

# REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: HERRON ISLAND FERRY OPERATIONS

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Herron Island is located in Case Inlet in south Puget Sound. This Pierce County island is 1.25 miles long, and .50 mile across with a population of approximately 150 full time residents and a seasonal population of roughly 300-400 persons; all requiring access to and from the island via ferry.

HMC Management (a Washington State Homeowners Association) owns and manages the Herron Island ferry operations with the goals of being good financial and environmental stewards, providing safe and efficient ferry transportation, and engaging with the Herron Island community to meet their transportation needs between the island and the mainland ferry dock. Herron Island is a private community with no general public access. The M/V Charlie Wells and Herron Island ferry operations are 100% funded by the owners of the Association. No government money subsidizes the operation of our ferry system.

## DESCRIPTION OF REQUEST

HMC Management (hereinafter referred to as HMC), is seeking information from qualified firms with experience in providing ferry operation services to assess the pros and cons of outsourcing our ferry operations.

The Herron Island Ferry System is a private (member only) ferry operation which transports persons, vehicles (both private and commercial), and other property between the mainland ferry dock at the intersection of Herron Road and Isted Road in Pierce County, and the Herron Island ferry dock; a distance of approximately one mile across Case Inlet. Currently, HMC manages ferry operations with one 11 vehicle/44 passenger ferry, the Marine Vessel (M/V) Charlie Wells, powered by two John Deere 9.0L marine diesel engines of 325hp. Marine reduction gear is Twin Disc Inc., marine controls are cable operated shift, and throttle and steering is a Wagner electric controlled hydraulic steering system. The current COI requires a master with a 100-ton Inland license or better and a deck hand.

## RFI SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

An electronic copy of your response to this Request for Information (hereafter called "response") must be received by HMC Management, Attention: Mike Graham, Board President at the email address provided below no later than close of business, 4:30 PM, November 30, 2017.

Timeline for review and feedback from HMC will be based on the information and level of interest we receive. We anticipate that if HMC decides to issue an RFP (Request for Proposal), that this would occur within 90 days of the RFI submission date.

## CONTACT

Mike Graham

[HMCMikeGraham@herronisland.org](mailto:HMCMikeGraham@herronisland.org)

## SCOPE OF EXISTING FERRY OPERATIONS

This scope of work describes the existing practices required to operate the Herron Island Ferry System.

### 1) Roles and Responsibilities

- a) The HMC Board of Directors is a five-person board and all are owner/members of the association. They are elected annually on a staggered schedule for two year terms. HMC employs an Island Manager (a non-member) and other office staff. The ferry crew reports directly to the Island Manager who reports to the Board of Directors through the Board President.
- b) The existing ferry crew consists of two Captains and two Deckhands also employed by HMC. They are currently represented by the Inland Boatman's Union (IBU) under a three-year collective bargaining agreement. One crew (Captain and Deckhand) works a full-time weekday shift (Monday afternoon through Friday morning) and the other crew (Captain and Deckhand) works a part-time weekend shift (Friday afternoon through Monday morning).
- c) The crew is responsible for checking in vehicles and walk-on passengers at the mainland ferry dock including collecting ferry fares, verifying member and guest credentials through the appropriate vehicle sticker or guest pass, loading and unloading the vehicles onto the ferry and transporting the ferry across the water. No check-in activity occurs from the island side to the mainland ferry dock. Additional duties are identified below under Maintenance & Operations Services.
- d) Together with operating ferry runs in accordance with the existing ferry schedule, the crew also performs routine maintenance and is responsible for piloting the ferry to and from a certified dry dock/shipyard facility on a biennial basis for major repair and maintenance services. HMC contracts out with the selected shipyard to perform the maintenance.

## 2) Ferry Vessel Operations

- a) The Herron Island ferry operates 365 days a year, with daily, seasonal, holiday, and pre-published low tide variances in the spring and summer months. A copy of the existing schedule is shown below: **(Copy of schedule provided as attachment)**
- b) The island manager is accountable for crew hiring decisions and partnering with the ferry captain to fully evaluate the technical requirements of each candidate. Payroll, employee benefits and interface with the IBU are all tasks currently performed by the Island Manager and the office staff.
- c) The ferry crew currently operates on a weekday/weekend rotation as described above. Scheduling of full time and part time crew is handled by the Island Manager, including backup crew coverage. At exceptionally busy times (such as holiday weekends) the crew is increased by one deckhand to expedite the fare collection and loading process for all vehicles wishing to ride the ferry.
- d) For the calendar year ending 2016, a total of 35,578 vehicles were transported, an increase of 3.5% over 2015. YTD traffic (through 8/20/17) shows less than .5% increase over 2016.
- e) Any overflow of vehicles in excess of the deck capacity at either the mainland or island-side ferry docks are transported as shuttles until all waiting vehicles are transported. This will often interrupt the ferry schedule but is a policy long practiced on Herron Island. For the calendar year ending 2016, the number of shuttles increased nearly 11% to 619, while scheduled runs held steady, increasing by less than .5% to 3128.
- f) Special ferry runs are available to members with advanced notification and require the payment of a special ferry fee. Reservations for special runs are based on the availability of the crew.
- g) Emergency runs - Round-the-clock service is provided to any member needing emergency transportation by ambulance. Emergency runs must be triggered by a call to 911.

## 3) Mainland and Island Ferry Docks

- a) Both the mainland and island-side ferry docks are owned and maintained by HMC.

## 4) Maintenance & Operation Services

- a) The current ferry crew performs routine preventative maintenance throughout the year to keep the vessel in good working order. The maintenance activities are primarily focused on vessel machinery, equipment, certification and systems. This includes periodic oil and filter changes and maintaining the cleanliness of the engine room.
- b) The current crew arranges for refueling at approximate three-week intervals and works in conjunction with a local EPA-approved contractor for spill containment at the time of refueling.
- c) The current crew performs periodic emergency and man-overboard drills.
- d) Each year, during the spring and summer months several ferry runs are cancelled due to low tide conditions. While the M/V Charlie Wells is a flat-bottomed boat and can remain afloat in the lowest of tides, the boarding ramp is limited in its ability to be lowered below a certain point, making it inaccessible for vehicle loading and unloading.

## INFORMATION REQUESTED REGARDING CONTRACTOR FERRY OPERATIONS EXPERTISE

- 1) Describe the nature and scope of your business, certifications, years of operation, union affiliation, number of employees and contractors, and geographic footprint.
- 2) Describe your knowledge in marine propulsions systems and the works of such systems. At a minimum, this would include knowledge of diesel engines in 300 to 1,000 horsepower range, marine reduction systems, control systems, and marine electrical systems.
- 3) Describe your knowledge and experience with current federal (in particular USCG), state and local laws with respect to the ferry system. Respondents must describe their knowledge and experience with respect to USCG 33CFR104 Chapter 1, Subchapter H – Maritime Security Rules for Vessels and Facilities.
- 4) Describe your experience in operating a car/passenger ferry or other similar system. Narrative must include dates and places where the experience was obtained. Your response should also include an overview of financial, quantitative and qualitative benefits realized by the organizations/communities who outsourced their operations to your company.
- 5) Describe your approach to partnering with public, private, or non-profit enterprise on the day-to-day operations of a Ferry System including adapting practices and approaches to align with the operations of the organizations you support. Specifically describe your staffing approach and if/how you have brought existing employees/crew over to become part of your operation.
- 6) Describe if/how you handle 24/7 coverage of ferry crew operations for emergency situations.
- 7) Describe your knowledge of and experience with operating online/mobile ticketing, reservations, or tracking systems.
- 8) Present any initial ideas you bring to the table for optimization of the Herron Island ferry operations that could reduce costs or increase service.
- 9) Describe why you should be considered as a bidder, should HMC issue a proposal for outsourced ferry operations.