



December 7, 2018

Dear Steamship Authority General Manager Robert Davis,

We welcome the Steamship Authority's new efforts to seek input from concerned citizens of Southeastern Massachusetts, including our organization, Southeast Massachusetts Regional Transportation Citizens Task Force, which has 55 members.

We hope that the SSA realizes the long-term implications for our communities of the proposed design of its new terminal building and overall terminal reconstruction project in Woods Hole.

We question the proposed Woods Hole terminal building's overall size and height and how the SSA developed its "Program Needs," the justification of which has not been made clear to the public.

We believe a two-story structure will unnecessarily obstruct views we value dearly of the Elizabeth Islands, Woods Hole Passage, and Great Harbor.

We would like to discuss with you the twelve points below and receive from you written, formal responses to our questions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Members of Southeast Massachusetts Regional Transportation Citizens Task Force
Email contact: smartcitizenstaskforce@gmail.com



Cc:

Senator Viriato DeMacedo
Representative Dylan Fernandes
Senator Julian Cyr
Representative David Vieira
Senator Mark Montigny
Representative William Strauss
Representative Tony Cabral
U.S. Representative Bill Keating
Mayor Jon Mitchell
Dukes County Commission
Board of Selectmen of Aquinnah
Board of Selectmen of Bourne
Board of Selectmen of Chilmark
Board of Selectmen of Edgartown
Board of Selectmen of Falmouth
Board of Selectmen of Oak Bluffs
Board of Selectmen of Tisbury
Board of Selectmen of West Tisbury
Steamship Authority Board
Martha's Vineyard Commission
Cape Cod Commission
Boston Globe
Cape Cod Times
MVTimes
Vineyard Gazette
Falmouth Enterprise
The Standard-Times

- 1) During the peak of the summer travel season in 2018, we observed few instances of lines of customers inside the temporary ticketing building, and we never saw the line extending more than a few people outside the building. What limitations did the size of the current temporary building size impose on customer satisfaction, comfort, ticketing sales, and critical SSA operations during the 2018 summer season, when the traffic in terms of cars and trucks was the highest volume ever, and passengers the 3rd highest?
- 2) How was the number of 300 passengers for the waiting room capacity determined? During how many months of the year is that capacity required? Could additional passengers waiting in the summer months not more easily and cost effectively be provided for with awnings?
- 3) Other than ticket sales, public restrooms and waiting area, what are the absolute needs required for the new terminal building? Which of those needs could be moved to Palmer Ave. or to a smaller secondary building on site? If any of these requirements cannot be moved, please justify the need for the placement of each of them in a single large terminal building.
- 4) How does SSA justify the significant increase in size of its "Program Needs" in 2018 in comparison with its needs as reflected in the 2014 Feasibility Study booklet? The SSA's overall "Program Needs" square footage appears to have grown significantly: from 5,995 sq ft in 2014 (page 30, 2014 Feasibility Study) to as much as 20,064 sq ft today (52' x 123' x 2 stories, if we have the 2018 proposed building's dimensions correct). What is the sq footage of the current design of the proposed building? What is the minimal space needed to meet the absolute needs of the new terminal building?
- 5) What percent of ticket purchases now occur over the counter at the Woods Hole ticket office vs. online and by cell phone? What calculations has the SSA made as to anticipated changes in in-person vs. online ticket purchasing in future? If such a calculation has not been made, why? What role could automatic ticket machines play in future, and would they require less space? Could electronic information kiosks, so ubiquitous at other transportation hubs, serve much the same purpose as staffed windows in terms of responding to information requests from customers?

6) What exactly is the extra cost/time of conducting employee trainings in Falmouth rather than in Woods Hole? The 2014 Feasibility Study booklet refers to commuting to training in Falmouth (in the SSA's newly completed building there) as an extra cost but does not say how much that cost is. How often are employee trainings conducted? What type of training is this? Precisely how does the SSA justify the need to conduct the training only in Woods Hole?

7) From a disaster management perspective, would it not be safer to have redundancy in a second smaller building at higher elevation on the terminal perimeter for those critical functions of the Steamship when a hurricane takes out the entire function of the main building?

8) How can the SSA minimize water view obstructions with the new terminal building?

- Will eliminating a second story of the new building reduce the level of obstruction of water views from Woods Hole village and approach to the village? The Bridge View Elevation rendering shared with the public on the SSA website indicates that a single-story building would not fully obstruct water views (see the Bridge View Elevation rendition here https://www.steamshipauthority.com/writable/files/WHTRP/180815_design_presentation_-_port_council_5.pdf)?
- Which water views in which directions exactly (toward the Elizabeth Islands; toward the Hole; toward Great Harbor?) will the proposed two-story building obstruct?
- Would orienting the building perpendicular to the water significantly reduce the area of water view that is blocked (NOTE: might turning the building perpendicular to its currently proposed orientation free up enough space for another line for pre-loading staging of cars)?
- Would reducing the steepness of the terminal building roofline significantly reduce view blockage?
- How would relocating the terminal building to a new location at the terminal minimize water view obstructions?
- Have physical changes already been made to the Woods Hole terminal site that preclude a change to the final placement of the terminal building?

9) Does the SSA believe that a larger, more expensive building will increase the number of cars and passengers who travel to Martha's Vineyard on SSA ferries?

10) The Steamship Authority has an important role to play in environmental stewardship, especially in light of its heavy contribution to a large CO₂ footprint through its ferries. Can solar panels be an integral part of the Woods Hole terminal building design? If the SSA will not be doing that, we ask for a valid reason why their installation is not feasible. We do not find cost to be a justifiable reason. We urge the SSA to consider the installation of solar panels wherever possible, on its buildings and over its parking lots.

11) What assurance do residents of Martha's Vineyard and Cape Cod have that the newly repaired and fully functional third slip in Woods Hole will not lead to more boat trips, both scheduled and unscheduled, and thus worsening traffic problems on Martha's Vineyard and on Cape Cod?

12) Given the observed growth of a variety of new ferry services to Martha's Vineyard from off-Cape ports, why is the Steamship Authority increasing Woods Hole terminal's capacity with a third slip? Why is the SSA not spending time, energy, or resources supporting the development of off-Cape ports and services?

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