

Plattsburgh Ferry FAQ's

1. Why does the Whatcom Chief need replacing?

A. The Whatcom Chief is too old, too expensive to maintain, has several upcoming major repair issues and does not meet current safety standards for automobile passenger egress.

2. Why should the Plattsburgh be the best option?

A.. The Plattsburgh is the only good used Ferry of appropriate size available for purchase in the entire U.S.A.. It is a very seaworthy design, in excellent condition and very reasonably priced, at roughly ¼ of the price of a new build.

3. What Capacity is the Plattsburgh.

A. As currently configured, the Plattsburgh will carry approximately 36 standard vehicles (V/S the 18-20 of the Chief) and approximately the same number of Walk-on Passengers (36+). The purchase price includes the addition of a small passenger space on the main deck for disabled persons. It is the same width of the Whatcom Chief and 80 feet longer.

4. The Plattsburgh is a used Ferry, how long will it last?

A. The Plattsburgh was built in Florida for the Lake Champlain Transportation Company of Burlington Vermont in 1984. It has spent its entire working life in fresh water with almost no corrosion. The hull is in virtually new condition and the machinery, excellent. Usable operational life span will be a minimum of 25 years.

5. If the Plattsburgh is so good, why are they selling it?

The traffic on the route has outgrown the Plattsburgh's capacity, it has been replaced with a larger vessel.

6. Will the Plattsburgh fit the existing docks?

A. Yes, the Plattsburgh, although longer, is the same width as the Whatcom Chief. It will fit in the existing docks perfectly without any dock modifications. In 2009 the Island Dock was reconfigured to night berth the proposed "Unbuilt New" Ferry of 2007, which would have been a similar size.

7. Will the slips have to be dredged for the Plattsburgh?

A, No, the measured lightship draft of the Plattsburgh is 6.2 feet in Freshwater, the lightship draft of the Whatcom Chief is 6 feet in Saltwater, which is more buoyant. The draft of the two vessels is identical.

8. As it is bigger, will the Plattsburgh use more fuel than the Whatcom Chief?

A. No, measured fuel use of both vessels is the same. The Plattsburgh has a longer waterline length and due to marine hydrology scale, will actually be more efficient, use proportionally less power and also be somewhat faster than the shorter Whatcom Chief. As the Plattsburgh has more vehicle capacity, it can haul the usual traffic with fewer trips. Overall, the Plattsburgh will use less fuel than the Whatcom Chief.

9. It's in Lake Champlain, How will it get here, what will that cost?

A. There are several options of transit to here, towing, barge transport and driving it here under its own power. For expeditious purposes we have selected the mid priced option, LCT has offered to deliver it to Bellingham for \$500,000, inclusive. It will take about a month to get here.

10. Can our existing crew operate the Plattsburgh?

A. Yes, the Plattsburgh will be reconfigured to under 100 tonnes to a T class Ferry by installing tonnage frames in the open parts of the hull and therefore can be operated by the Crew's current licenses. The cost of this is included in the purchase price and could be done either on the East Coast, Gulf Coast or locally.

11. Could the same number of crew run the Plattsburgh?

A. Yes, the Coast Guard has stated, in conference, that when the Plattsburgh is rerated to under 100 net tonnes, it could run with the current three person crew to a passenger capacity of at least 150.

12. Is the Plattsburgh Capable of going to Fairhaven?

A. The Plattsburgh is considerably more seaworthy, will have more passenger capacity and can legally carry about twenty more cars than the Whatcom Chief. It is faster and will burn no more fuel at that speed. It will be a far better, more capable, vessel on that route than the Whatcom Chief.

13. What would happen to the Whatcom Chief if the Plattsburgh was purchased?

A. That's up to the County, they own it.

a. It could be **kept as a spare** for emergencies and dry-dock with an inter-local agreement between Whatcom, Skagit and San Juan Counties. The costs of dry-dock's of Whatcom and Skagit County alone would pay for its maintenance. Current costs of our Drydock times are about \$200,000 a year, **not** including repair of the Ferry Boat, and without any regard to disruption of normal life, Skagit's costs are likely similar.

At this time and in the foreseeable future, there are **no available spare Ferries** on the entire West Coast of the United States, that would fit our docks and be available for emergencies. Additional revenues could be generated by charters to deliver Propane and Petroleum carrying Semi-Trucks to the San Juan Islands. Further maintenance savings could be made by doing all needed work on the vessels on-the-water and only the lower exterior hull work in the Shipyard.

b. Sold, for other uses

c. Scrapped.

Conclusion:

Considering all the factors concerning the Lummi Island Ferry Boat, the age and deterioration and non compliance of the Whatcom Chief, the overall low cost of the Plattsburgh, its projected longevity, and ease of application, this is absolutely the best financial approach to the situation. As the size of the Plattsburgh may be an interim solution, it represents a fungible good that can be sold, likely for more than we paid for it, in the future when it needs to be replaced with a different vessel.