



# Washington State Ferries

SEATTLE FERRY TERMINAL, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98104 • MA 4-2700

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION, WASHINGTON STATE FERRY SYSTEM

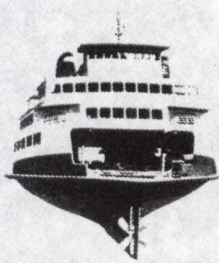
Water transportation has always been vital to the people, economy and growth of the Puget Sound Area. Over the years, the requirements for cross-sound transportation (and the method of meeting these requirements) have changed.

In the early 1900's several privately-owned ferry companies served the waterfront points of the Olympic and Kitsap Peninsulas, Seattle, Everett and Tacoma, and the major islands of the Sound. By the 1930's the automobile was becoming popular and more and larger vessels were needed to accommodate them. The ferries of San Francisco Bay, idled by the completion of the Golden Gate and other bridges, were brought to Puget Sound to serve this need.

In 1951 the Puget Sound ferry system was purchased by the Washington State Toll Bridge Authority. The Toll Bridge Authority today operates the system, largest in the world, under the direction of the Washington State Highway Commission.

Traffic increase on the ferry system has been impressive. In the ten year period 1956-66, passenger traffic has increased 13 per cent and vehicular traffic has increased 38 per cent. On an average day, 12,000 passengers and 9,000 motorists use the services of Washington's state ferries. These figures do not include the trucks and other vehicles classified as "commerce traffic," or tourists.





## Washington State Ferries

SEATTLE FERRY TERMINAL, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98104 • MA 4-2700

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION -- Page 2

There are currently 20 ferries serving seven routes and 18 terminals. The ferries travel approximately 750,000 miles and make about 180,000 landings per year. Ferry system movement of raw materials and consumer goods adds up to 1-1/2 million tons of cargo per year.

Increasing tourism throughout the Pacific Northwest places additional demands on the ferries. The interesting marine routes and scenic recreational areas served by Washington's ferries and the colorful vessels themselves are bringing tourists in growing numbers. In 1962, for example, the ferries carried nearly 1.5 million World's Fair visitors.

Construction is presently underway on four 160-car "super-ferries." Each ferry will carry substantially more cars and at greater speed than the largest, fastest ferry now in operation in the system. A smaller ferry is also being built to up-date service in the lower Puget Sound region.

Construction of the ferries will effect welcome dollar economies for the system. Some of the older, slower ferries presently used have high maintenance costs but carry only a few vehicles. Such ferries have been relegated to the role of "extra-ferry" to assist the larger, regular vessels during the peak traffic periods. The new super-ferries will make it possible to dispense with this costly extra-ferry operation.

As the Puget Sound areas continue to grow, The Washington State Ferry System, an important link in Washington's transportation chain, must continue to keep pace.