



Reservation System

Vendor Landscape - FINAL

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Market Overview

The overall landscape of vendors who provide reservation systems to transit and/or ferry services is small; there really is not a dedicated commuter ferry reservation system space, so vendors tend to be those who handle reservations for other entities, like dinner cruises and theme parks, or in other modes of transportation like buses or airplanes.

To highlight the challenges of identifying vendors that may be suitable for Kitsap Transit's needs, we first distinguished between the characteristics of ticketing and reservation systems. Ticketing systems generally provide a ticket for near instantaneous use (usually within a couple hours or the day of purchase), where the full cost of the service is paid at the time of ticketing. Ticketing may provide general access to a service (e.g.: a transit day pass that provides access on all routes all day) or may specify a place and time (e.g.: a movie ticket for a specific theater, specific movie at a specific time). These transactions are one-time/non-recurring, but customers may be able to purchase multiple tickets now for future use. They typically do not guarantee service; there remains a first come, first served component.

In contrast, reservations by definition are for use at a specified future point in time. Payment may be made at the time of ticketing (e.g.: airline tickets) or may occur at the time of use (e.g.: restaurant reservations). In order to match a customer request with supply, a location, time, route, etc. is specified. Reservations aim to guarantee service to the customer by holding a seat/table/room for their use. The vast majority of reservation systems are built around one-time/non-recurring transactions, and this is one of the key characteristics that poses a challenge for KT in the vendor space. While occasional KT customers may find this type of reservation system satisfactory, commuters seeking recurring reservations at more or less consistent days and times are not well served by this design. In our review of the vendor landscape, we could find no known use cases where a reservation system supports consistent, recurring reservations.

Comparison of Ticketing and Reservation System Characteristics

	Ticketing System	One Time Reservations	Recurring Reservations
Time of Use	Usually instant or the day of	Use in the future	Use in the future
Time of Payment	At ticketing	At ticketing or at use	At ticketing or at use
Location/Time	May or may not be specified	Specified location/time	Specified location/time
Frequency	Non-recurring/Multiple use	Non-recurring	Consistent, recurring
Typical Use Cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit day passes, • Movie theater tickets, • Museum/theme park entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airline/hotel bookings, • Sporting event tickets, • Restaurant reservations, • Dinner cruises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No other known use cases
Meets KT System Need	No	Yes, partially	Yes, partially

As the discussion and table above demonstrate, there is no known vendor that is a perfect fit for KT's ferry commuting service, so we examined a variety of vendors whose products may fit with some additional configuration or customization, much like the current vendor, RocketRez. There are some vendors, like

Starboard Suite, FareHarbor and CARUS, that specialize in reservations and ticketing for passenger vessels, all of whom were evaluated by Kitsap during their initial vendor selection. For the most part, though, even these vendors target the tourist industries and their products provide functionality far beyond reservations, like managing ticketing, events, and lodging.

Potential Vendors

To survey the vendor landscape, we drew from the vendors that were identified as we conducted the system review, and talked to peer agencies, although not all of the agencies we interviewed use a reservation system. More details about how those agencies manage reservations and passenger demand can be found in a separate document that Four Nines and Amey Consulting prepared for KT, called “Reservation System Peer Analysis”

Two peers, Washington State Ferries and Steamship Authority (Martha’s Vineyard, MA) have custom systems that were designed for them, and the rest are using a variety of systems designed for other uses. Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District works with tickets.com for special event ticketing, and has just engaged Gateway Ticketing to manage their bicycle reservation system. Previously, Golden Gate used ParkMobile, primarily a parking app, to help them with bicycle reservations, and ultimately decided that the ParkMobile product did not meet their needs. Gateway Ticketing is also employed by the San Francisco Bay Ferry for special event ticketing.

To round out the vendor landscape, we conducted some additional high-level research into reservation systems being used by regional airlines (PenAir and Kenmore Air), Greyhound’s BoltBus, and other vendors mentioned in the introduction who provide reservations and/or ticketing for non-commuter vessels.

Vendor	Product/Focus	Example Customers
RocketRez https://rocket-rez.com/	Charters and Tours	Kitsap Transit (current product), City of Fort Lauderdale Water Taxi
Carus Ferry AB https://www.carus.com/	CarRes, sales/revenue management, reservation system	Alaska Marine Highway System
Tickets.com https://www.tickets.com/	Ticketing and ticket inventory management	Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (for purchase with special event ticket only)
ParkMobile https://parkmobile.io/	Parking Solutions	Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (old)
Gateway Ticketing https://www.gatewayticketing.com/	Galaxy POS Ticketing System	Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (new), Blue & Gold
TakeFlite https://tflite.com/	Passenger service system	Kenmore Air, Grant Aviation (Alaska)
Starboard Suite https://www.starboardsuite.com/	Full suite for ticketing, marketing, revenue management, customer check-in	Island Adventure, Riverlady Cruises
Sabre https://www.sabre.com/	Airport/Airline reservations, management	PenAir, various airlines, rail lines, tourism

Vendor	Product/Focus	Example Customers
FareHarbor https://fareharbor.com/	Internet booking, event management	Painted Ladies Touring Company; Body Glove Cruises
Checkfront https://www.checkfront.com/	Tour booking reservation system	1000 Island Cruises, Eagle Wing Tours
BoltBus (provider unknown) https://www.boltbus.com/	Bus ticketing, boarding management	Greyhound, BoltBus

Analysis

There are no vendors in the research we conducted that are a perfect fit for KT. The peers that we interviewed either do not use a reservation system or are addressing different issues than those of KT's Fast Ferry, and as stated earlier, it's a small vendor pool. Consequently, we performed a very high level analysis and limited it to four vendors who may warrant some additional time and research in the event that KT pursues a new vendor.

The table below describes the vendor, product type, whether they have ferry and/or transit experience, and whether they have the capability of handling recurring commuter reservations. "Maybe" in the last category indicates that the vendor may have the capability, but it is either tied to ticketing, requires customization, or hasn't yet been done despite the apparent ability to handle it. Key strengths and weaknesses are noted for each, along with cost information where it was obtainable and our estimate of how scalable the solution is, which in every case is at least adequate for what KT would need in a product. In the table below, the term "SaaS" stands for Software as a Service, meaning that the software application is owned and maintained by the vendor at their own server location, and made available to the customer on a subscription basis. The next column, "COTS", stands for Commercial Off the Shelf software, which is packaged software that the customer purchases as software licenses, and is usually installed on the customer's internal computer systems.

Name	SaaS	COTS	Custom	Ferry/ Transit Experience	Strengths	Weakness	Cost Range	Scalability	Recurring/ Commuter Reservations
Takeflite	Y	Y	N	N	Full service suite for small to medium airlines	Primarily airline; reservations only a small part	Unknown	Good	No
Carus	Y	Y	N	Y	E-commerce w/ responsive design, customer service back end. Focus on customer experience	Targeted at larger, no-commute commercial enterprises and likely to be priced accordingly	\$40K initial, ongoing annual fees of \$60K	Good	Maybe, but appears tied to ticketing
Gateway Ticketing	Y	Y	N	Y	POS - Ticketing & Admission Control, modular	Not reservation system	Approx. \$2K/month service fee	Good	Maybe, but tied to ticketing
Starboard Suite	Y	Y	Y	Y	Highly flexible and configurable; platform could be customized. Much experience w/passenger vessels	May be too expensive	.25/ \$1.50 per ticket, or monthly fee negotiable	Good	Yes, with customization

Conclusion

We did not find a vendor that is currently a good fit for KT's current needs. An investment in a new system would be much more costly both initially and on an ongoing basis than further investment to enhance the current system. Given the cost constraints inherent in an agency of KT's size, it does not make sense to scrap the current system and procure a new one.