

**MINUTES
OF THE
LONG-RANGE VINEYARD TRANSPORTATION TASK FORCE
OF THE
WOODS HOLE, MARTHA’S VINEYARD
AND NANTUCKET STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY**

October 22, 2020

Via the Zoom Video Conferencing App
First Floor Meeting Room (Room 103)
The SSA’s Administrative Offices
228 Palmer Avenue, Falmouth, Massachusetts

Task Force Members present:

Leon Brathwaite
(Dukes County Commissioners)

Doug Brown
(Falmouth Select Board)

John Cahill
(Tisbury Select Board)

Keith Chatinover
(Dukes County Commissioners)

Robert Davis
(Steamship Authority)

Jesse Law III
(Oak Bluffs Board of Selectmen)

Michael Santoro
(Oak Bluffs Board of Selectmen)

Douglas Sederholm
(Martha’s Vineyard Commission)

Julian Suso
(Falmouth Select Board)

Task Force member absent:

Mark Rozum
(Steamship Authority)

James Vercruysse
(Martha’s Vineyard Commission)

Also participating:

Steven Sayers
(Steamship Authority)

1. Mr. Sayers began the meeting at approximately 4:30 p.m. by announcing that the Steamship Authority (SSA) was making an audio and video recording of the meeting, and he asked whether anyone else was making a recording as well.¹ Mr. Chatinover informed

¹ Reporter’s Note: Unfortunately, Mr. Sayers forgot to click on Zoom’s “Record” button at the beginning of the meeting. As a result, the SSA did not make a recording of the meeting.

Mr. Sayers that Rich Saltzberg of *The Martha's Vineyard Times* had sent an email saying that he also was making a recording of the meeting.

2. Mr. Sayers then announced that, in response to Governor Baker's executive orders concerning the necessity to conduct public meetings in line with social distancing guidelines during the current state of emergency involving the COVID-19 pandemic, all Task Force members that day were participating remotely in the meeting because their physical attendances that day would be unreasonably difficult. Mr. Sayers also stated that all Task Force members were participating in the meeting by the Zoom video conferencing app and that all members will be clearly audible to each other.
3. The Task Force then **voted** (with Messrs. Brathwaithe, Brown, Cahill, Chatinover, Davis, Law, Santoro, Sederholm and Suso voting in favor) to approve the minutes of the Task Force's September 17, 2020 meeting in public session.

Lengths of Trips Taken by SSA Customers with Vehicles Less Than 20 Feet in Length

4. Mr. Sayers reviewed a chart that had been prepared by SSA Treasurer/Comptroller Mark Rozum comparing the length of round trips taken on the Martha's Vineyard route from May 15th through September 15th in 2019 and 2020 by SSA customers with vehicles less than 20 feet in length. Mr. Sayers noted that all of the round trips taken by the SSA's "excursion" fare customers originated on the island, as all excursion trips must originate on the island, and that all of those customers were probably year-round island residents, as people are required to have their names on an island town's street list in order to be eligible to travel on an excursion fare. Mr. Sayers also noted that, as shown by the chart, a good portion of those customers leave the island and return the same day, indicating that they are doing errands or going to medical or dental appointments. Indeed, Mr. Sayers observed, during this past summer 44.2% of the SSA's excursion customers returned to the island the same day, showing how year-round island residents use the SSA's services.
5. Mr. Sayers then noted that the trips taken by the SSA's "standard" fare customers needed to be broken down further because they include trips originating both on the mainland and on the island. Mr. Sayers also observed that those trips included both tourists traveling to the island and seasonal residents traveling off-island using "preferred" spaces to do errands and go to medical or dental appointments just as year-round island residents do.
6. In response to a question from Mr. Cahill, Mr. Sayers stated that one could not tell how many of the standard fare customers who traveled on both segments of their round trips the same day were tourists coming to the island for a day trip or seasonal residents going off-island for a day to run errands. Indeed, Mr. Sayers said, a good portion of those same-day standard fare customers, which accounted for 11.4% of the total standard fare customers this past summer, could have been seasonal residents traveling off-island for a day on preferred spaces.

7. Mr. Cahill then noted that a significant percentage of standard fare customers took round trips during the summer that were eight days in length (18.4% in 2019 and 16.3% in 2020), and Mr. Sayers observed that those numbers could include both tourists going to the island for a week and seasonal residents leaving the island for a week (leaving on a Saturday and returning on a Sunday eight days later), particularly those who may be renting out their homes for a week. In this regard, Mr. Cahill stated that a big bulk of Hertz Car Rental's business on Martha's Vineyard is comprised of seven-day rentals during the summer, which equates to the amount of vacation that an average tourist can take.
8. Mr. Davis further noted that a portion of the same-day standard fare customer trips could be attributable to service vehicles that are traveling to the island for a day for commercial purposes.
9. Mr. Sederholm observed that the percentage of two-day to seven-day trips taken by excursion fare customers had decreased in 2020 compared to 2019, but that the percentage of same-day trips taken by those customers had significantly increased, and he wondered whether that was a result of the pandemic. Mr. Chatinover stated that he thought it could be, as this past summer people who previously traveled as walk-on passengers for a day felt safer traveling in their cars. In addition, Mr. Chatinover said, people were staying off-island for shorter periods and were trying to get back to the island the same day instead of staying on the mainland overnight. Mr. Santoro also noted that most places on the mainland were closed this spring and people had no reason to leave the island, which may have resulted in more people traveling to the mainland after May 15th in order to get their errands done.
10. Mr. Sayers suggested that it may be helpful if the chart included the same information for the summer of 2018, and Mr. Cahill observed that, with the additional information, one would be able to compare two summers without having one affected by the pandemic. In this regard, Mr. Davis stated that, for the months of May through September of 2018, 25% of the vehicles traveling on the Martha's Vineyard route were excursion fare customers, that during the same period in 2019 the percentage had increased to 26%, and that during the same period this year the percentage had decreased to 24%.
11. In response to a question from Mr. Santoro, Mr. Davis stated that the price of excursion fares goes up every year on May 15th and goes back down on September 15th.
12. Mr. Sayers observed that the chart should also show the gross number of vehicles traveling each year so that people can see whether there was a decrease in the number of people who traveled this past summer. Mr. Sayers noted that such a decrease might also explain why the percentage of excursion fare customers who took same-day trips during the summer increased from 36.8% in 2019 to 44.2% in 2020. In this regard, Mr. Davis stated that the overall number of excursion trips had fallen by 29,000 this year.
13. In response to a question from Mr. Cahill, Mr. Davis stated that it would be difficult to create a similar chart showing the length of trips of the SSA' freight customers, because some of the SSA's larger freight shippers make their reservations in one-way segments so

they are not tied to specific trips. As a result, Mr. Davis said, matching up the reservations would be difficult and might include trips where a cab travels to the island with one trailer and returns to the mainland with a different trailer that is empty.

The SSA's Resiliency Planning for Climate Disruption

14. Mr. Sayers noted that discussion of the SSA's resiliency planning for climate disruption had been placed on today's agenda at the request of James Vercruyssen, who was not present that day, and he suggested that the Task Force either defer discussion of this topic today or just have a preliminary discussion so that Mr. Vercruyssen can join in on the discussion at the next meeting.
15. Mr. Sayers then reviewed the portion of the SSA's supplemental MEPA submission for its Woods Hole terminal reconstruction project, which was addressed to Secretary Matthew A. Beaton of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and dated October 2, 2015, that discussed "the intersection of climate change and accessibility." In this regard, Mr. Sayers noted that the submission discussed how the new Woods Hole terminal was being designed for future climate change, allowing the SSA to increase the height of its ferry slips and piers as time goes on. Mr. Sayers also observed that the new terminal building will be floodproofed up to 17 feet above sea level even though the elevation of its first floor will be only 13 feet above sea level to ensure that it is accessible for individuals with disabilities. Mr. Sayers noted that floodproofing the building for that additional four feet was projected to keep it dry over its 50-year service life.
16. Mr. Sayers also briefly discussed the memorandum issued by the Woods Hole Group to the SSA, dated June 14, 2019, in which the Woods Hole Group set forth their analysis for their recommended design flood elevations for the Woods Hole terminal building and other buildings on the site based upon their model of future storms and sea level rise under a changing climate. Mr. Sayers stated that, fortunately, the Woods Hole Group made the same recommendation regarding how high the terminal building should be floodproofed, namely up to 17 feet above sea level, in order to maintain its 50-year service life with their anticipated future rise in sea level.
17. In response to a question from Mr. Brown, Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA had not asked to raise the elevation of the entire parking lot even though the parking lot will be flooded in the future while the terminal building will be higher and dry. Mr. Sayers noted that the SSA had to maintain sufficient clearance for vehicles to get under the Crane Street bridge, which meant that the elevation at that location has to remain at its current elevation, which he thought was around 5 or 6 feet above sea level. Further, Mr. Sayers said, because of accessibility regulations, there has to be a gradual slope from the plaza surrounding the terminal building to the base of the Crane Street bridge in order to ensure that it remains a walkway. In this regard, Mr. Sayers noted that if there were steeper slopes around the terminal property, they would be considered ramps and require handrails, which would pose a problem for vehicular traffic. Nevertheless, Mr. Sayers stated that there would be an increase in elevation in that part of the property between the terminal building and the

water, as the elevations of the new transfer bridges will vary between seven and nine feet above sea level, whereas the elevations of the old transfer bridges were all around seven feet; and he noted that the site would then slope slightly upward to the front of the plaza surrounding the terminal building, which will be 10.5 feet above sea level.

Mr. Sayers also stated that the Woods Hole Group's analysis indicates that one of the principal sources of flooding on the terminal property will be Little Harbor, and that the back of the property will be flooded at the same time as the front. Mr. Davis also noted that another source of flooding will be the area around the intersection of Luscombe and Railroad Avenues that is between five and six feet above sea level.

Accordingly, Mr. Sayers observed that there obviously will be more disruptions to the SSA's service in the future as the weather gets worse, and that the terminal property will be flooded during 50- and 100-year storms; but he noted that, during those storms, the SSA more likely will suspend service and tie up its boats because of weather conditions rather than due to the flooding of its terminal property.

18. Mr. Sayers then stated that the Woods Hole Group's analysis does not address the impact of climate change and sea level rise on the SSA's other ferry terminals and that the SSA still has to go through a similar process with respect to those other terminals. Mr. Sayers also noted that, while the SSA may similarly be able to increase the height of the transfer bridges at its other terminals, because they are all of the same gallows design, the other terminals have more significant elevation problems. In this regard, Mr. Davis observed that the SSA's Vineyard Haven terminal already has problems due to flooding at Five Corners during storms, and that the access streets to the SSA's Nantucket terminal similarly flood during storms, requiring the SSA to direct its vehicle traffic through that terminal's truck staging area.
19. In response to a question from Mr. Law, Messrs. Davis and Sayers stated that the back parking lot at the SSA's Woods Hole terminal is also pretty flat and will probably flood during future storms. Mr. Sayers further recalled that the parking lot had flooded during a storm in the early 1990s (either Hurricane Bob or the "No Name" storm). After Mr. Davis noted that the lot has around 200 spaces for SSA parking permit holders and 60 spaces for businesses in Woods Hole village, Mr. Law asked if the SSA would be liable for cars parked there if they are flooded. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that whether the SSA would be liable would depend upon a number of factors, including whether a customer had parked there on a daily basis or was a parking permit holder who had signed an agreement with the SSA that excluded liability on the SSA's part. Even with respect to a daily parker, Mr. Sayers said, the SSA still might not be liable for damages if it took appropriate precautions or if a court were to hold that the flood was an Act of God. But Mr. Sayers emphasized that the SSA does not want to have these types of issues with its permit holders and that, as it has done in the past, it will notify them in advance of large storms so that they can move their cars to the SSA's Palmer Avenue parking lot.

Ways the SSA Can Provide More Service for Martha's Vineyard

20. The Task Force members then discussed the various ways that the SSA can provide more service for Martha's Vineyard. In response to a question from Mr. Santoro, Mr. Davis confirmed that the SSA's 2021 operating schedules for the Martha's Vineyard are the same schedules as those that had been approved for 2020. Mr. Davis also confirmed that the SSA's fifth ferry on the route during the summer, the *M/V Sankaty*, is only scheduled to operate three daily round trips Monday through Friday, which was how it was scheduled in 2019, and that, if need be, it is able to operate a fourth round trip those days with the same crew on overtime.

Mr. Sayers noted that the *M/V Sankaty* is the SSA's only spare boat during the summer and that, before 2019, the SSA kept it off line in case any of the SSA's other boats had any mechanical issues. Mr. Sayers stated that having the vessel in service Mondays through Fridays during the summer has worked out pretty well because the SSA has not had many mechanical issues with its other vessels, but that putting the vessel in service has meant that the SSA does not now have a spare boat available during the summer if needed. In this regard, Mr. Davis noted that, if the SSA did experience a mechanical issue with one of its vessels, it would operate additional trips with its other vessels to make up for the disruption in service.

Mr. Sayers further noted that, in 2019, the SSA also operated the *M/V Sankaty* on weekends in August to take cars off the island after the Agricultural Fair and as seasonal residents began leaving at the end of the summer. Mr. Davis also stated that the SSA has been able to use the *M/V Sankaty* for hazardous trips that sailed later in the morning during the summer than the previously scheduled hazardous trips with the *M/V Governor*, which was also more difficult to load with trucks.

21. Mr. Chatinover stated that he was disappointed that none of the alternative ways identified by the SSA to increase service for Martha's Vineyard would increase the SSA's passenger capacity without increasing its vehicle capacity, which was the type of recommendation he was looking for. In this regard, Mr. Chatinover observed that having daytrippers on the island was not an issue with most year-round residents, as daytrippers rely more on buses and taxis for transportation around the island than their own automobiles. Accordingly, Mr. Chatinover suggested that a lot of year-round residents would advocate for an increase in the SSA's passenger capacity but not necessarily an increase in its vehicle capacity. For example, Mr. Chatinover said, increasing the number of ferries providing service to the island would probably be controversial, and he stated that the Task Force should keep that in mind.

Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA had not presented any recommendations regarding whether or how it should provide more service for the island, and that the document describing alternatives ways that the SSA could provide more service was just showing the different possibilities. Mr. Sayers also noted that there is no need for the SSA to increase its passenger capacity, as all of the SSA's ferries on the Martha's Vineyard route currently have excess passenger capacity. Indeed, Mr. Sayers said, several of the SSA's ferries can

carry more than 1,000 passengers and are never close to capacity during the summer. In addition, Mr. Sayers questioned whether there was a reason for the SSA to provide high-speed passenger service between Woods Hole and Martha's Vineyard, as the trip would not be much faster than a trip on the SSA's current ferries, which is only 45 minutes, and would also require infrastructure that the SSA currently doesn't have. Mr. Davis agreed, observing that, even if customers were able to take a high-speed ferry from the island to Woods Hole, they would have to wait there for the SSA's shuttle buses to take them to the off-site lots where their cars are parked, and at the moment the SSA doesn't have enough shuttle bus drivers for its current operations.

The Need for More Freight Service Next Year

22. Mr. Santoro then stated that he believed the island will require more freight service next summer due to its need for more goods, and he expressed concern about the impact that additional freight service will have both on the SSA's revenues, because standard fare automobiles pay a higher percentage of their cost of service than freight trucks, and on the ability of year-round island residents to travel on excursion fares. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA had no plans to decrease the number of preferred spaces on its ferries next summer (which are currently 120 spaces each day off-island) and that, because many year-round residents travel off-island using those preferred spaces, he did not believe an increase in the number of freight trucks carried by the SSA would result in a decrease of those excursion trips. However, Mr. Sayers said, the additional freight trucks carried by the SSA will take spaces previously occupied by standard fare automobiles, which will result in a decrease in the SSA's revenues.

Mr. Cahill agreed with Mr. Santoro that the island will need more freight service in the future, as real estate was booming and new homeowners on the island will want to make renovations or additions to their houses, which will require more contractors and supplies. Mr. Cahill also stated that he believed that freight demands are just going to go higher and higher, as the demand for real estate was not declining.

Mr. Davis agreed that seasonal island residents appeared to be staying on the island for more of year, noting that, in previous years, the SSA had provided additional service with the *M/V Sankaty* on weekends in August to take care of the backlog of people trying to return to their homes on the mainland, but that the SSA did not see the same amount of demand this year. Mr. Davis stated that, while traffic off-island was busier during the last two weeks of August this year, the SSA had not seen the massive exodus it had experienced in prior years.

Mr. Cahill stated that the SSA did not see that exodus this year because those seasonal island residents are still on the island, noting that the Dukes County Registry of Deeds had seen a record high number of transactions during the month of September. Mr. Cahill also observed that all of those real estate purchases will translate into more money being spent on renovations and more freight of all kinds coming to the island. Mr. Santoro agreed,

saying that not only will there be more freight coming to the island, but more rubbish being taken off the island.

Mr. Law (who is the General Manager of ABC Disposal) agreed with Mr. Santoro, saying that while the amount of his commercial rubbish had decreased this past year, his residential rubbish was three times the amount it was the previous year, and that he did not see the amount of that rubbish decreasing at the end of the summer as fast as it had in previous years.

Availability of Excursion Fare Travel and the Need to Reduce the Amount of Traffic on the Island

23. Mr. Brathwaite then suggested that the Task Force look at the availability of excursion fare reservations, saying that the biggest complaint he hears from year-round island residents is that they cannot travel off-island when they want and they also can't get back to the island when they want. In this regard, Mr. Brathwaite stated that he too has been unable to make reservations because none have been available, even though he tried to make them in advance, and that there similarly have been no preferred spaces available when he tried to make reservations a few days before he wanted to travel.
24. Mr. Chatinover stated that he also hears that complaint from year-round island residents, but that the one complaint he hears even more frequently is that there are too many cars on the island. Accordingly, Mr. Chatinover said, while the Task Force has to find a way to make certain that year-round island residents can travel off-island affordably and when they want, it also has to find a way to make certain that the island's growth is sustainable. Mr. Chatinover observed that if the island does not do something to stop its explosion of cars, eventually will be no place for the cars to go.

In response, Mr. Law stated that, as much as he would like to believe that reducing ferry service could be a silver bullet to solve the island's growth problem and the increase in the number of cars on the island, he was afraid that the amount of ferry service was only a small part of the problem. Mr. Chatinover agreed, but stated that it definitely was still a part of the problem.

25. Mr. Brathwaite suggested that the Task Force find out from the island's Registry of Motor Vehicles how many vehicles have been registered on the island for the last four or five years, as he believed there are many more cars registered on the island now than there have been in the past. In this regard, Mr. Brathwaite stated that he felt a lot of the traffic that is on the island is not being generated by the SSA. For example, Mr. Brathwaite said, several of his friends recently had built homes on the island and they all now have cars in their garages.

Mr. Brathwaite also noted that year-round island residents can only travel on excursion fares in vehicles that are registered on the island. In addition, Mr. Davis said, only those island residents whose names are on an island town's street list are eligible for excursion

fares, so it might be interesting to see how many new residents have put their names on those street lists.

26. Mr. Brown then asked if the island could regulate the number of cars that each household can have. In response, Mr. Cahill observed that while such restrictions may exist in other countries of the world, he did not know whether it would be possible to enforce them in the United States.
27. Mr. Santoro then suggested that part of the problem may be that it is less expensive for tourists to travel to the island with their cars than to leave it in one of the SSA's parking lots on the mainland, but he observed that even if the SSA changed that dynamic, those tourists still have to bring their luggage, goods and family with them. Further, Mr. Santoro said, even if fewer tourists brought their cars to the island, that may just result in an increase in the number of rental cars they drive here.

But Mr. Cahill noted that Martha's Vineyard could limit the number of rental cars available on the island by switching to a medallion method for determining the number of rental cars each rental car company is allowed to rent. Mr. Cahill reported that Nantucket has switched to that method, which prohibits a rental car company from renting more vehicles than the number of medallions it has purchased. In any event, Mr. Cahill said, the total number of cars rented on Martha's Vineyard during the peak of the summer is around 750, although that number does not include rental cars rented on the mainland and driven onto the island.

Mr. Davis also stated that he thought it will be difficult to get more tourists to leave their cars on the mainland, and described how amazed he has been by the large amount of luggage passengers bring with them on the SSA's high-speed ferry between Hyannis and Nantucket, even for weekend trips.

28. Mr. Sayers then asked if it were possible for any of the towns on Martha's Vineyard to have pedestrian-only zones and require people to park outside of their downtown areas. In response, Mr. Santoro noted that Oak Bluffs had tried restricting parking downtown, but that people began parking in surrounding neighborhoods, blocking residents' driveways and taking up what limited parking existed there for those residents. Mr. Santoro stated that the Town was now working to develop a park-and-ride lot, but that it was only going to hold around 60 cars and the Town has not yet decided who will be parking there, although they may be employees of town businesses.

Mr. Brown noted that allowing employees of Woods Hole businesses to park in 60 spaces of the SSA's Woods Hole parking lot had helped traffic a lot in Woods Hole. But Mr. Sederholm questioned whether 60 spaces would be enough to alleviate Oak Bluffs' traffic issues, observing that the park-and-ride lots in Vineyard Haven and Edgartown were getting maxed out and that both of them had substantially more than 60 spaces.

29. Mr. Santoro observed that all of these issues go hand in hand and that, when people talk about trying to restrict the amount of freight or the number of automobiles, it is difficult to determine where to start and how to go about it. In this regard, Mr. Santoro noted that,

while the Martha's Vineyard Commission had developed guidelines, it is up to each of the individual towns on the island to create its own zoning to restrict growth. Mr. Sederholm also stated that there is significant political tension between limiting the number of cars per residential lot and taking actions that affect individual choice, which goes against a certain ethic in this country. But Mr. Sederholm also observed that the island only has so much space.

30. Mr. Brown suggested that island towns could begin limiting the number of cars per residential lot by making it part of their permit processes for new construction or rebuilds. Specifically, Mr. Brown stated that the towns could place conditions on new building permits, and applicants for those permits can either accept those conditions or not build their projects. In this way, Mr. Brown said, the towns would not be taking away anyone's rights, and new people would be getting a new deal. But Mr. Brathwaite questioned whether those limitations would apply to both the owners of those lots and people who are visiting.
31. Mr. Sayers also noted that these efforts to limit the number of cars on the island assumed that people are driving unnecessarily on Martha's Vineyard and that, if the number of cars on the island were reduced, there will be fewer reasons for people to drive. Mr. Sayers stated that he was not certain there was a correlation there and that, instead, he thought that people needed to be provided with alternative ways to get around the island because they need to get from one place to another and are not just taking joy rides.

Mr. Brathwaite agreed, noting that while he may stay home during certain times of the day when traffic is bad, tourists still want to go places and don't want to use taxis because the fares are so expensive. Mr. Brown then asked whether the towns could restrict those fares so that they aren't so expensive, but Mr. Santoro noted that taxis on the island are getting more competition from Uber, which is regulated by the Commonwealth, and that taxi owners will complain about unfair competition if their fares are restricted while Uber's fares are not. Mr. Brathwaite also observed that, even if taxi fares were less expensive, it would still be cheaper for a tourist who is here for a week to bring a car to the island rather than to leave it on the mainland.

Mr. Chatinover further noted that, even if traveling around the island by taxi were less expensive than bringing a car here, the clientele the island is attracting is one that will pay more for the added benefit of having a car because they do not want to take public transportation. Accordingly, Mr. Chatinover stated that increasing cost as a supply and demand model for decreasing demand would very much hurt people who don't have as much money, particularly island residents who do not have the wealth that tourists have. Ultimately, Mr. Chatinover said, fares are not what is driving people to travel to the island with their cars; rather, it was convenience.

32. Mr. Brown then asked whether the Martha's Vineyard Transit Authority(VTA) had small vans or buses with which it can offer door-to-door service. In response, Mr. Brathwaite stated that the VTA does have smaller buses for people with special needs, but otherwise the VTA mostly stays along the main roads. As a result, Mr. Brathwaite said, taking the

VTA is not that convenient except for those people who live along one of its bus routes. Mr. Santoro further observed that the people who use the VTA are mostly daytrippers and employees going to and from work, and possibly a few year-round island residents. But Mr. Santoro stated that he did not see summer visitors who are on the island for a week or so using the VTA.

33. Mr. Law then reminded everyone that tourists who rent homes for a week also receive reservations for their cars on the SSA's ferries so that they can travel back and forth to the island. Mr. Sayers noted that one of the SSA's policies governing its Headstart Reservation Program was to make those car reservations available for home renters by allowing island residents to transfer up to five of their own Headstart reservations to their tenants, provided that each transfer is made at least 30 days prior to the day of sailing, and that having those reservations available for home renters was essential to island residents' ability to rent their homes during the summer.

Freight Service for Martha's Vineyard

34. Mr. Brown stated that freight service could be provided from New Bedford beginning in mid-2022, and he asked whether there was a way to make that service viable. In this regard, Mr. Brown observed that, while New Bedford freight service could take pressure off of the SSA in terms of vehicle capacity, it would not reduce traffic congestion on Martha's Vineyard.
35. In response to questions from Task Force members, Mr. Davis stated that it takes around 2 hours and 15 minutes for a ferry to sail between New Bedford and Martha's Vineyard via Quick's Hole, and that the driving time between New Bedford and Woods Hole is around 45 minutes to an hour, depending upon bridge traffic. Mr. Brathwaite then observed that, while a ferry trip from New Bedford to Martha's Vineyard may entail a little longer boat ride, vehicles are able to get on the ferry at New Bedford an hour earlier than if they sailed from Woods Hole.

Mr. Brathwaite also noted that freight shippers do not want to have their drivers accompany their trucks on ferries between New Bedford and Martha's Vineyard because of the drivers' payroll cost; rather, they want to be able to drive a truck on the boat at one port and have another driver pick it up at its destination, and that the SSA provides this type of drive-on, drive-off services for freight trucks that are carried between Hyannis and Nantucket. Mr. Davis agreed, although he noted that the SSA cannot provide those services for trucks carrying hazardous cargo, as United States Coast Guard regulations require drivers of hazardous cargo trucks to be with their vehicles at all times.

36. Mr. Brathwaite then observed that Woods Hole residents were concerned about trash trucks traveling through their community, and he stated that it would go a long way if the island could bale that refuse, put it on a barge, and barge the bales of trash to New Bedford.

37. Mr. Law then asked about the freight service that had been provided from New Bedford by Seabulk in 2000 and 2001. In response, Mr. Brathwaite stated that Seabulk had not been able to provide the service on its own and make any money; instead, it needed to be subsidized by the SSA in order to be profitable. Mr. Sayers agreed, recounting how the SSA had entered into a contract with Seabulk pursuant to which it paid Seabulk to provide the service and the SSA kept all of the revenues from the service. Ultimately, Mr. Sayers said, the SSA lost a lot of money on the service and that his memory was that the revenues derived from the service had paid for only around 15% to 20% of the cost of the service.

Mr. Sayers further stated that, in 2016, the SSA conducted a feasibility study for potential New Bedford freight service and concluded that operating the service only during the summer would provide it with the greatest chance of success, and that Craig Johnson had stated that there were possibly private operators who could provide such a service at their own financial risk and make a profit. Accordingly, Mr. Sayers said, there may a possibility of someone other than the SSA providing freight service from New Bedford, but that, given the SSA's labor structure, he did not think it was reasonable to assume that the SSA could provide that service and operate at a surplus.

38. In response to a question from Mr. Santoro, Mr. Davis stated that SeaStreak was asking for permission to operate one daily round trip between New Bedford and Martha's Vineyard during the winter. Mr. Santoro then noted that SeaStreak had been reaching out to see if it can carry freight, such as seafood, in addition to passengers on its trips in order to subsidize that service, but that he did not know if SeaStreak planned on carrying freight for the long term. In response, Mr. Sayers recounted how, in its original proposal to provide service between New Bedford and Martha's Vineyard in the early 2000s, SeaStreak had proposed to carry hand freight as well as passengers on its trips.

39. Mr. Cahill then stated that he thought it would be wise for the Task Force to devote a whole session on the subject of freight and what options there are. In this regard, Mr. Cahill stated that the subject should not be just about New Bedford, but also should include a discussion of the possibility of air freight and whether there are better types of transportation for the island's different freight needs, which include home building/construction and solid waste. Ideally, Mr. Cahill said, the Task Force should try to devise a plan that offsets some of the problems that are entailed in transporting freight from Woods Hole, observing that the last time the SSA tried it was back in the early 2000s and that he thought the Task Force should take another hard look at it.

Mr. Brown agreed, and stated that ideally the options would include ones that do not cost the SSA any money, observing that private businesses could be allowed the opportunity to provide freight service for Martha's Vineyard at their own expense. But Mr. Cahill noted that there could be different pricing models for different commodities that take into account how increased freight costs would hurt some island businesses, such as restaurants and the food industry, while there were other sectors of the island's economy, such as home construction, that could afford to pay an increase in their delivery costs. Mr. Brown agreed, observing that the island might prioritize different types of freight.

40. Mr. Santoro observed that one of the big issues for the SSA is the number of trucks on its boats that carry trash, and that the SSA has been trying to get those trash trucks off of its boats. In response, Mr. Davis recounted how, in 2017 and 2018, the SSA had engaged a consulting firm to study the possibility of barging solid waste off of the island, and had met with Ralph Packer to discuss whether he would be willing to provide barge service for trash from the Towns of Tisbury and Oak Bluffs. Mr. Davis stated that the SSA had hoped that Mr. Packer would propose a lower price for barging trash to New Bedford, as it represents a backhaul for him, but that the only price he offered was his standard fare, which resulted in this barging option still be prohibitive for those towns. Mr. Law agreed and observed that, if the SSA could get the trash trucks off of its boats, it would gain a phenomenal amount of deck space.
41. Mr. Sayers also noted that, even if trash were carried in trucks on ferries to New Bedford instead of being barged there, the trucks would not have to be accompanied by their drivers because trash is not hazardous cargo. In addition, Mr. Law confirmed that trucks carrying trash from the island currently travel by New Bedford, as the trash is disposed of at either Crapo Hill Landfill or Coventa SEMASS. Mr. Davis further noted that one advantage of baling trash is that SEMASS would be able to store the bales and burn them when it has less of a waste stream. After Mr. Sayers observed that the trash did not have to be baled in order to be carried by trucks on ferries to New Bedford, Mr. Law stated that it would only be a little more expensive to transport trash trucks on ferries to New Bedford, as there was only an hour time difference each way.
42. Mr. Santoro observed that, if the Task Force were to develop a five-year plan, that timeframe would coincide with the time that Vineyard Wind no longer needs Mr. Packer's facility, and he suggested that the Task Force start talking with Mr. Packer to see if it might be possible to use his facility after Vineyard Wind is finished. Mr. Sederholm then suggested that this possibility could be explored when Mr. Packer submits his Development of Regional Impact (DRI) application with the Martha's Vineyard Commission, observing that if there is a change in use of that facility after Vineyard Wind is built out, and the facility then has excess capacity, providing barge service for solid waste could be considered a benefit for the island and established as a condition of approval. In this regard, However, Mr. Law cautioned that Mr. Packer's facility probably will not be used entirely by Vineyard Wind, as he is continuing to barge sand, stone and gravel to the island.
43. Mr. Cahill noted that the New Bedford Airport is always looking for ways to make additional revenue, and he suggested that the Task Force have a conversation with the New Bedford Airport Manager to see whether he has any suggestions about how air service might be used to address some of the island's problems.
44. Mr. Sederholm noted that the Task Force should also consider whether any technologies will be developed in the future that might help address the island's problems, such as the use of drones that are sufficiently large for air freight. The other Task Force members agreed, observing that electric trucks (ideally without air brakes) should also be studied.

45. In response to a question from Mr. Cahill, Mr. Sayers stated that, many years ago, New Bedford was the only mainland port in Massachusetts that the SSA could identify as being suitable for use to provide alternative freight ferry service from Woods Hole, although there were several locations, including Onset, Massachusetts, that potentially could be used for passenger-only ferry service.

The Task Force's Next Meeting

46. The Task Force then agreed that its next meeting will take place via Zoom from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 19, 2020.
47. Mr. Sayers then asked if any attendees of the meeting wanted to make any comments, but no one responded.

Then, at approximately 5:55 p.m., the Task Force unanimously **voted** (with Messrs. Brathwaite, Brown, Cahill, Chatinover, Davis, Law, Santoro, Sederholm and Suso voting in favor) to adjourn their meeting that day.

A TRUE RECORD

Steven M. Sayers

Approved by the Task Force at their meeting
on November 19, 2020

Documents and Exhibits Used at the Task Force's October 22, 2020 Meeting

1. Agenda for the Task Force's October 22, 2020 Meeting (posted October 20, 2020).
2. Draft Minutes of the Task Force's September 17, 2020 meeting in public session (dated October 15, 2020).
3. Chart – 2019 vs. 2020 Martha's Vineyard Route – Under 20 feet Vehicles Length of Stay Comparison.
4. The SSA's supplemental MEPA submission for its Woods Hole terminal reconstruction project, which was addressed to Secretary Matthew A. Beaton of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and dated October 2, 2015.
5. The Woods Hole Group's memorandum to the SSA, dated June 14, 2019, in which it set forth its analysis of its recommended design flood elevations for the Woods Hole terminal building and other buildings on the site based upon its model of future storms and sea level rise under a changing climate.
6. Issues Regarding the Alternative Potential Ways of Providing More Service for Martha's Vineyard, prepared on October 19, 2020.