

SOUTH SHORE DRIVE

TIDEWATER ROAD

GU

Guemes Channel

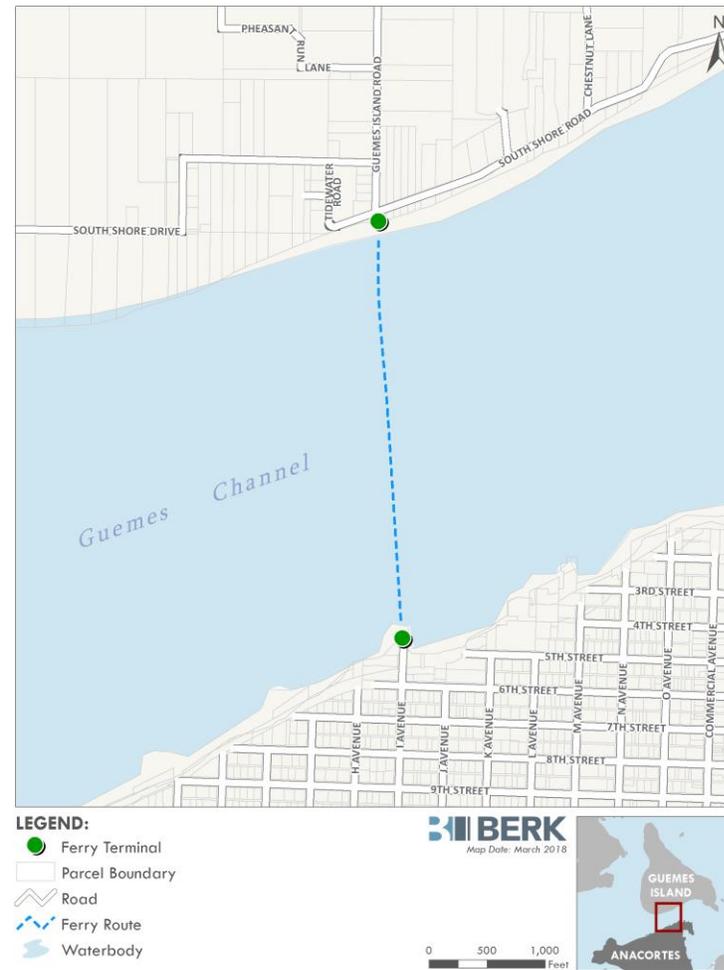
GUEMES FERRY REPLACEMENT DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

April 28, 2018

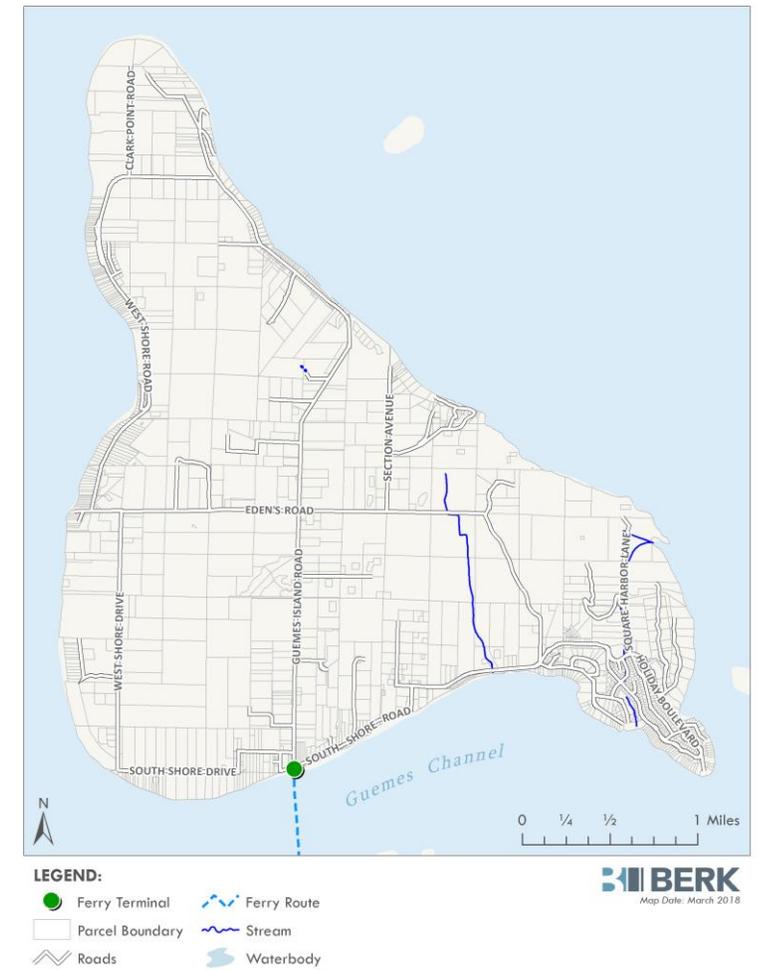
PURPOSE

- ❖ Examine environmental effects of the proposal (32-car boat) and alternatives (Reduced Ferry Size 28-car boat and No Action 21-car boat).
- ❖ Inform Skagit County's decision regarding the ferry replacement.
- ❖ Allow for public comment on proposal and alternatives and mitigation measures.
- ❖ Fulfill State Environmental Policy Act Requirements.
 - Support a threshold determination under SEPA.

STUDY AREAS



Primary: Terminals and Route

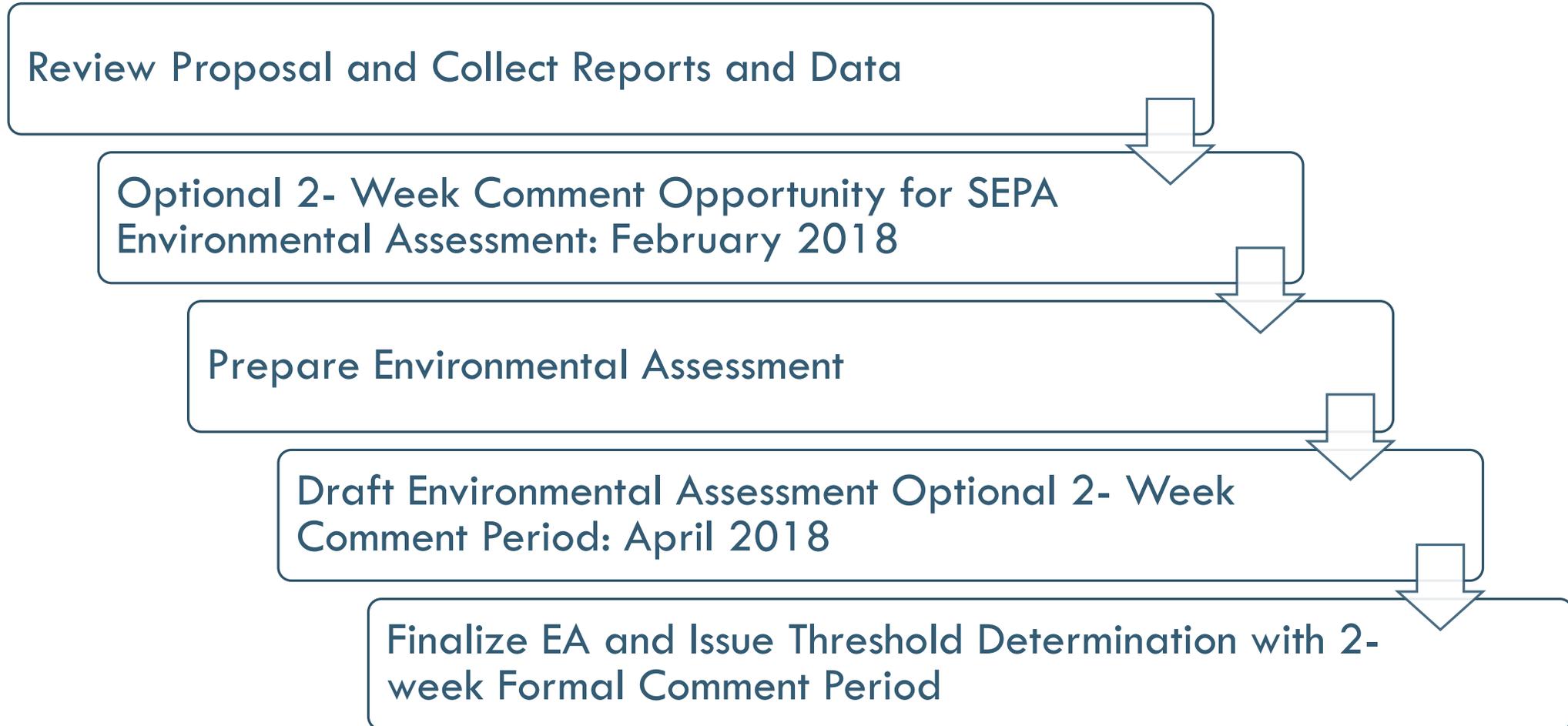


Secondary: Guemes Island Indirect and Cumulative Impacts

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CONTENTS

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Proposal and Alternatives
- ❖ Environmental Assessment of the Alternatives
- ❖ Direct Impacts: Ferry Operation and Terminal Improvements
- ❖ Indirect and Cumulative Impacts: Island Land Use and Growth, Potable Water
- ❖ Attachments
 - A. SEPA Checklist
 - B. Skagit County Priority Habitat and Species 2017 (List)
 - C. References
 - D. Growth Memo

PROCESS



VOLUNTARY COMMENT PERIOD: FEBRUARY 2018

In response to comments, the Environmental Assessment addresses:

- ❖ A Reduced Ferry Size Alternative in comparison to the Proposal
- ❖ A review of growth trends on the island
- ❖ A review of public water and groundwater resources
- ❖ A review of County land use and transportation plans
- ❖ Alternative energy sources per the Proposal design reports

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ALTERNATIVES

❖ Proposal

- Electric ferry serving up to 32 vehicles and 150 passengers per trip

❖ Reduced Ferry Size Alternative

- Electric ferry serving up to 28 vehicles and 150 passengers per trip

❖ No Action

- Diesel ferry serving up to 21-cars and 100 passengers



DIRECT EFFECTS

Fish and Wildlife: With physical changes to the terminals in the Guemes Channel there could be impacts to priority habitats and species, state species of concern, and federal threatened and endangered fish and wildlife species.

- ❖ When the terminal improvements are designed, a biological assessment and federal, state, and local permits would be required.
- ❖ Such assessments and permits would determine appropriate conditions of approval such as work windows and avoidance of protected habitat to reduce or avoid impacts.

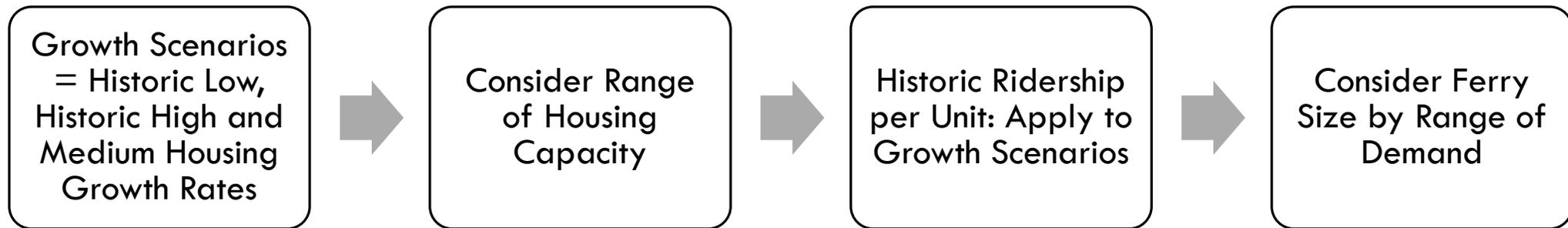
DIRECT EFFECTS (CONT.)

Air, Noise, Water Quality:

- ❖ New ferry vessel under the Proposal or Reduced Ferry Size Alternative could reduce air quality impacts and reduce the potential for noise compared to the No Action Alternative given the proposed ferry design and use of electric power.
- ❖ Water quality impacts could be reduced where diesel fuel use is reduced under the Proposal or Reduced Ferry Size Alternative.



GROWTH / INDIRECT AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS



COMPARISON OF ROUND TRIP RIDERSHIP ESTIMATES AND FERRY CAR CAPACITY NEEDED

Scenario	Vehicle Ridership Round Trip 2036	Vehicle Capacity Needed 2036	Vehicle Ridership Round Trip 2060	Vehicle Capacity Needed 2060
Historic Trends High	131,000	25	188,000	35
Glosten Vessel Capacity Study 2017			170,000	32
County Comp Plan Medium	119,000	22	158,000	30
Historic Trends Low	105,000	20	119,000	22

Proposal is in range of 2060 estimates

Based on Historic Per Capita Rates Applied to Range of Growth Rates – BERK 2018

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICY GOAL 8A AND POLICIES

Goal 8A-5 Work to maintain county and state ferry services as an important element of the transportation network.

policy 8A-5.3 To meet future increases in demand, increase service capacity of the Guemes Island Ferry by: (a) encouraging car-pooling and walk-on passengers; (b) increasing the frequency of ferry runs based on demand; (c) considering additional ferry capacity if the aforementioned procedures fail to accommodate demand; and (d) adding additional runs outside the current schedule.

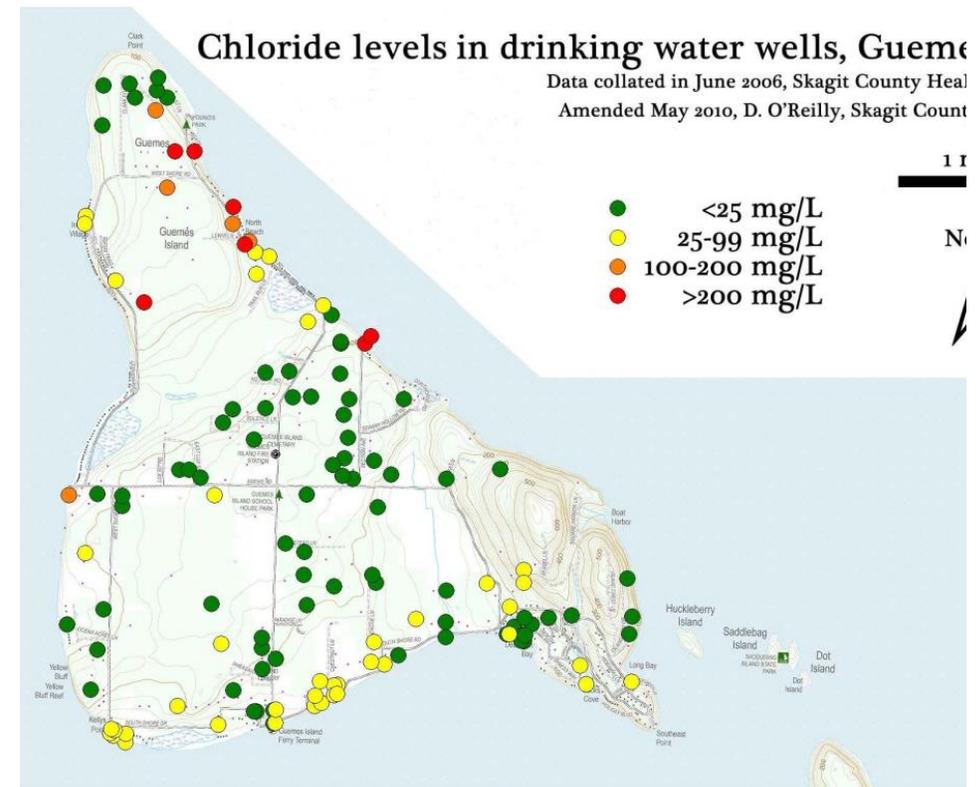
POLICY REVIEW

1. The Proposal would meet Goal 8A-5 to maintain County ferry services, as would the Reduced Ferry Size Alternative.
2. A vessel sized for a projected growth rate at a medium or lower level, or for the mid-point of the 2060 planning horizon, could reflect the following trends and uncertainties:
 - Declining rates of ridership,
 - Changing nature of vehicle travel (e.g. driverless cars, car sharing), and
 - Potential for additional demand management measures (ferry ticket pricing and parking supply and transit support).

It could also match policy 8A-5.3 - graduated approach to changes in the ferry system and service.

POTABLE WATER

- ❖ Proposal and Reduced Ferry Size
Alternative would not create direct impacts to ground water resources on Guemes Island.
- No alteration of the growth capacity under the Comprehensive Plan and zoning.
- The ferry size alternatives designed to provide capacity within the range of historic population and dwelling unit growth rates.
- The County has recently implemented code regarding several land use and aquifer protection measures to mitigate impacts.



RESULTS

Direct Impacts/Mitigation

Project level impacts can be:

- ❖ Avoided based on designs (e.g. reduced air quality emissions, reduced noise due to electric power), or
- ❖ Mitigated by federal, state, and local codes and permit conditions (e.g. work windows and other conditions regarding plant and animal habitat and species).

Indirect/Cumulative Impacts

- ❖ Growth trends do not support the idea that a ferry size induces growth.
- ❖ Growth trends and ridership analysis do support considering an alternative in the range that accommodates growth in the middle of the planning period or for a medium or lower historic rate paired with demand management and transit measures.



NEXT STEPS

Draft EA Comment
Period – Closes 4/30 at
4:30 pm

Finalize EA and Issue
Threshold Determination
with 2-week Formal
Comment Period

County Decision makers
Consider Ferry Sizing
Proposal

INFORMATION AND COMMENTING

Environmental Assessment Information

<https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PlanningAndPermit/ferryEnviro.htm>

Comments

Due: 4:30 pm, April 30, 2018

Email comments are preferred and must be sent to pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us

Send written comments marked as:

Comments on proposed “Replacement Guemes Ferry Proposal”
Planning and Development Services
1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon
WA 98273

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

GROWTH SCENARIOS

Three scenarios for future housing and population growth on Guemes Island to project potential impacts on ferry ridership and vehicle demand.

Scenario	Growth Rate
1. Historic Trends Low (2010-17)	0.52%
2. County Comprehensive Plan (Medium)	1.18%
3. Historic Trends High (2000-17)	1.7%

COMPARISON OF GROWTH TRENDS TO HOUSING CAPACITY

None of the Growth Scenarios would reach the low estimate of housing capacity before the year 2036.

Scenario 2 (County Comprehensive Plan) is projected to surpass that capacity around 2050, and Scenario 3 (Historic Trends High) is projected to exceed all three capacity estimates before 2060.

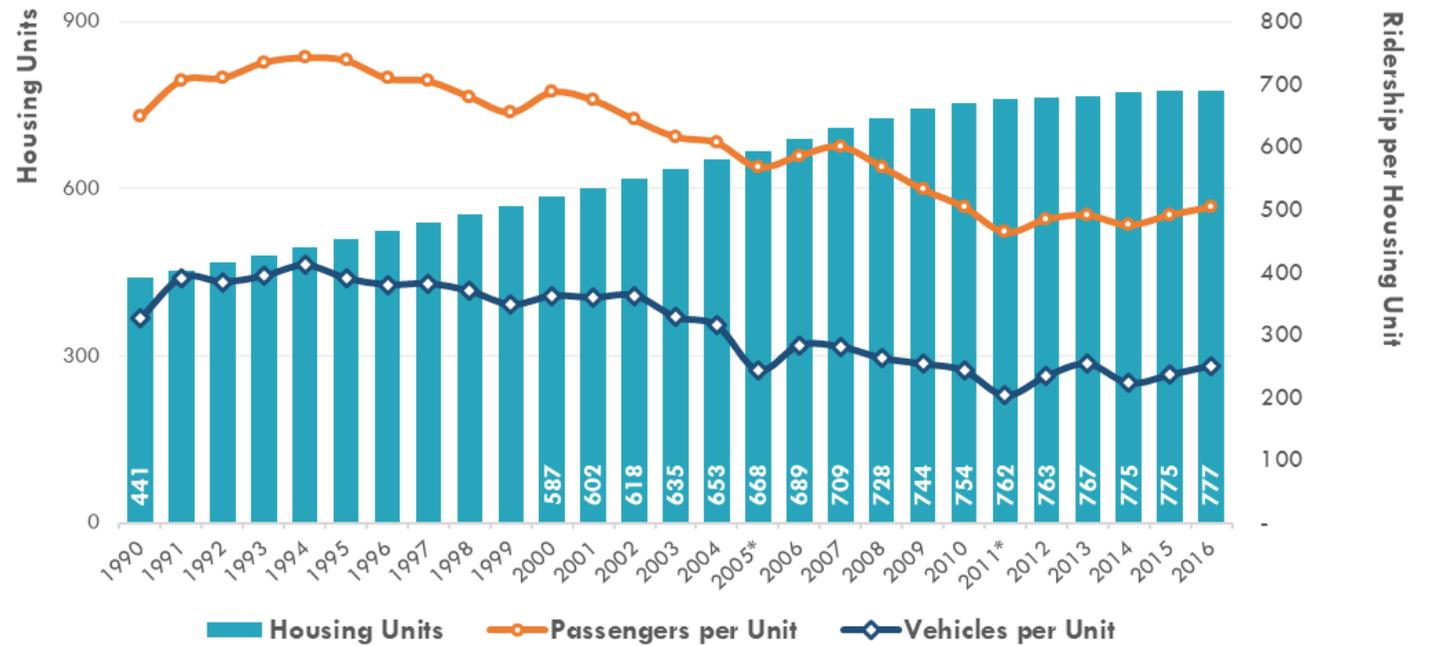


APPLY RIDERSHIP PER HOUSING UNIT TO EACH HOUSING SCENARIO

	Average Annual 2012 – 2016 (excluding 2014*)
Passenger Round Trips per housing unit	247
Vehicle Round Trips per housing unit	122
Passenger Round Trips per capita	267
Vehicle Round Trips per capita	132

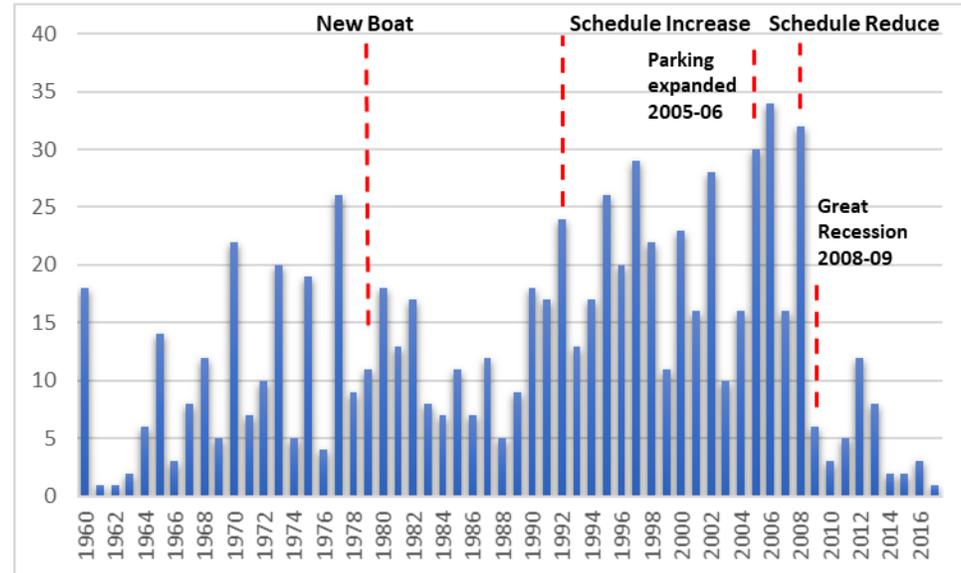
* In 2014 there was an approximately one-month ferry outage during which time a contract passenger ferry ran.

RIDERSHIP PER HOUSING UNIT, 1990 - 2016



* In 2005 & 2011 there were extended ferry outages, with shorter maintenance outages in 2010, 2012, 2014, & 2015. No housing data exists for years 1991-1999, so linear growth is assumed.

NUMBER AND AVERAGE - STRUCTURES BUILT BY YEAR 1960-2016



Year Range		Annual Average Buildings (Assessor Year Built)	Condition
1960	1979	10.15	Prior to 21-car boat
1980	1991	11.83	New 21-car boat
1992	2005	20.36	Schedule Change 1992
2006	2008	27.33	Schedule Change 2006 Increase and 2008 Small Decrease; expand parking.
2009	2017	4.67	Post Schedule Change, Recession, and Recovery
2012	2017	4.67	Post Economic Recovery

COUNTYWIDE UNINCORPORATED RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS

