PRESS RELEASE

Kitsap Transit ferries carried more than 1 million passengers in 2023

Post-pandemic travel patterns, extra sailings, marketing campaign fuel growth

<u>**CORRECTION**</u>: This press release was updated on Feb. 28, 2024, after a data discrepancy was discovered.
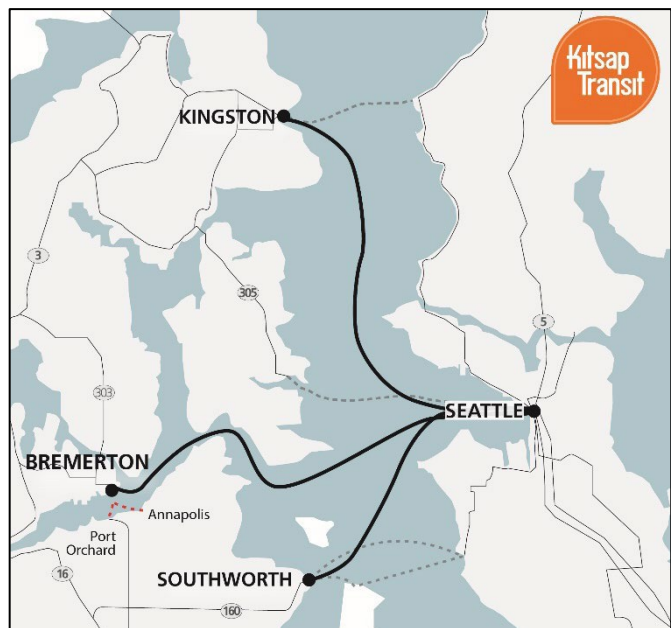
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BREMERTON, Wash. – Kitsap Transit's passenger-only ferries carried more than 1 million passengers in 2023, a 37 percent jump over ridership in 2022, as demand rebounded in the post-pandemic era.

Kitsap Transit's three cross-sound fast ferry routes between the Kitsap Peninsula and downtown Seattle accounted for much of the ridership gain, with the Bremerton/Seattle route posting a 54 percent gain over the prior year. Starting in December 2022, Kitsap Transit temporarily added 14 weekday sailings and 14 Saturday sailings on the Bremerton/Seattle route in [an arrangement with the state](#) until Washington State Ferries can restore its two-boat service on the route.

Kitsap Transit's fast ferry routes (solid black lines on map) to Seattle and local ferry routes connecting Port Orchard, Annapolis and Bremerton carried more than 1 million passengers in 2023.

The Bremerton Fast Ferry service began operating in the summer of 2017 after Kitsap County voters approved a sales-tax measure to fund three passenger-only ferry routes connecting Bremerton, Kingston and Southworth to downtown Seattle. Kitsap Transit launched fast-ferry service on the Kingston/Seattle route in November 2018 and the Southworth/Seattle route in March 2021.

The two newer fast-ferry routes also saw significant ridership gains: The Kingston/Seattle route saw a 37 percent increase in ridership, and the Southworth/Seattle route a 49 percent increase. Average

passenger loads per sailing were up 35 percent for the Kingston service and 41 percent for the Southworth service.

In addition, Kitsap Fast Ferries met the agency's 2023 goal of obtaining 98 percent or better service reliability and arrived on time (defined as within 5 minutes of scheduled arrival) 95 percent of the time.

"We are proud of the dedication our ferry crews, mechanics and shoreside ambassadors demonstrate day in and day out in operating our service safely on the marine highways while maintaining an excellent record of reliability," said John Clauson, Executive Director of Kitsap Transit. "And we're able to offer the public reliable transport to and from the ferry terminals thanks to the dedication of our bus operators and the people who support them."

Most fast ferry sailings have room for passengers. Consider these weekday averages:

- Bremerton/Seattle: Average passenger load to Seattle in the morning was 56 percent and returning to Bremerton in the afternoon was 64 percent. Afternoon sailings to Bremerton typically depart at or near capacity, such as the 3:45 PM sailing.
- Kingston/Seattle: Average passenger load to Seattle in the morning was 25 percent and returning to Kingston in the afternoon was 26 percent.
- Southworth/Seattle: Average passenger load to Seattle in the morning was 28 percent and returning to Southworth in the afternoon was 23 percent.

To look up statistics on each route and average loads by sailing, visit kitsaptransit.com/ferry-dash.

The ridership gains came in a year that Kitsap Transit mounted its first-ever marketing campaign for its fast ferry service. The campaign, "Reliable, Relaxing & REAL FAST," was produced in partnership with Tacoma marketing firm JayRay, with video ads running on YouTube, Facebook and TikTok, among other digital channels, and large printed banners on the sides of Kitsap Transit buses.

To meet the ongoing maintenance needs of its 10-vessel fleet, now Washington's second largest, Kitsap Transit is planning to construct a new ferry maintenance facility. The facility will increase ferry service reliability and directly benefit multimodal transit in the region. Kitsap Transit has completed a comprehensive screening process to identify potential sites for the facility and set up a StoryMap to share information and collect feedback from the public through January 10, 2024.

TABLE: Comparison of 2022 and 2023 Ridership, Kitsap Transit Ferries

	2022	2023	Change	% Change
Fast Ferry Routes	510,942	769,732	258,790	51%
Bremerton/Seattle	334,973	517,270	182,297	54%
Kingston/Seattle	77,783	106,375	28,592	37%
Southworth/Seattle	98,186	146,087	47,901	49%

Local Ferry Routes	283,954	323,085	39,131	14%
Port Orchard/Bremerton	203,681	216,101	12,420	6%
Annapolis/Bremerton	80,273	106,984	26,711	33%
KT FERRIES TOTAL	**794,896**	**1,092,817**	**297,921**	**37%**

About Kitsap Transit

Kitsap Transit has been operating friendly, convenient public transit since 1983. The transit agency for Kitsap County carried more than 3.84 million riders in 2019 across a multi-modal system of routed buses, passenger ferries, paratransit shuttles, vanpools, and worker/driver buses for the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard.

Hablar español?

Por favor llame al 1-800-501-7433 durante las horas normales de oficina. El personal de servicios al cliente se conectará con un intérprete para ayudarle a responder sus preguntas.

Nagsasalita ka ba ng Tagalog?

Paki-tawagan ang numero 1-800-501-7433 normal na oras ng trabaho. Customer Service kawani ay kumonekta sa isang taga interpretor upang tulungan sagutin ang iyong katanungan.