year. Besides, with the Alaskan Way Viaduct being torn down, more taxi runs could alleviate some of the congestion for those who commute to the downtown area for work. Ditto with a potential Lake Washington water taxi, between Kirkland and the University of Washington. With the impending Evergreen Point Bridge rebuild around the corner, commuters will need another way to cross the lake. Let's hope naysayers don't sink this much-needed transportation plan.

© 1998-2008 *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*