

Ferry-Service Improvements: Planning and Implementation for Long Island Sound Ferry Crossings

GERALD S. COHEN, G. FREDERICK YOUNG, DAVID I. GOODING, AND E. WILSON CAMPBELL

The Long Island Sound Ferry Service Improvement Study was initiated in March 1980 to identify possible ways to improve ferry services between Long Island and Connecticut. The events leading to legislation proposed for introduction in the New York State Legislature, which detailed a mechanism for achieving expanded cross-Sound ferry service for residents of the region, are described. The history of previous bridge and ferry crossing studies is reviewed, and the principal findings and issues of the current study are presented. The study featured technical work conducted primarily by staff of the New York State Department of Transportation and establishment of a bistate Policy Advisory Committee representing local officials, businessmen, and citizens' groups. A series of public forums was held that enabled decisionmakers to be aware of public views on the issues. Financial recommendations included the creation of a bistate commission that would oversee and assist in promoting expanded, coordinated ferry operations.

Transportation access between Long Island and New England is essentially dependent on passage through one of the world's most heavily traveled urban-core areas--the City of New York--over bridges that are already at or are rapidly approaching their capacity limits and over expressway and arterial systems that are experiencing severe congestion. The only current transportation alternatives to those routes for travel between Long Island and points throughout New England are two long-established, but also capacity-constrained, ferry services across Long Island Sound: Port Jefferson-Bridgeport and Orient Point-New London.

A number of studies of new bridges or ferry services have been undertaken since the mid-1960s, each generally reinforcing belief in the potential benefits of improved cross-Sound access but failing to establish clearly a course of action that is financially attainable and broadly supportable on both sides of the Sound. In the spring of 1980, immediately following the most recent examination and rejection of a new cross-Sound bridge at any location and for the foreseeable future, the Governors of New York and Connecticut directed their respective Departments of Transportation (DOTs) to initiate a broad, cooperative investigation of alternative improvements in cross-Sound ferry services that might offer a financially viable solution to the continuing issue of cross-Sound transportation access.

The objectives of this study have been to assess the overall desirability and feasibility of major improvements in cross-sound ferry services as transportation investments and to develop a program of near- and longer-term actions to carry out such improvements.

PREVIOUS CROSSING STUDIES

Several studies of various Long Island Sound crossings were made between 1965 and 1971, including a railroad crossing study and bridge studies by a number of groups. Many of these studies advocated a bridge between Rye and Oyster Bay. A 1965 report by the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority strongly advocated a bridge from Rye to Oyster Bay.

During 1974-1975, the Tri-State Regional Planning Commission conducted a Long Island Sound Ferry Study

for Connecticut and New York State. The conclusions were as follows:

1. High-speed hovercraft were too expensive.
2. Major expansion of ferry-boat services would be desirable.
3. The best crossing location, economically and operationally, would be Old Saybrook to East Marion. However, new terminals and access roads in these areas were strongly opposed by local residents and officials.
4. If such a new route were ruled out, improvements to the existing ferries would be desirable.

RECENT BRIDGE STUDY

Pressure to consider a bridge continued. In light of continued expressions of interest in, as well as opposition to, a bridge, Governor Carey directed Commissioner Hennessy (in 1979) to reexamine the feasibility of a bridge and to provide current data for decisions regarding crossings from Long Island to New England.

This study used a 22-member Policy Advisory Committee consisting of political and community leaders and concerned citizens from both New York and Connecticut. This committee met four times and formed task groups that met nine times. The committee also held six public forums at various places on both sides of the Sound. This public involvement helped to ensure a relevant, responsive study. Two major recommendations were made (1):

1. New York State should not, in the foreseeable future, devote further effort to the general or site-specific investigation of a cross-Sound bridge at any location.
2. In cooperation with local officials at current ferry terminal locations and with transportation and economic development officials from the State of Connecticut, New York should undertake the expansion of cross-Sound ferry services, which already appear to have support at the local and state levels on both sides of the Sound.

In May 1980, the Governors of New York and Connecticut appointed a Policy Advisory Committee consisting of local officials and concerned citizens to give advice and make recommendations regarding improved cross-Sound ferry services to the transportation commissioners and the study team.

GOALS OF THE FERRY STUDY

This study of Long Island-New England transportation linkages was designed to provide a set of readily implementable recommendations that had benefited fully from public exposure. The study was also designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. A reasonable degree of agreement among all significant parties on desirable and feasible services;

2. Production on an "action" program that would be supported by both state and local government and operators of current services;

3. Suggestion of both short-term improvements and longer-term service improvements over a 5- to 10-year period, a program of incremental improvements permitting promotion of improved services and assessment of realized use estimates;

4. Recognition of existing terminal locations and operations where improvements could be implemented most rapidly, as well as of continued private ownership and operation of those services in the mix of alternatives to be examined; and

5. Maximum encouragement of private funding for service improvements with minimization of public funding for cross-Sound transportation improvements or operations.

STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

Many of the goals of the study required the achievement of a reasonable degree of agreement or consensus on appropriate actions for service improvements. It was particularly important, therefore, that the transportation commissioners, who would present recommendations to the respective Governors, be aware of all points of view and alternative solutions. The study structure was designed to ensure this knowledge.

Four major groups were involved in the study:

1. A Policy Advisory Committee--jointly chaired by the transportation commissioners and consisting of local officials, business leaders, and representatives of citizens' groups from both states--which met periodically for the purpose of providing input, suggesting avenues of technical analysis, and, most important, helping formulate recommendations for service improvements;

2. A consultant who collected needed survey data, provided background on other ferry operations, and, most important, served as a liaison and contact person for the two state DOTs and the Policy Advisory Committee and for the general public;

3. An NYSDOT technical task force that produced use and financial forecasts for alternative service and fare scenarios, analyzed study findings, and developed conclusions from the study efforts; and

4. Those citizens who provided useful input to the process through their comments at a series of public forums held in New York and Connecticut (many other comments were received in letters written to the commissioners and the local press).

Generally, the public endorsed strongly the concept of improved ferry service, but there was some opposition to extending the service to additional sites in central Suffolk County. The commissioners' recommendations (2) reflected the input of the Policy Advisory Committee, the results of the public forums, the views of the public as written in letters, and the technical reports produced by the consultant and NYSDOT staff.

STUDY FINDINGS

The following sections summarize the findings of the study team.

Present Ferry Service

Two operators currently provide ferry service across Long Island Sound. Cross-Sound Ferry Service, Inc., provides year-round service between Orient Point, New York, and New London, Connecticut. The Bridgeport and Port Jefferson Steamboat Company provides

seasonal service between Port Jefferson, New York, and Bridgeport, Connecticut. These operations are labeled as lines G and C, respectively, on the map shown in Figure 1.

The Orient Point-New London service is provided by three vessels. Two of the ferries can carry 300-325 passengers and 20-22 automobiles, and the third can accommodate 300 passengers and 51 automobiles. All three vessels can accommodate trucks. Frequency of service ranges from a high of 24 one-way trips/day in the summer to a low of 6-8 trips/day during the winter. During the spring and fall months, 14 trips/day are provided. Crossing time ranges from 60 to 80 min, depending on the vessel.

Only one ferry provides the Port Jefferson-Bridgeport service. The vessel can carry 1089 passengers and 36 automobiles, but truck service is not offered. The existing vessel is more than 50 years old and on occasion has been out of service for repair. It is possible that, in the not too distant future, the owners will have to decide whether to overhaul the existing vessel or acquire another one. This service is only operated between May and October. During the summer and on weekends, 8 one-way trips are provided. Frequency of service is only 4-6 trips during the midweek period in the spring and fall. The crossing time is 90 min.

Ridership for both services has generally been increasing in recent years. In 1979, the Orient Point-New London ferry carried 257 000 passengers and 103 000 vehicles and the Port Jefferson-Bridgeport service carried 112 000 passengers and 25 000 vehicles. Although the monthly average for the Orient Point service was approximately 21 000, the range was from a low of 3313 in January to 54 161 in August. Similarly, the Port Jefferson service, with an average patronage of 18 725, shows a low of 4449 in October and a high of 31 255 in August.

During the summer of 1980, a survey of ferry riders was conducted. The results indicate the following:

1. For both services, the largest share of riders--approximately 45 percent--lived in New York State.

2. The primary reason for using the ferry lines was to travel to and from recreational activities.

3. Automobile was the most popular means of travel to the ferry.

4. The average vehicle occupancy was 2.62 persons on the Orient Point-New London line and 2.32 on the Port Jefferson-Bridgeport line.

5. The majority of passengers began and ended their trip in either southeastern Suffolk County or Connecticut.

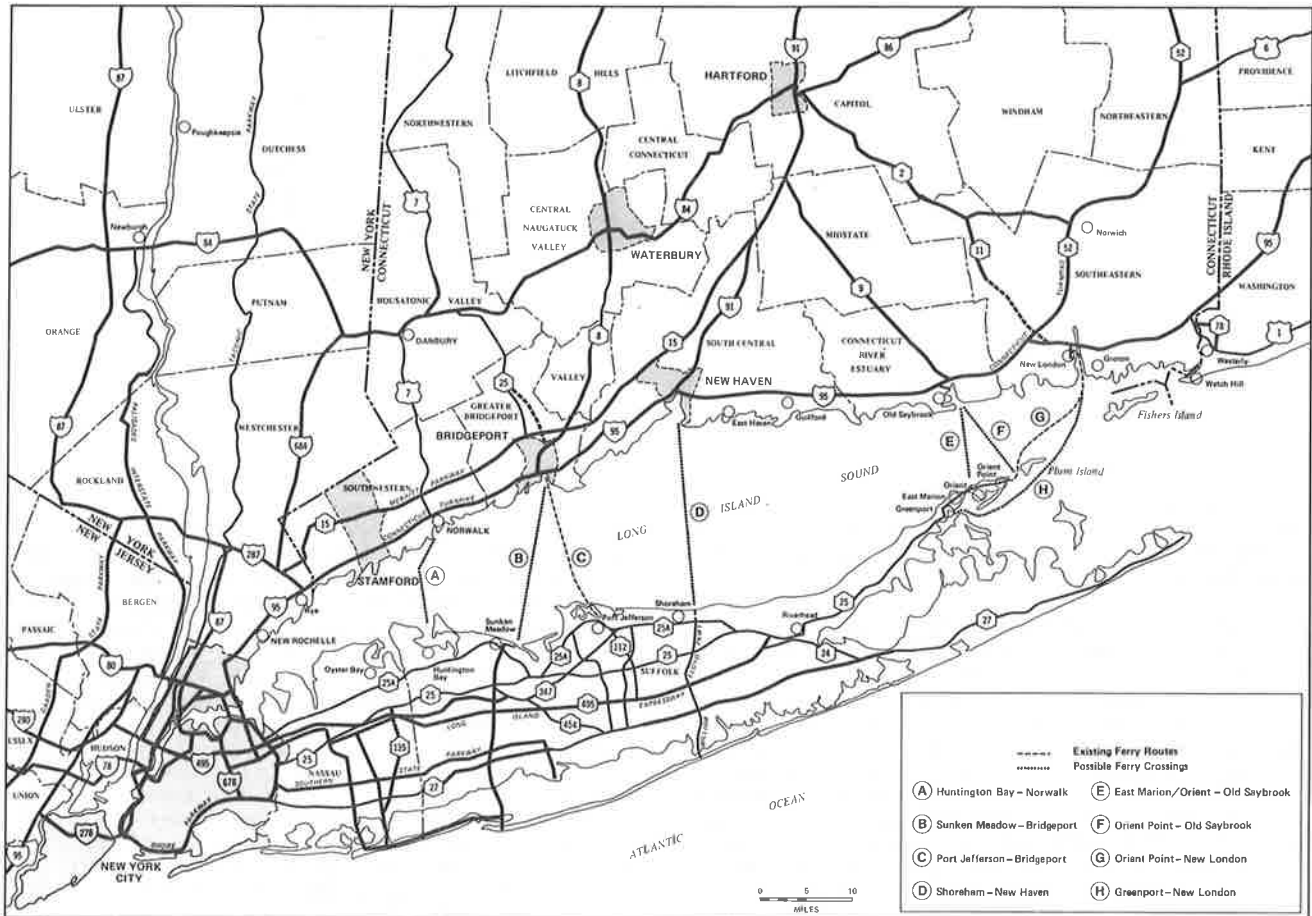
6. When passengers were asked what they liked about the ferry, most responded that it saved time. Other common answers were that they enjoyed the trip and that the trip saved money.

7. When passengers were asked what they disliked about the ferry service, the most common complaints concerned the cost, congestion at the terminal access, and infrequent service.

Ferry Locations

The principal alternatives for ferry-service corridors and terminal locations have been widely established over a decade or more of cross-Sound transportation improvement studies and public discussions and by the geographic location of natural harbors, urban concentration, or on-land access facilities already in place. Although detailed subalternatives may be considered further for implementation purposes, there are essentially 11 cross-Sound ferry-service corridor or terminal location alternatives (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Existing and possible ferry-service crossings between Long Island and Connecticut.



Expected Ferry Use

Forecasts of use, revenue, and capital and operating costs have been developed for all potentially significant alternative cases. For each alternative case, use and revenue forecasts have been made for the following:

1. Three user groups--(a) automobiles (including light trucks and motorcycles), (b) heavy commercial trucks, and (c) passengers (including automobile drivers); and

2. Two future time periods--(a) 1983-1984 as the earliest period that services with up to four vessels could be in place on existing cross-Sound corridors or when similar new-corridor service could be initiated and (b) 1993-1994 as a point in time when full, combined cross-Sound service improvements could be accomplished and full user response to these improvements would be expected. This approach makes it possible to evaluate the service response, capacity requirements, and revenue contribution of each user group. It also permits estimation of potential near-term and longer-range cost-revenue results and investment requirements for staged improvement and financial planning.

The key element of the study method of forecasting ferry use is relative travel costs (including the value of time) for "crossing" the Sound via an existing western bridge and using the alternative ferry service. Forecasts produced are responsive to changes in service frequency, fare levels, and relative total travel costs. This involves three basic assumptions:

1. Future cross-Sound travel patterns for automobiles and passengers will be similar to those for current users of existing cross-Sound ferry services. For heavy commercial truck travel, patterns will be similar to those currently using the Triborough Bridge system and, for eastern cross-Sound corridor alternatives, to those currently using the Orient Point-New London ferry service.

2. The rate of general inflation will decline very gradually, from the 1980 annual level of about 13.3 percent to a long-term rate of 6 percent by the mid-1990s.

3. The price of gasoline and diesel fuel will rise 25 percent above the rate of general inflation between 1980 and 1985. Fuel prices are adjusted to the rate of general inflation after 1985.

The principal data available for use in the detailed development and testing of a use and revenue forecasting method are as follows:

1. Interviews of 1980 users of the two existing cross-Sound ferry services were the source for trip purposes, origins, destinations, and weighted average trip lengths.

2. Historical information for the past 10 years provided by the operators of the two existing cross-Sound ferry services included service schedules and fares, vessel capacities and speeds, and the number of automobiles and light trucks, heavy commercial trucks, and passengers that were carried. From these data additional insights on traveler perception of, and probable response to, relative levels of service, travel time, and costs could be drawn.

Table 1. Projected 1984 and 1994 costs and revenues for two existing ferry services.

Service	Year	No. of Boats	Cost (\$000 000s)					Total Revenue (\$000 000s)		
			Annual Operating Cost for Boats and Terminals	Annualized Capital Cost			Total	Fare Increased at Half Inflation Rate	Fare Increased at Inflation Rate	
				Boat	Terminal	Access				
Port Jefferson-Bridgeport	1984	2	2.81	1.40	0.35	0.40	4.96	3.50	3.97	
		3	3.34	2.10	0.35	0.40	6.19	4.29	4.86	
		4	5.04	2.81	0.35	0.40	8.60	6.86	7.94	
	1994	2	5.50	1.40	0.35	0.40	7.65	6.10	8.18	
		3	6.54	2.10	0.35	0.40	9.39	7.50	10.13	
		4	9.86	2.81	0.35	0.40	13.42	11.9	16.64	
		6	14.23	4.21	0.35	0.40	19.19	17.73	25.33	
		8	18.60	5.61	0.35	0.40	24.96	23.55	33.90	
Orient Point-New London	1984	3	3.19	2.10	0.26	-	5.55	4.93	5.56	
		4	4.59	2.81	0.26	-	7.68	6.59	7.46	
	1994	3	6.27	2.10	0.26	-	8.63	8.41	11.45	
		4	9.00	2.81	0.26	-	12.07	11.21	15.50	
		6	13.20	4.21	0.26	-	17.67	15.72	22.26	
		8	17.41	5.61	0.26	-	23.28	20.25	28.86	

3. A one-day sample of heavy commercial trucks using the Triborough Bridge system in 1979 helped to identify the travel patterns and cost and time factors for such trips.

The principal relations explaining 1970-1979 cross-Sound ferry use for automobiles and passengers were quantified through regression analysis and used to forecast future use at existing--and, by extension, all alternative--cross-Sound service corridors. This approach was also used for heavy commercial truck forecasts on the eastern crossing corridor alternatives, and a relative timeand cost-based diversion approach was used to forecast truck use in general (1). Forecasts were also prepared for each crossing alternative. In each case, the existence of another crossing alternative with similar service levels is implied. Forecasts involving three coexistent ferry services, and truck diversion to these services from the Triborough Bridge route, were developed in a slightly different manner.

The principal conclusions of the study demand forecasts and analyses are as follows:

1. The principal constraint on cross-Sound travel may be the limited cross-Sound service available. Responses from all three potential user groups are estimated to increase dramatically with each increment of cross-Sound ferry service capacity provided. They also indicate that higher fare levels will not significantly dampen user response. Recent experience on both existing cross-Sound ferry services has demonstrated just this finding: Both have increased fares, added services, and gained ridership. The ridership increases at Orient Point-New London, on the order of 20 percent between 1978 and 1979, may also reflect the capacity and amenity improvements of a new "T-boat".

2. The near-term cross-Sound ferry use forecast at all crossing corridor alternatives investigated could be very large when compared with the recent 1979 use of current cross-Sound ferry services. For the four-vessel cases, 1984 forecasts show a doubling of passenger use, more than a doubling of passenger vehicles, and more than a threefold increase in heavy commercial truck use at Orient Point-New London.

Estimated Costs and User Revenues

Cost estimates were developed for access and terminal improvements (including new harbors or long piers, where necessary) and the acquisition and operation of new vessels (T-boats). Table 1 gives

more detail on alternative service levels, investment cost annualizations, and fare levels for estimated results for the two existing cross-Sound ferry service corridors. (Because of the large number of alternative service combinations considered in the study, only selected examples can be given in this summary; a full exposition of the study results is given in the technical reports.) Not surprisingly, projected annual operating costs are greatest for those corridor alternatives that have the longest crossing distances and in-harbor times, and alternatives that exhibit the shortest crossing distances and in-harbor times have the lowest annual operating costs. The Orient Point-New London service is the intermediate case. Still, the range of estimated annual operating costs is not great overall: For the eight-vessel cases, the high is \$20-21 million and the low is \$15-16 million.

In sum, the estimates given in the table indicate that, at least in concept, many of the alternative cross-Sound ferry-service improvements examined in this study can be economically feasible private-enterprise ventures at fare levels increased at or at somewhat less than the rate of general inflation.

Additional Potential Impacts

Environmental impacts of cross-Sound ferry services and of related shore or inland facility improvements will have to be examined in detail prior to implementation. State and/or local or federal review, evaluation, and approval procedures will have to be satisfied and acceptable plans prepared to avoid or minimize potential adverse impacts.

The economic activity that might be generated by an investment in substantially improved cross-Sound ferry services was estimated by "scaling down" the same types of regional economic impacts attributed to the very much larger investments estimated to be required for a new cross-Sound bridge in the 1979 NYSDOT study. The estimates include direct economic impacts from construction and continuing impacts from improved interregional access as well as the effect of additional increases in sales expected by business (as estimated from a survey of business executives for that bridge study).

An investment of about \$100 million (probably staged in a series of smaller units) was assumed for a "major improvement" in improved cross-Sound ferry services--12 new boats at \$81.6 million (in 1984 dollars) and \$20 million for terminals and access. This order-of-magnitude ferry-service investment would be 6-2/3 percent of the average 1979 estimates of investment required for a new bridge. Since

improved ferry service would not be as fast or convenient as bridge travel, the proportional economic impacts associated with a bridge were further reduced by one-half to reflect an appropriate level of perceived, potential business sales (and investment) that might be associated with improved ferry service. The economic impact on business is estimated to be \$170 million on Long Island and \$50 million in Connecticut.

Public and Private Roles in Financing and Implementation

Cross-Sound ferry services at this time are primarily a matter of private-sector concern and initiative. Formal public involvement is essentially limited to federal safety and operating authority controls and general governmental concern with such matters as traffic control, municipal harbor facilities, and the environment, primarily dredging. The user demand, cost, and revenue estimates developed in this study, although subject to further testing over time, are generally encouraging for the continuing private-sector initiative in cross-Sound ferry-service improvements, financing, and operations. At the same time, potentially significant public benefits to travelers and communities on both sides of Long Island are estimated to accompany major improvements in cross-Sound ferry services, and improvements to harbor and landside transportation facilities can be seen as furthering a variety of public objectives. Public action on such improvements, careful public attention to possible environmental, community, and continuing service adequacy issues, and, most important, clear public policies with regard to cross-Sound transportation (particularly policies supportive of private-sector initiative and disavowing competitive public action) appear to be the only public commitments necessary to assist major improvements in cross-Sound ferry service.

A number of additional assistance mechanisms are available to state and local governments. On the financial side these include tax exemptions and loan or loan guarantee capabilities to directly assist private initiatives or to lower the costs and increase the potential of securing private-sector financing. Economic development programs generally, including the existing capabilities of such institutions as the Connecticut Development Authority and several industrial development agencies in Suffolk County on Long Island, may be of material aid in the light of the broad economic benefits identified. Efforts should concentrate on incentives to encourage private-sector investment in new vessels and private ownership and operation and on improving eligibility for federal support of harbor, terminal, and access improvements.

Although the findings regarding a new, or third, cross-Sound ferry service cannot be definitive, the overall weight of the evidence available indicates that such an additional service may well be both desirable and affordable in the future. A number of technical and public support issues must be thoroughly addressed, and necessary construction and other actions to implement a new service at any location cannot be initiated without additional investigation and analysis.

It is also clear that some form of continuing public organization is desirable to follow up on these implementation proposals and to provide an ongoing forum to monitor and coordinate cross-Sound ferry services and their improvement. In keeping with these findings and established public policies, this organization need not be either an operating authority or a formal bistate body. Each state

should consider an organizational form, membership, and set of responsibilities best suited to its own traditions and interests. It appears to be both necessary and desirable, however, that these organizations work closely together and that such organizations provide, in their membership, for involvement of the local areas most likely to be affected by continued and improved cross-Sound ferry services.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. There is strong evidence of potential cross-Sound travel demand among all groups of users (passenger vehicles, heavy commercial trucks, and passengers) that can be tapped immediately and could grow in the next decade to 10 or more times present ferry-service use, even at fare levels designed to recover most, and in some situations all, operating and investment costs.

2. A combination of crossing locations--especially with a possible third centrally located service--will provide the best potential for service improvements and traveler and economic benefits as well as the service design, implementation staging, and operational flexibility needed.

3. Although all major potential cross-Sound ferry-service corridor and terminal location alternatives were identified and examined during the course of this study, none clearly emerged, on all counts, as the most desirable alternative to pursue. However, of those alternatives, the Shoreham-New Haven corridor appears to offer the most promise for new service and should be further examined cooperatively, publicly, and in detail. To date, no strong support has been shown for any of the cross-Sound ferry-service corridor alternatives except the two currently in operation. Little public support, or technical evidence, has been found in favor of the corridor alternatives to the west of Port Jefferson-Bridgeport. If implemented, those alternatives could have a significant adverse effect on the present locally supported private ferry service between those locations. Although transportation and energy analyses indicated potential service and financial advantages for several East Marion/Orient Point-Old Saybrook ferry-service corridor locations, those alternatives have generated little public support and some opposition on Long Island and adamant opposition in Connecticut. The Greenport-New London corridor alternative does not fare well in the evaluations of ferry services.

4. Existing cross-Sound ferry services appear to be financially sound and locally well supported, and the owners are interested in proceeding with facility, equipment, and overall service improvements; those services and locations also appear to offer the most cost-effective, and certainly the most rapid, opportunities for major service improvements.

5. Although the investment needed to fully implement potentially desirable services could approach or exceed \$100 million, the total call on public resources need not be substantial and may properly be shared among benefiting jurisdictions. Such investment can, and as a practical matter must, be made on an incremental basis so as to provide all parties ample opportunity to make prudent decisions in the light of more current information.

6. Private-sector financing of the major element of cross-Sound ferry-service improvements--new, modern, and efficient vessels--should be achievable; public-sector commitments should be limited to facilitating private investments and accomplishing relatively modest improvements in landside access and terminals. Removal of speculation about public action to compete with private-sector cross-Sound ferry services or to proceed eventually with a

cross-Sound bridge would eliminate a major perceived stumbling block to private-sector investment.

7. The principal costs of improved ferry service can be financed by user revenues. Thus, the best means of conducting improved ferry service and securing investment funds to improve ferry service is reliance on the private sector for operating the ferry service and for investing in that service. Public involvement would take the form of cooperation between commissioners established in each state for the purpose of coordinating efforts to improve ferry service and to ensure that a reasonable level of improved ferry service is available to the public.

On completion of the study, the New York State and Connecticut DOTs produced an executive summary report containing the official recommendations (2). The major recommendations were as follows:

1. The States of New York and Connecticut and their several directly benefiting localities should work toward a cooperative policy commitment and a cooperative public-private program of promoting major, immediate, and continuing improvements in cross-Sound ferry services to levels needed to serve transportation demand in a safe, reliable, cost-effective, and coordinated manner. Necessary steps toward enabling legislation, bistrate and state-local arrangements, and detailed implementing studies, negotiations, and programming actions should be initiated immediately.

2. The recommended program should contain four key elements: (a) staged land access and terminal improvements and vessel acquisitions for the two existing Port Jefferson-Bridgeport and Orient Point-New London services to bring both of those services up to frequent, adequate year-round capabilities with amenities for automobile, passenger, and commercial truck users; (b) initiation of detailed engineering, operations, financial, and environmental studies toward implementation of a third major year-round cross-Sound ferry service route somewhere between New Haven and Shoreham; (c) creation of continuing organizations, appropriate to each of the states, charged with responsibility for conducting the examination of a third major cross Sound ferry service, monitoring services and use, making service and improvement recommendations, taking the lead role in securing private and public funding for such improvements and in negotiating assistance and service agreements, and generally providing technical, service coordination, and promotion assistance; and (d) identification of initial public funding that can serve as a catalyst for major private funding for identified improvements in ferry services and facilities.

3. Public policies with regard to cross-Sound ferry services should generally emphasize the following: (a) private-sector operation and financing of vessels, terminals, and ancillary equipment; restriction of state-local financing to general-purpose access and public facilities improvements; and maximum reliance on user charges to support improved and continued cross-Sound ferry services; (b) support of the efforts of authorized private operators in improving services, in instituting such new services as may be found feasible and desirable, and in adjusting their operations and repositioning their equipment to best meet evolving cross-Sound service requirements or opportunities; (c) careful examination of, and sensitivity to, the economic, environmental, traffic, and energy consumption

elements of service improvements and operations; (d) coordination and coordinated promotion of cross-Sound ferry services between the states and their localities, among ferry-service operators, and with related transportation service or other planning and implementation programs; (e) a staged program for improvements to existing services as well as possible initiation of and improvements to a new service; and (f) clear recognition of the importance of user amenities (protection from weather, reservation systems, etc.) and specialized freight services (exclusive runs, truck consolidation services, etc.).

IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDY FINDINGS

When fully implemented, improvements in cross-Sound ferry service to meet existing and potential needs for improved ferry service between Long Island and Connecticut could cost as much as \$100 million. A legislative proposal was developed in New York to provide implementation and financing procedures. It was proposed that public-sector commitments be limited to facilitating private investment and accomplishing relatively modest landside and terminal improvements at existing locations and the accomplishment of full technical impact and feasibility studies of the third coexisting service. Since the initial proposal, there has been evidence of private initiative for new-vessel financing and the proposed element regarding public loan guarantees has been withdrawn. The major elements of the current proposal are as follows:

1. An appropriation of \$1.25 million is needed to improve terminal facilities and road access, primarily at Port Jefferson.

2. An appropriation of \$0.5 million will be used to provide a detailed feasibility study of ferry service at a third location. This would be a consultant effort, to be undertaken while service improvements are made and promoted and demand response is observed for existing services.

Creation of a Commission was also proposed in the legislation. This Commission will provide a mechanism for overseeing and promoting New York's interest in improving ferry services; in taking the lead responsibility in seeking private (and possibly federal) financial aid and local or state assistance; and in examining and monitoring service levels and recommending future improvements. Commission members would be from Long Island, which places the public-interest responsibility for cross-Sound ferry service with the localities that would be the principal beneficiaries of improved service. NYSDOT would also be authorized to coordinate efforts for ferry-service improvements with the Commission.

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