

COVER MEMO

Briefing Date/Time: September 8, 2025

Staff Contact/Title: Mike Reid, Community and Economic Development Director, miker@portolympia.com

Subject: Electric Ferry Briefing

Purpose: ☒ Information Only ☐ Decision Needed

Overview:

The Port's primary guiding and vision document Vision 2050 has some clearly articulated goals and actions associated with the due diligence around exploring the viability of "non-trade maritime functions". Specifically one of the ten goals in Vision 2050 states: *Explore the potential for the Port to serve as a cruise ship destination and regional commuter node.*

In support of that goal the following action items are incorporated into the Commission adopted plan:

Action Item #26: Continue to track State-led ferry service studies and evaluate the feasibility of the Port's potential role as the southernmost passenger terminal in South Puget Sound.

Action Item #27: Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a "Mosquito Fleet" water-taxi system that provides limited-scale transportation service for commuters throughout South Puget Sound south of Tacoma.

In an effort to advance these action items the Port retained the services of Peter Phillips of Colibri NW. Peter will be updating the Port Commission on his efforts associated with this project.

Background:

On May 8, 2025 the Port hosted Artemis Technologies at the Port Plaza for a live demonstration of an electric hydrofoil ferry that they manufacture. The Port has

continued conversations with Artemis Technology to remain informed on their progress and advancements to bring their product to scale in the Puget Sound.

Summary and Financial Impact:

Continued engagement with this effort will have associated costs and expenses. For example the Port may want to explore funding a ferry demand study to determine the likelihood of whether there truly is enough market demand to generate enough ridership to support a successful and sustainable outcome.

Environmental Considerations:

The Port is exploring and supporting alternative modes of transportation like ferries not only because of economic considerations like tourism but also because they can be part of environmental solutions specifically reducing single passenger vehicles from the transportation system.

Staff Recommendation:

There is no specific Commission action at this time that requires a staff recommendation. Staff are supportive of this work as it is clearly articulated in Vision 2050.

Commission Recommendation:

Discussion only

Next Steps/Timeframe:

Staff will continue to engage and monitor significant activities that align with the stated goal: *Explore the potential for the Port to serve as a cruise ship destination and regional commuter node*. There is no immediate or pressing action at this time.