

# Guemes Ferry Operations and Service Analysis

**Public Meeting**

**July 17, 2019**



**kpff**

**BERK**

# Consulting Team



- Project manager
- Lead on community engagement and financial analysis
- Lead deliverables
- Environmental assessment and legislative review



**Vivien Savath**



**Lisa Grueter**



- Lead on ticketing, queuing, loading, parking, and schedule analysis
- Planning illustration and preliminary capital cost estimates



**Michael  
Anderson**



**Cassandra  
Durkin**



**Kelly  
Lesoing**

# Outline

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- Scope, objectives, timeline
- Situation assessment highlights
- Goals, criteria, preliminary options

# Scope and Timeline

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*“Everything but the boat and terminal”*

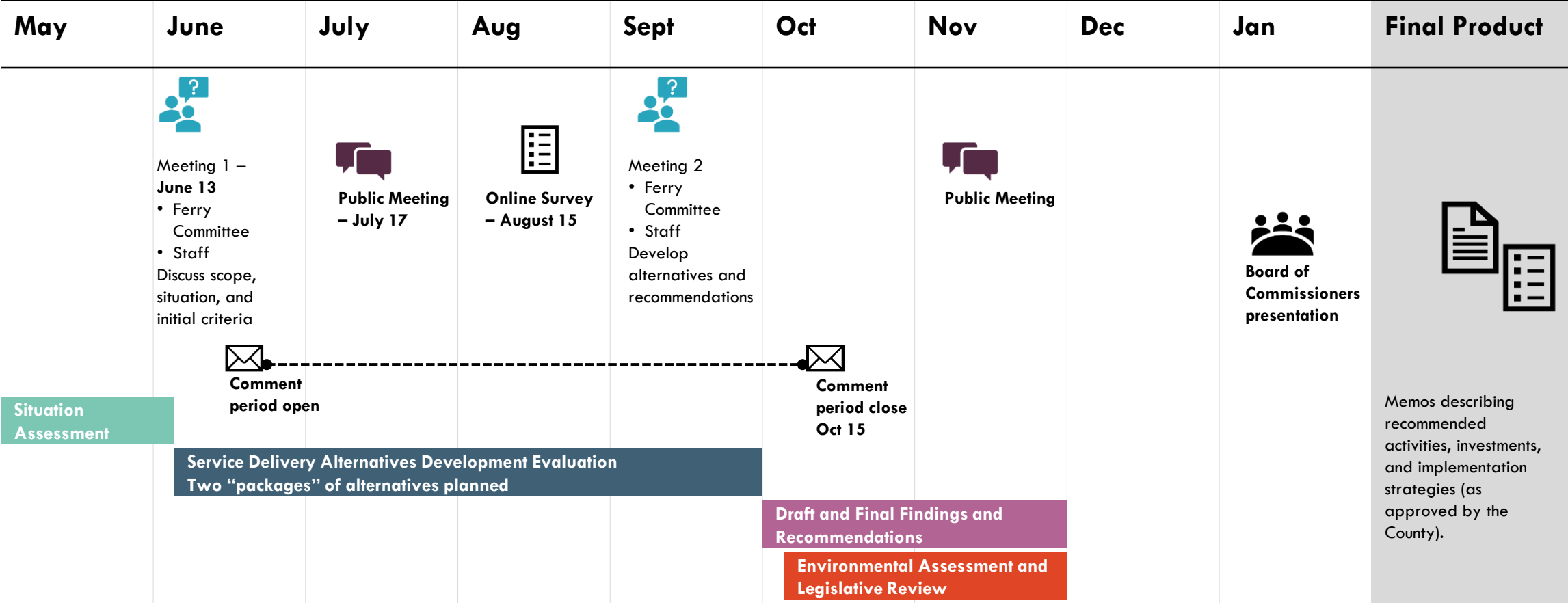
*Glosten is working on the boat design concurrently*

Engage the ferry community, staff, and County commissioners to develop and evaluate strategies for:

- ❑ Ticketing
- ❑ Fare structure
- ❑ Queuing and loading
- ❑ Parking
- ❑ Ferry schedule

# Scope and Timeline

Meeting 3 (Optional, as-needed)  
 • Ferry Committee  
 • Staff



# Public Input

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- Two public meetings
  - July 17
  - November Date TBD
- Study website
  - <https://publicinput.com/guemesferry>
- Email comments open now: [ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us)
  - Comments will close October 15, 2019 for final report production.
  - Final report will include compiled comments and responses.
- Online survey
  - August 15 on <https://publicinput.com/guemesferry>

# Situation Assessment Highlights

# Ferry Policies and Goals

## The Guemes Island Sub-Area Plan

### Overall Goal

Allow growth that will conserve the island's groundwater resources, rural character, and sense of community.

### Ferry Recommendations

- Ferry Committee
- Ridership Demand
- Parking
- Ferry Schedule

Policy 6.1 1: When evaluating major changes in ferry operations or schedules, the County shall include the following factors:

- An assessment of ridership demand and alternative means to reduce that demand or encourage less vehicle trip usage and more pedestrian, carpool and bicycle usage.
- An assessment of the potential impacts on Anacortes and Guemes Island, including costs, congestion, parking and growth and effects on critical areas, the rural character and the social fabric of the island community.

## 2016-2036 Comprehensive Plan

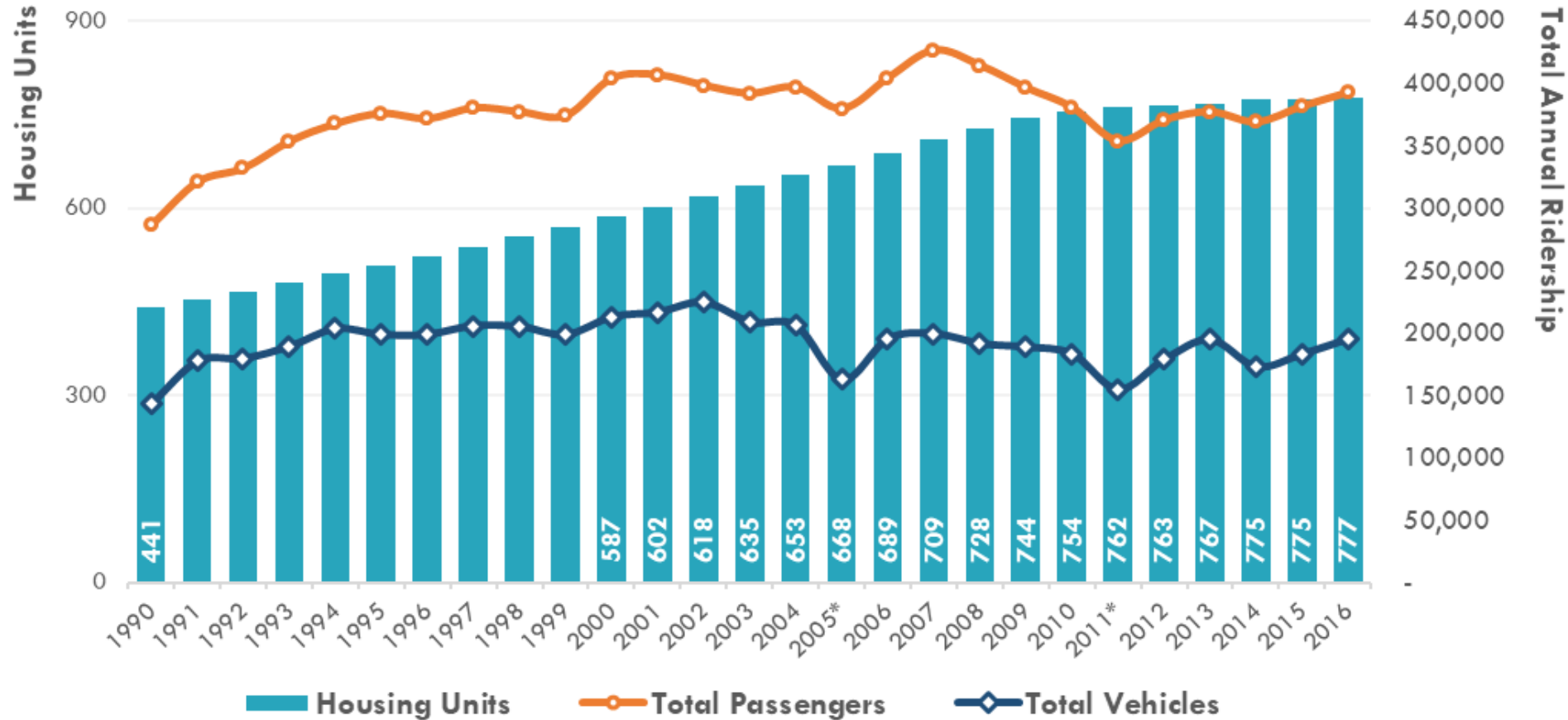
### Ferry Service Goal

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

- 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.
- 8A-5.5 Continue to provide safe and adequate ferry service between Anacortes and Guemes Island, and a fare structure designed to recover operating costs similar to the Washington State Ferries model.



# Vehicle ridership relatively flat in recent years despite population increase



- 1990-2002 saw a close relationship between ridership and housing.
- Vehicle ridership peaked in 2002 while passenger ridership peaked in 2007.

\* 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.

Source: Skagit County, 2018; OFM, 2018; BERK, 2018.



## Analysis of cars left behind data (July 2018 – April 2019) shows that:

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- ❑ Cars are most frequently left behind on the 1:00 p.m. run following the midday break.
  - 74% of Thursday 1:00 p.m. runs left cars behind (over and back).
  - Sunday 1:00 p.m. runs left cars behind 45% of the time going over and 64% coming back.
  
- ❑ Cars are not frequently left behind in the evenings, except Friday nights.
  - Runs 8:30 p.m. and later typically experience cars left behind 2% of the time or less.
  - The exceptions are Friday runs going over 8:30 (19%), 9:15 (19%) and 10:00 p.m. (14%); and Saturday 10:00 p.m. coming back (7%).
  - The weekend 11:00 p.m. run experienced 0 cars left behind in the timeframe.

Source: Skagit County, 2018; BERK, 2019.

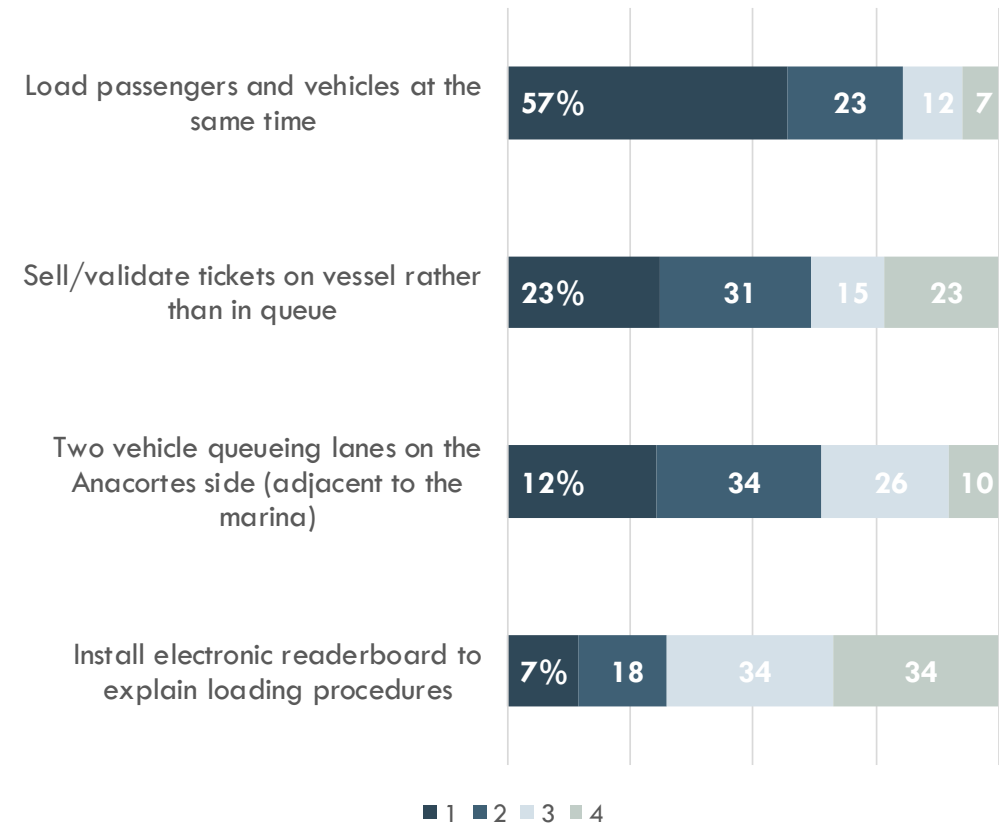
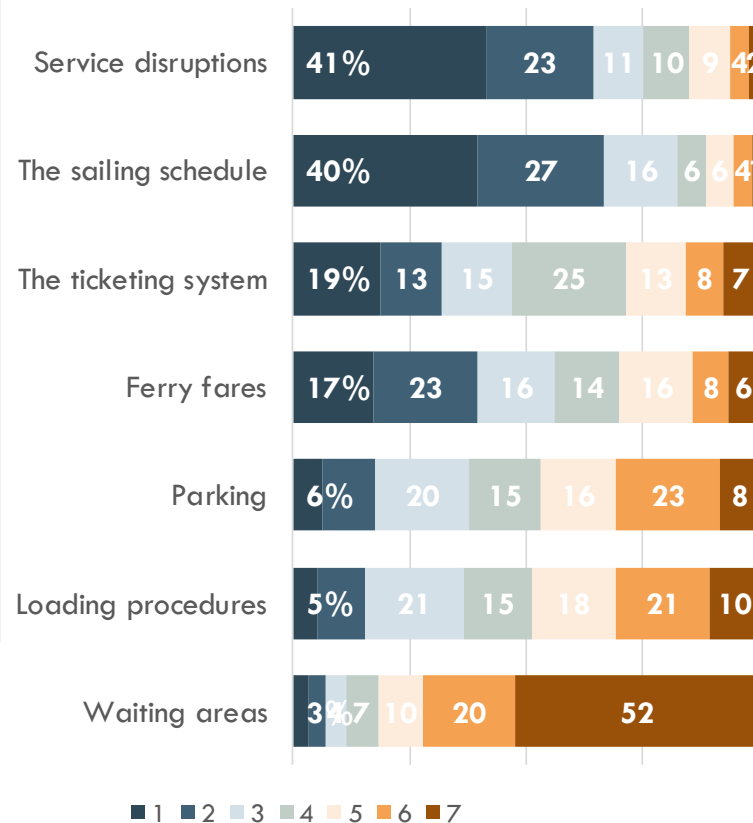
# About the Surveys

- Two surveys were administered via PublicInput.com. One survey gathered feedback regarding ferry replacement and the second survey was about system improvements given the new ferry.
- 683 surveys were received and 232 people left comments.
- 73-76% of responses were from residents
  - 52-57% of total responses from full-time residents
  - 19-21% of total responses from part-time residents
- Information from both surveys are included in this section.

|                             | Replacement Survey      | System Improvement      |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Dates</b>                | 9-15-2017 to 12-11-2017 | 12-14-2017 to 7-22-2018 |
| <b>Survey Respondents</b>   | 334                     | 349                     |
| <b>Number of Commenters</b> | 127                     | 105                     |
| <b>Residents</b>            | <b>73%</b>              | <b>76%</b>              |
| • <b>Full-time</b>          | 52%                     | 57%                     |
| • <b>Part-time</b>          | 21%                     | 19%                     |

# Community priorities are schedule, ticketing, and fares

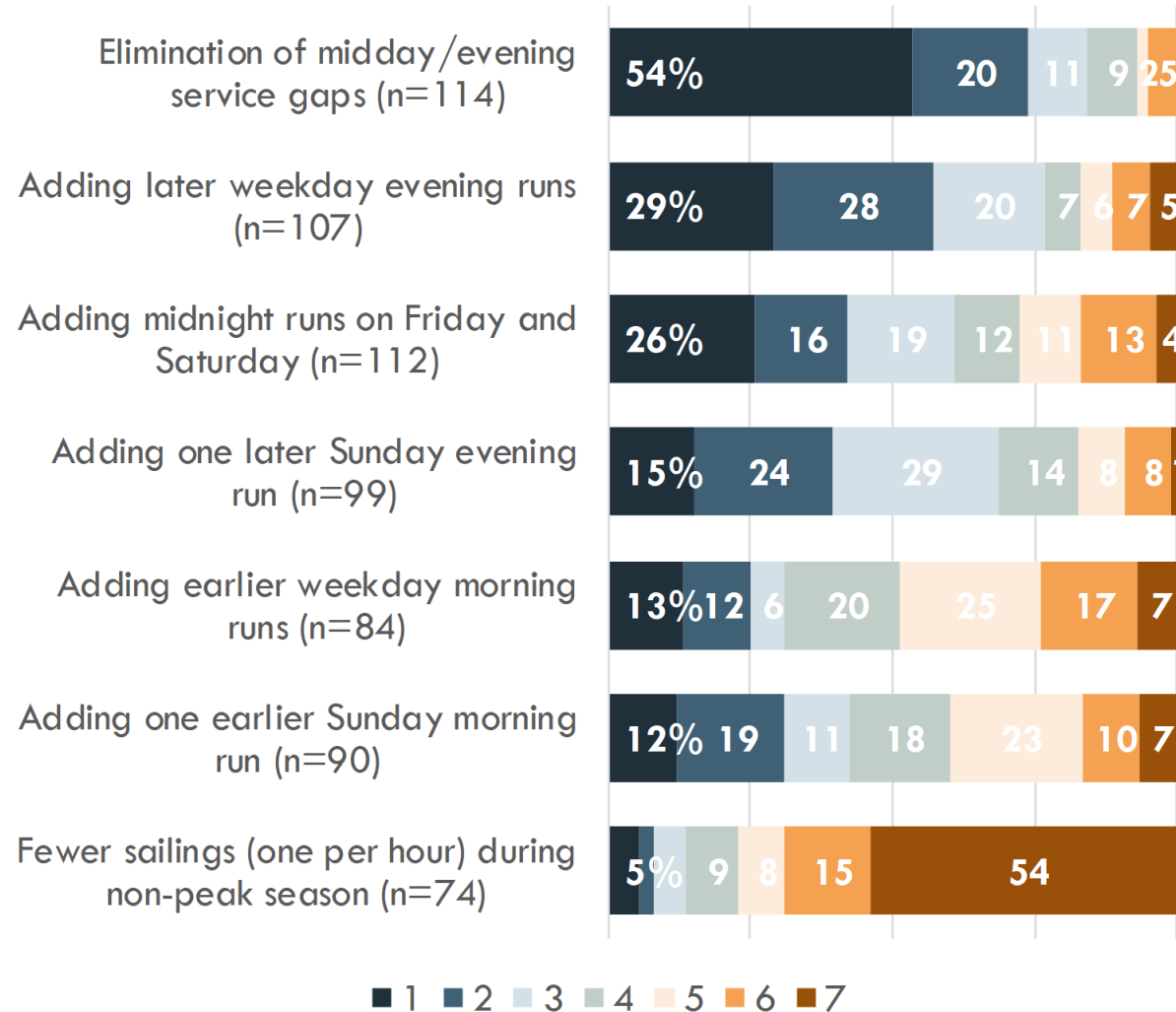
- Service disruptions and the sailing schedule were seen as the most important system improvement.
- Loading passengers and vehicles at the same time was by far seen as the highest priority for loading procedure changes.



# Schedule priorities are midday gaps and evening runs

- The elimination of midday/evening service gaps was ranked as the top choice of 54% of the time.
- Adding later weekday evening runs was ranked as the top choice of 29% of the time.

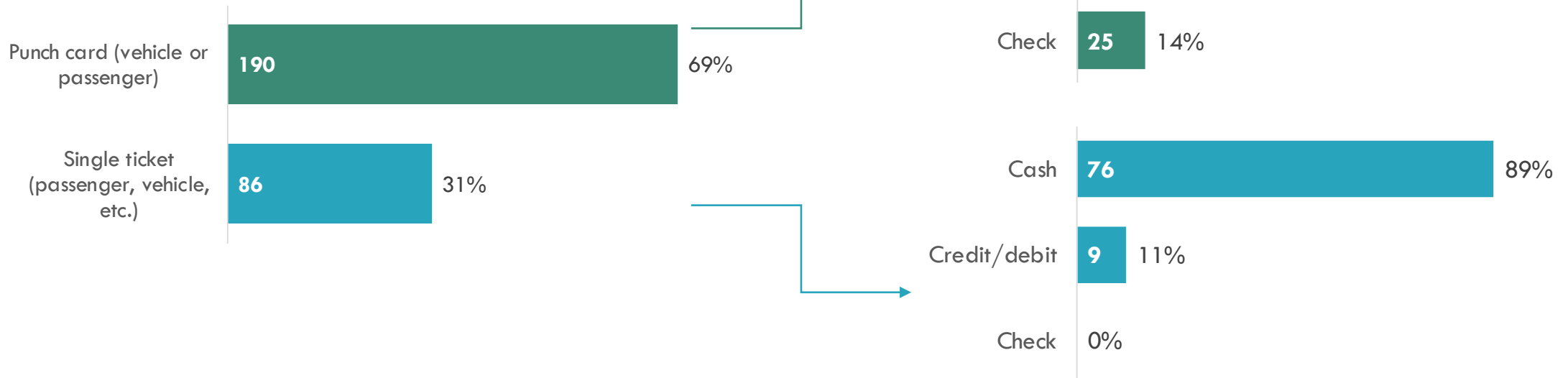
*“Elimination of the service gaps would relieve congestion, notably during the busy season April through October. Not having a later run on Saturday has resulted in our not being able to participate in cultural and social events as well as family events on Sunday late afternoon.”*



# Purchase method depends on the product

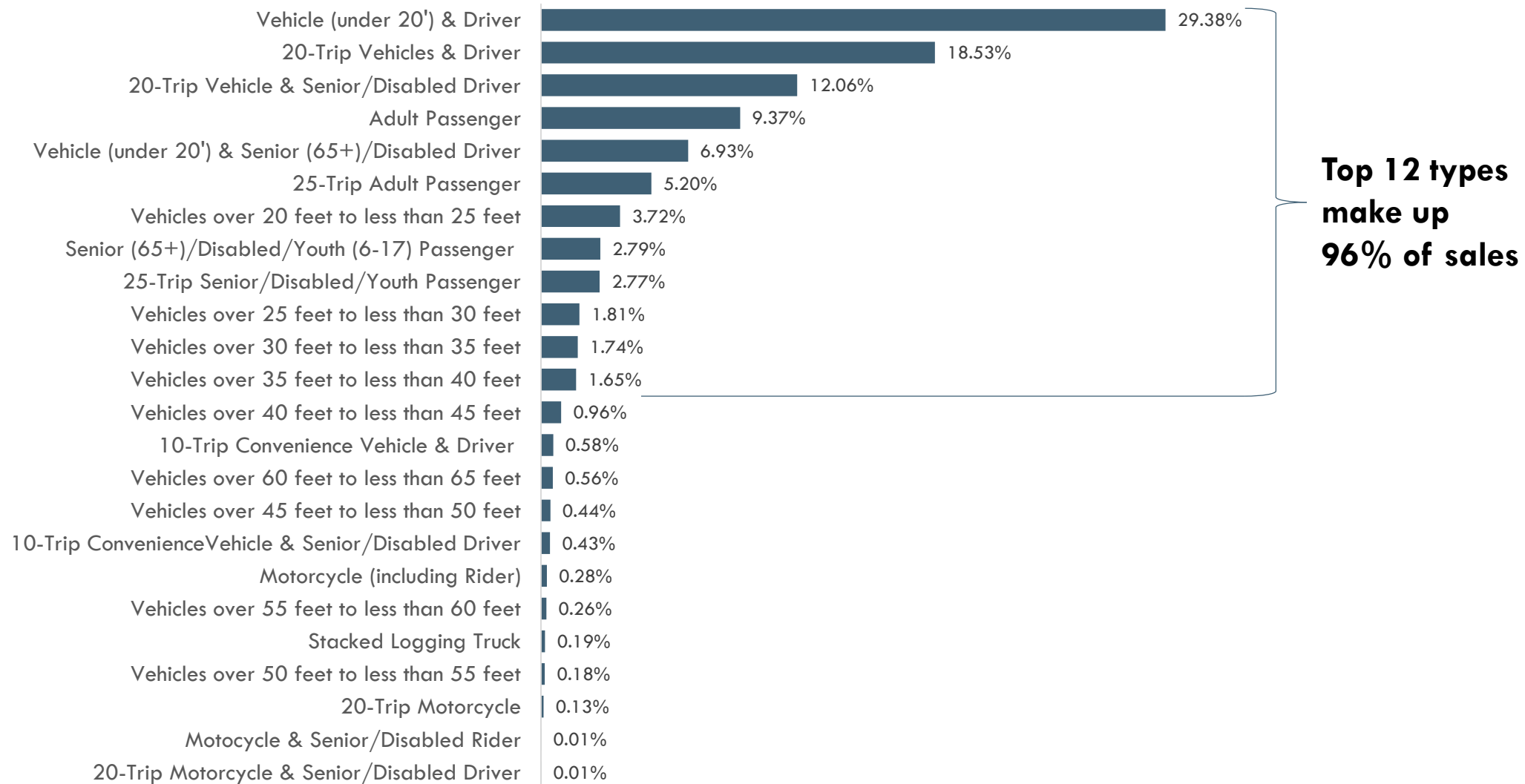
- Most survey respondents purchase a punch card and use credit/debit for that purchase.
- Sales data shows that the overall ferry receipts are about one-third credit/debit.

## How do you pay for that purchase?

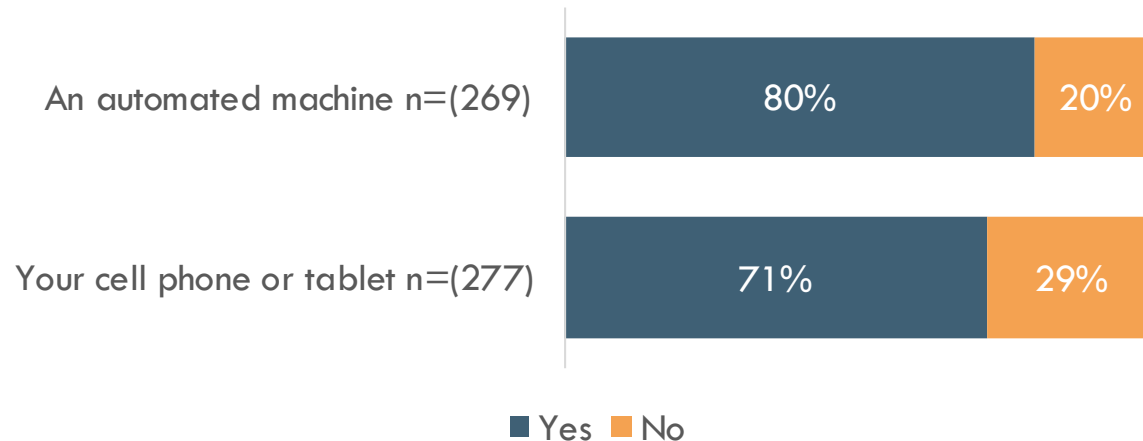


**Note:** The second question was filtered to only show responses for people who indicated that was their primary purchase type. Many respondents answered for both ticket types, not just their primary type.

# Many fare types that comprise less than 1% of sales



# Most respondents would use an automated machine or phone



## Concerns with:

### Cell phones or tablets

- *"I don't want to use my cell phone or tablet for ferry ticket purchases. It could be an added option for some but not the only option."*
- *"Not everybody has a cell phone that can do this option."*
- *"My current phone lacks easy capability"*

### Automated Machines

- *"A system that requires the driver or passenger to leave their vehicle would seem to increase loading times, as would a credit/debit card system reachable from a car (parking garage model)."*
- *"Not unless it was a drive-up machine. Depending on when you hit the cycle, you may not be holding up other ticketed drivers if you have to get out and pay at a machine."*
- *"Guessing a dedicated machine would not provide a cost-effective return on investment what with programming, security, maintenance, and the need for a one-off everything system."*
- *"The automated machines for the San Juan ferries jam all the time. It definitely isn't hassle free"*

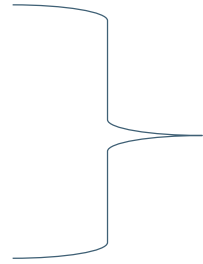


# Preliminary Options

# How should we prioritize options?

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- Revenue
- Operating cost
- Capital cost
- Level of service
  - Wait times
  - Access
  - On-time sailings
- Other considerations to prioritize?



## Funding Options

- Fares
- Road fund
- Other funding

# Which fare options should we analyze further?

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## **Preliminary Fare Options:**

- Reduce number of fare categories
- Introduce a small vehicle (under 14') fare and change standard fare to 22'
- Do not charge for walk-ons
- Remove peak/non-peak fares

## **Other?**

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# Which schedule options should we analyze further?

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## **Suggestions from survey:**

- Elimination of midday/evening service gaps
- Adding later weekday evening runs
- Adding midnight runs on Friday and Saturday

## **Other schedule options?**

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# How you would like to pay for a ticket to ride the ferry?

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## **Suggestions from survey:**

- Online pre-sales for punch cards
- An improved mobile point-of-sale (POS) system or barcode scanning technology
- A (walk-up) vending kiosk
- A (drive-up) tollbooth

## **Other?**

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# Coming soon...

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- Further analysis of parking, loading, and queuing will be developed following KPFF's site visit which took place earlier today.

# What does success for this study mean to you?

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- Improved service?
- Maintain fare levels?
- Maintain sense of community?
- .....?

Review of proposals

Other comments and  
questions?



# Appendix

# Guemes Island Sub-Area Plan

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- The 1990 Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), RCW 36.70A provides for sub-area plans, which are detailed land-use plans for smaller geographic areas. The Skagit County Comprehensive Plan of 2000 calls for Guemes Island to be a “Rural Area of More Detailed Planning,” as an island with distinct physical boundaries whose rural character continues to be shaped by its dependence on a ferry for access and on groundwater for drinking water.

The Guemes Island Sub-Area Plan was adopted in January 2011:

- **Establishes overall goal:** Allow growth that will conserve the island’s groundwater resources, rural character, and sense of community.
- **Contains guidance** for the development and update of the Guemes Island Ferry Capital Facilities Plan, which provides the specific planning and development criteria for ferry operations.
- **Reinforces Public Forum process** established by County Resolution:
- Public Forums provide public advisory input on the County’s Work Plan for the Guemes Island ferry operation. Topics of interest include ticket fare structure and fare recovery model, cost containment, ferry sailing schedule, ferry operations master plan and ADA accessibility issues confronting passenger-only ferry service.

# Guemes Island Sub-Area Plan Ferry Recommendations

## Ferry Committee

Policy 6.1: The County should continue to encourage regular and structured advisory discussion of operational issues associated with the effective operation of the Guemes Island ferry through the Public Forum process as set forth in accordance with resolution R20100050. Issues of ferry access for the elderly and disabled should be addressed through the Public Forum process and implemented, as needed, by Skagit County Public Works.

Policy 6.2: The County should review recommendations from the Berk Study Report as part of preparing its annual Ferry Operations Work Plan.

Policy 6.3: The County should provide reports discussing progress in implementing related SCCP policies and presenting data on ridership demand, system costs and performance in simplified graphic format. This information should be presented to the County Commissioners and the Guemes Island community as a part of the Public Forum meetings.

## Ridership Demand

Policy 6.4: The County in coordination with the Ferry Committee, should promote alternatives to automobiles on the Guemes Island Ferry with educational materials, incentives, and other supportive measures to reduce vehicle demand, especially during peak use periods.

Policy 6.5: The County should coordinate with Skagit Transit to provide a direct local service route between the Anacortes ferry dock and the Anacortes downtown core as well as beyond.

Policy 6.6: The County should consider “flex cars” as part of an overall strategy to reduce vehicle demand and encourage more “walk-on” passengers.

Policy 6.7: The County, in coordination with the Ferry Committee, should identify measures for increasing foot traffic and ridesharing, and provide economic and other incentives to encourage these modes of transportation.

Policy 6.8: The County should work to ensure that timely after hours emergency ferry service is available.

Policy 6.9: The County should improve accessibility for elderly and disabled passengers when normal ferry service is unavailable.

# Guemes Island Sub-Area Plan Ferry Recommendations

## Parking

Policy 6.10: 6.11 The County, the City of Anacortes, the 6th Street neighborhood, and Guemes Island commuters should cooperatively implement the recommendation of the Crossing Over Report to improve transit service, street signage, commuter education, and street parking.

## Ferry Schedule

Policy 6.11: When evaluating major changes in ferry operations or schedules, the County shall include the following factors:

- An assessment of ridership demand and alternative means to reduce that demand or encourage less vehicle trip usage and more pedestrian, carpool and bicycle usage.
- An assessment of the potential impacts on Anacortes and Guemes Island, including costs, congestion, parking and growth and effects on critical areas, the rural character and the social fabric of the island community.

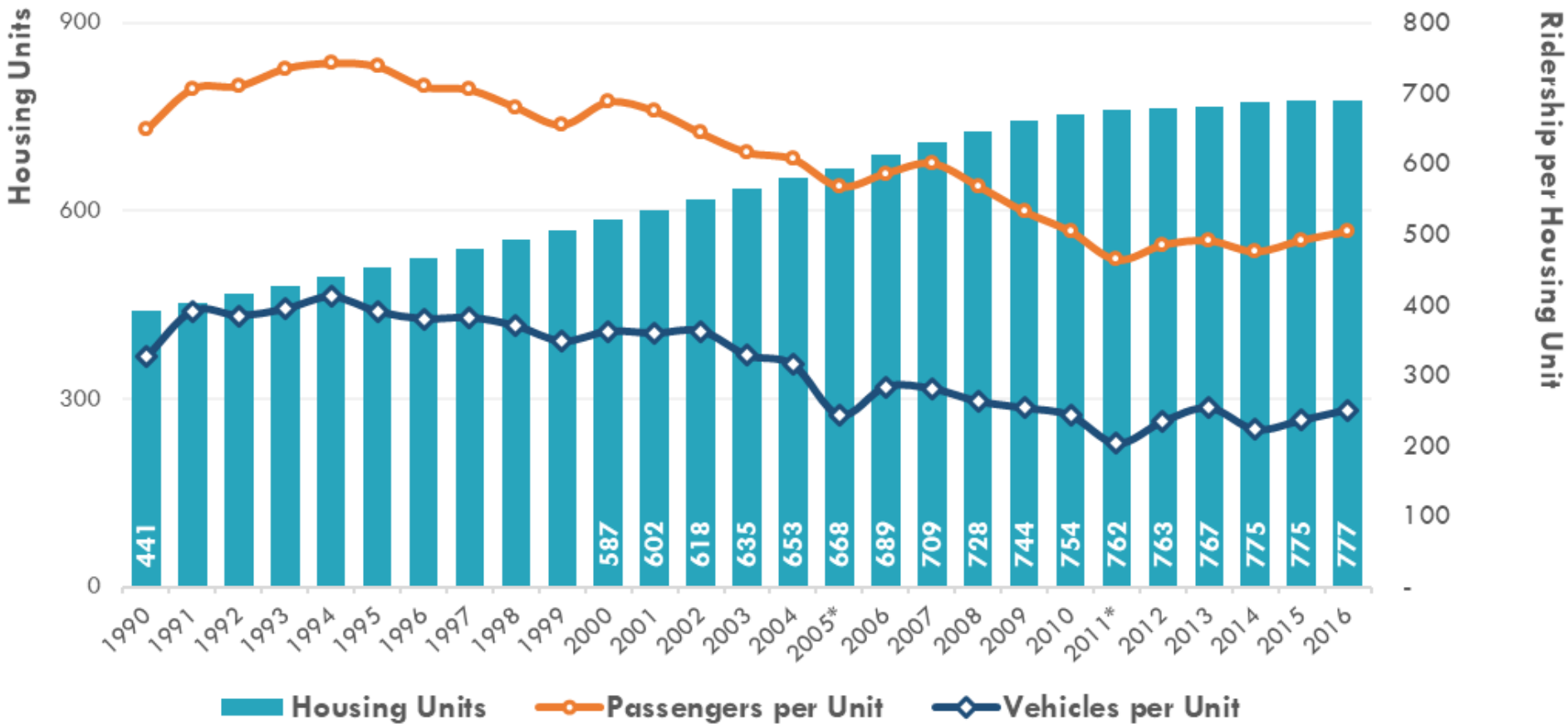
# 2016-2036 Comprehensive Plan

## Ferry Service Goal

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

- 8A-5.1 Encourage the provision of adequate street, highway, and road facilities to accommodate traffic to the ferry terminals in Anacortes.
- 8A-5.2 Work with the City of Anacortes, property owners, and residents on Guemes Island to develop and maintain adequate parking areas.
- 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.
- 8A-5.4 In making all decisions related to the Guemes Island Ferry, balance the needs of the Island residents, the non-resident property owners, and the County citizenry as a whole. Decisions that would have significant service or financial impacts should be made after providing ample opportunities for public review and comment.
- 8A-5.5 Continue to provide safe and adequate ferry service between Anacortes and Guemes Island, and a fare structure designed to recover operating costs similar to the Washington State Ferries model.
- 8A-5.6 Support the State's continued provision of ferry service to and from Anacortes San Juan Islands-Vancouver Island, B.C.

# Ridership per Housing Unit, 1990 - 2016



- Decline in rides per housing unit could be due to a slow decline in population per housing unit, household size, and the percentage of homes that are occupied full time
- In the year 2000, 46.6% of units were occupied full time.
- In 2010 this rate dropped to 40.2%

\* 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.

Source: Skagit County, 2018; OFM, 2018; BERK, 2018.



# July 2018 – April 2019 Cars Left Behind

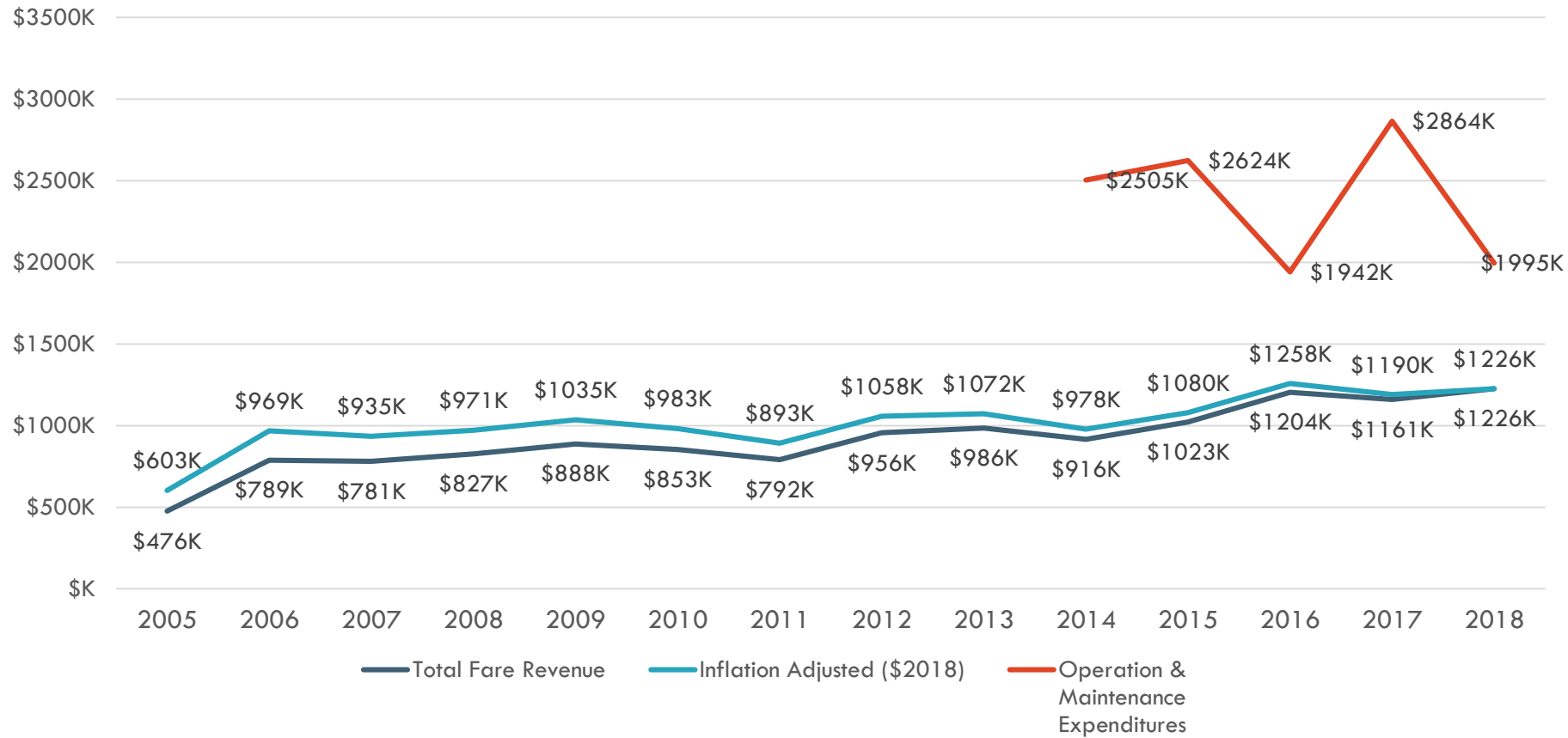
| Time | Monday |      | Tuesday |      | Wednesday |      | Thursday |      | Friday |      | Saturday |      | Sunday |      |
|------|--------|------|---------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|--------|------|----------|------|--------|------|
|      | Over   | Back | Over    | Back | Over      | Back | Over     | Back | Over   | Back | Over     | Back | Over   | Back |
| 630  | 2%     | 32%  | 2%      | 39%  | 16%       | 28%  | 2%       | 35%  | 5%     | 7%   | 0%       | 0%   |        |      |
| 700  | 0%     | 0%   | 2%      | 9%   | 2%        | 0%   | 2%       | 0%   | 2%     | 2%   | 0%       | 0%   |        |      |
| 730  | 0%     | 7%   | 2%      | 9%   | 7%        | 12%  | 2%       | 5%   | 0%     | 5%   |          |      |        |      |
| 800  | 0%     | 25%  | 5%      | 43%  | 16%       | 19%  | 7%       | 30%  | 5%     | 12%  | 0%       | 7%   | 0%     | 30%  |
| 830  | 11%    | 18%  | 7%      | 48%  | 14%       | 23%  | 7%       | 19%  | 7%     | 21%  | 0%       | 0%   | 0%     | 11%  |
| 900  |        |      |         |      |           |      |          |      |        |      |          |      | 0%     | 0%   |
| 915  | 23%    | 57%  | 30%     | 64%  |           |      | 12%      | 56%  | 30%    | 42%  | 9%       | 44%  |        |      |
| 945  | 7%     | 48%  | 16%     | 45%  | 49%       | 44%  | 9%       | 42%  | 21%    | 28%  | 0%       | 21%  | 2%     | 25%  |
| 1015 | 2%     | 39%  | 7%      | 48%  | 21%       | 40%  | 9%       | 33%  | 2%     | 30%  | 12%      | 21%  | 0%     | 23%  |
| 1045 | 5%     | 57%  | 5%      | 52%  | 12%       | 49%  | 21%      | 58%  | 16%    | 58%  | 28%      | 44%  | 7%     | 66%  |
| 1115 | 7%     | 45%  | 5%      | 45%  | 5%        | 44%  | 7%       | 28%  | 7%     | 44%  | 16%      | 21%  | 0%     | 36%  |
| 1300 | 64%    | 68%  | 59%     | 73%  | 67%       | 72%  | 74%      | 74%  | 70%    | 67%  | 70%      | 51%  | 45%    | 64%  |
| 1330 | 34%    | 41%  | 36%     | 36%  | 37%       | 28%  | 42%      | 33%  | 51%    | 35%  | 47%      | 7%   | 18%    | 41%  |
| 1400 | 2%     | 16%  | 11%     | 20%  |           |      | 26%      | 21%  | 37%    | 23%  | 35%      | 5%   | 5%     | 16%  |
| 1430 | 7%     | 2%   | 20%     | 16%  | 12%       | 42%  | 26%      | 7%   | 35%    | 9%   |          |      |        |      |
| 1445 |        |      |         |      |           |      |          |      |        |      | 47%      | 14%  | 2%     | 27%  |
| 1515 | 36%    | 34%  | 52%     | 30%  | 47%       | 49%  | 51%      | 33%  | 58%    | 33%  | 0%       | 0%   | 0%     | 0%   |
| 1600 | 55%    | 23%  | 64%     | 32%  | 56%       | 37%  | 63%      | 21%  | 72%    | 14%  | 21%      | 0%   | 0%     | 18%  |
| 1630 | 32%    | 5%   | 48%     | 5%   | 30%       | 7%   | 53%      | 5%   | 51%    | 2%   | 9%       | 0%   | 0%     | 16%  |
| 1700 | 23%    | 2%   | 36%     | 0%   | 12%       | 2%   | 37%      | 2%   | 44%    | 0%   | 40%      | 2%   | 2%     | 5%   |
| 1730 | 11%    | 0%   | 30%     | 0%   | 5%        | 0%   | 23%      | 2%   | 37%    | 0%   | 19%      | 2%   | 0%     | 2%   |
| 1815 | 11%    | 0%   | 14%     | 0%   | 14%       | 0%   | 28%      | 5%   | 42%    | 0%   | 19%      | 0%   | 0%     | 9%   |
| 1845 | 5%     | 0%   | 5%      | 0%   | 0%        | 0%   | 14%      | 0%   | 16%    | 0%   | 5%       | 0%   | 0%     | 5%   |
| 2000 | 9%     | 2%   | 5%      | 0%   | 5%        | 0%   | 19%      | 2%   | 37%    | 2%   | 2%       | 5%   | 2%     | 7%   |
| 2030 | 0%     | 0%   | 2%      | 0%   | 0%        | 0%   | 2%       | 0%   | 19%    | 0%   | 0%       | 0%   | 0%     | 2%   |
| 2115 |        |      |         |      |           |      |          |      | 19%    | 0%   | 0%       | 2%   | 0%     | 2%   |
| 2200 |        |      |         |      |           |      |          |      | 14%    | 0%   | 0%       | 7%   | 0%     | 0%   |
| 2300 |        |      |         |      |           |      |          |      | 0%     | 0%   | 0%       | 0%   | 0%     | 0%   |

Source: Skagit County, 2018; BERK, 2019.



# Fare Revenue 2005-2018

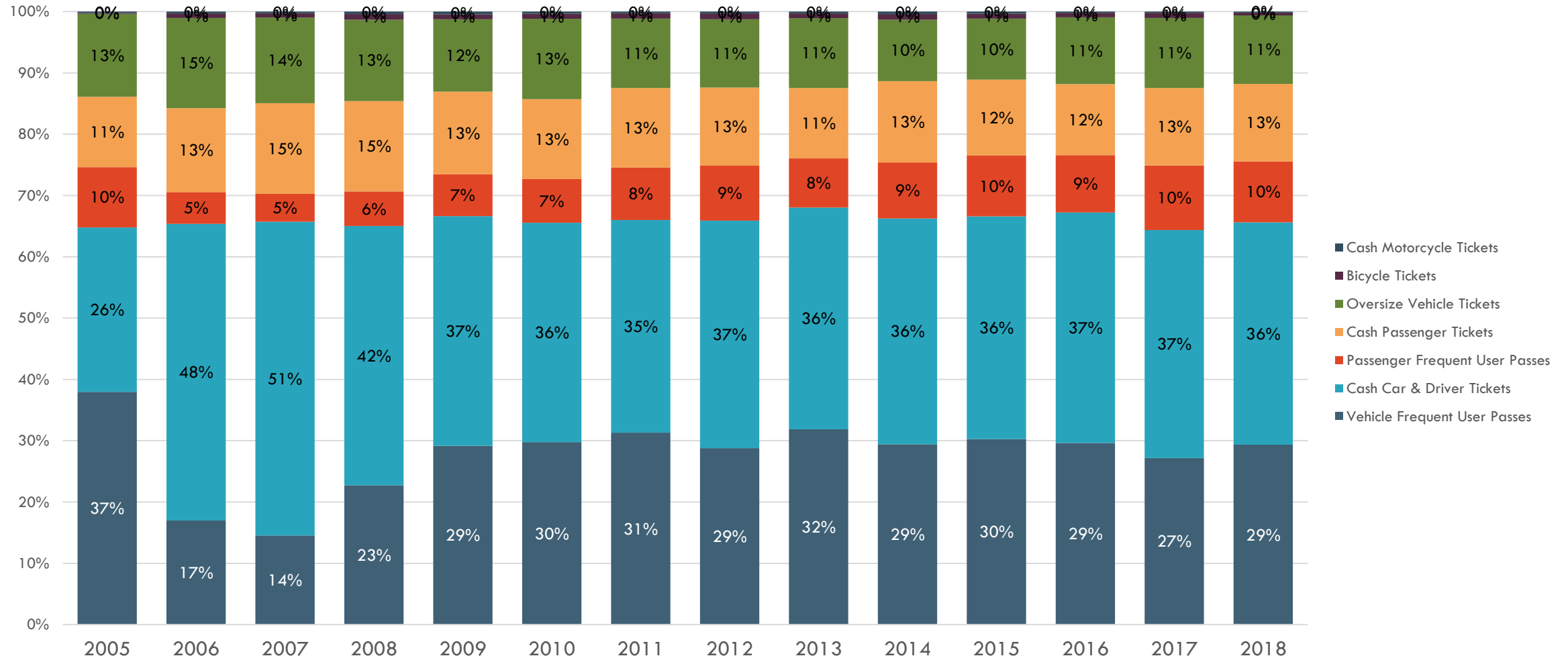
Guemes Island Ferry Fare Revenue 2005-2018; O&M 2014-2018





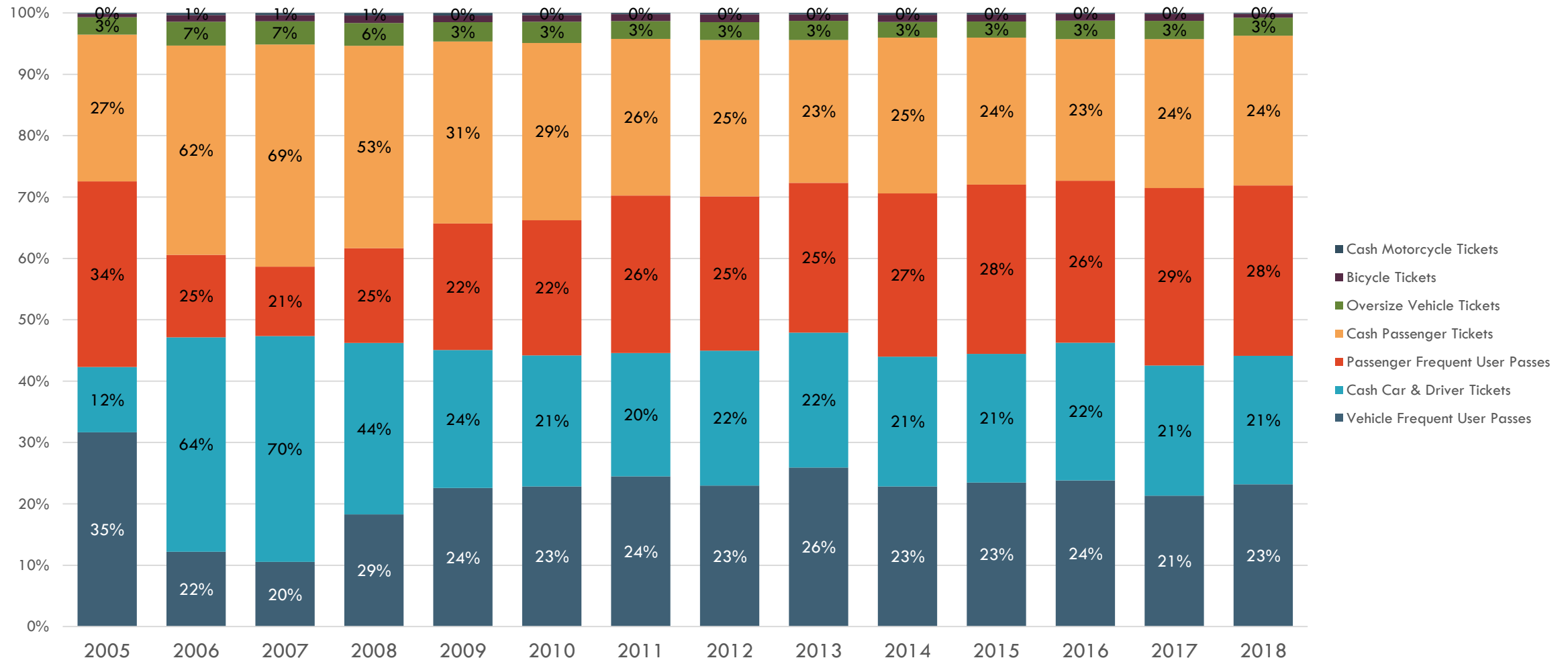
# Guemes Island Ferry Fare Box Contribution by Type (\$)

2005-2018



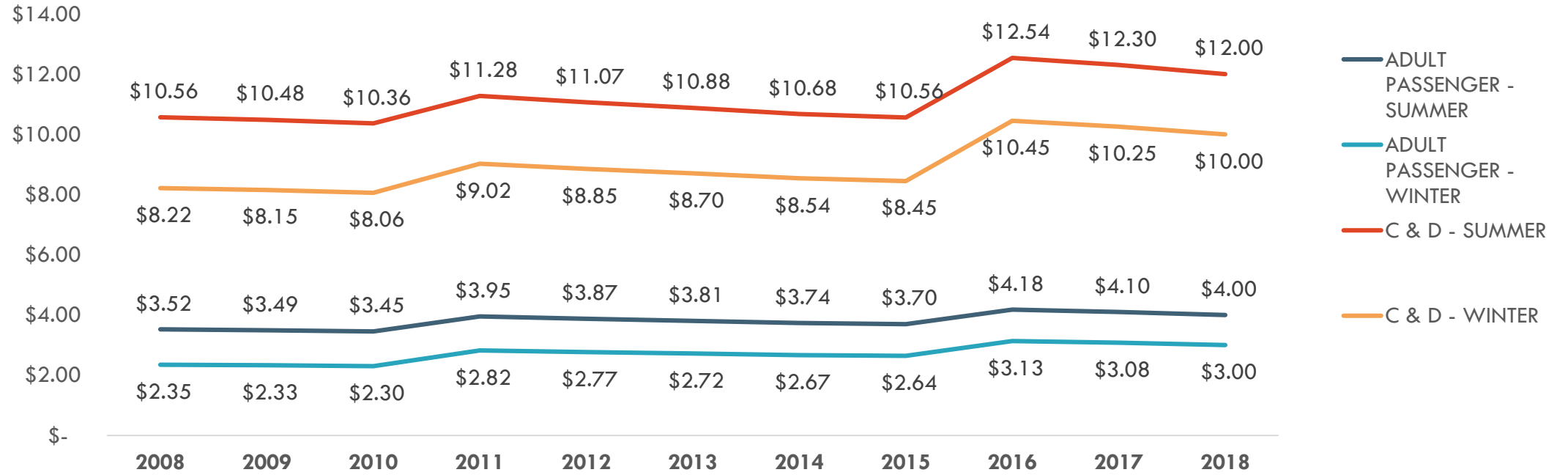
# Guemes Island Ferry Percent of Fare Sales Volume by Type

2005-2018



# Fare Trends

Benchmark Fares 2008-2018 (Inflation Adj 2018\$)



Total number of fare categories (Peak and Non)

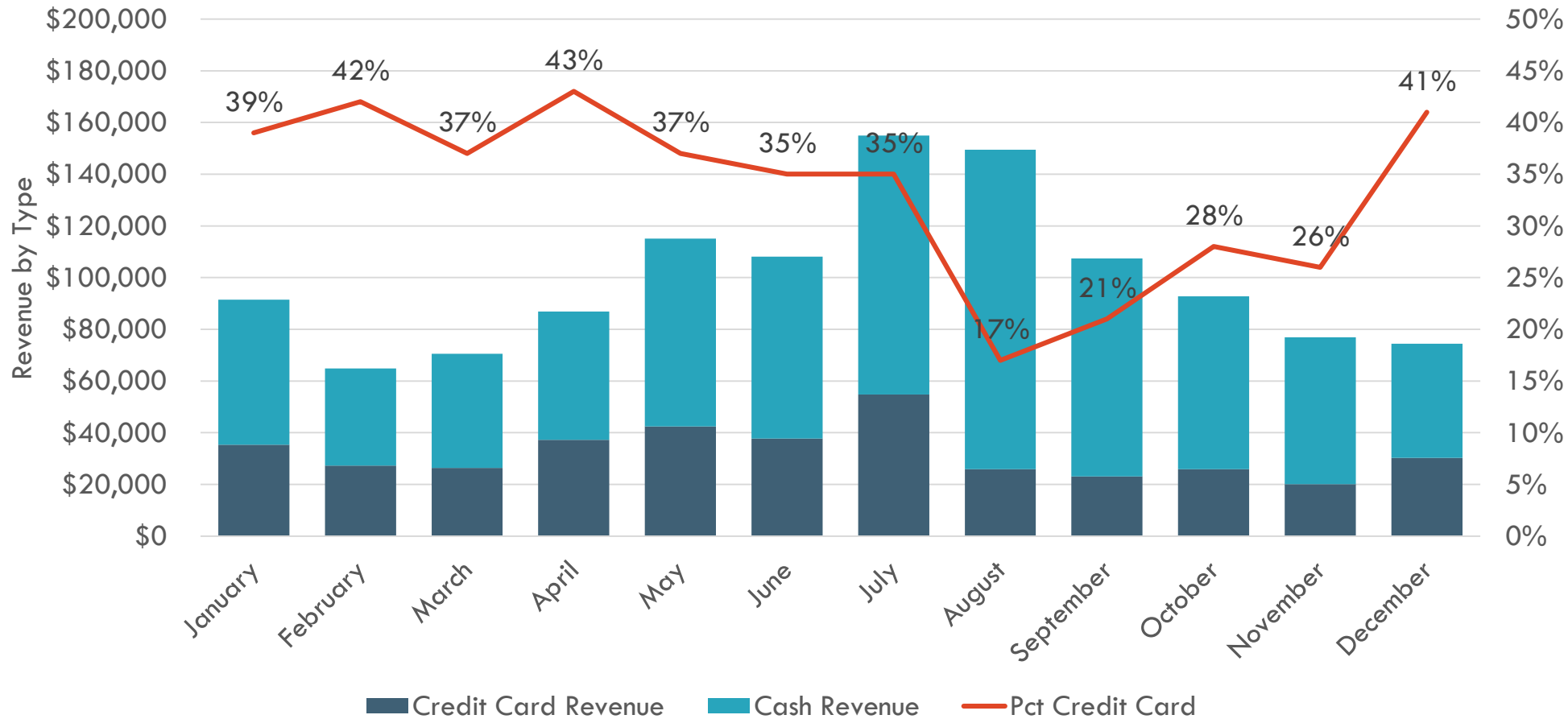
|      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
| 44   | 46   | 46   | 50   | 45   | 45   | 45   | 44   | 44   | 43   | 45   |

Vehicle to Passenger Fare Ratio (Non Peak)

|      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
| 3.50 | 3.50 | 3.50 | 3.20 | 3.20 | 3.20 | 3.20 | 3.20 | 3.33 | 3.33 | 3.33 |

**Ratio lower than it was 10 years ago**

# Ticketing: 2018 Credit Card Use



**2018 Avg Percent of Revenue by Credit Card: 33%**

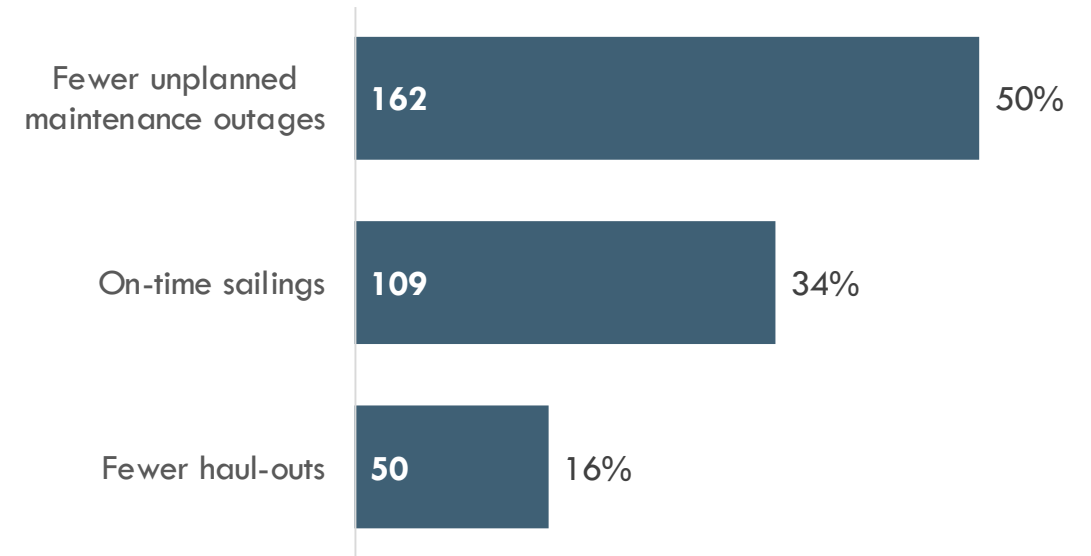
## In our first survey, 60% of respondents said *\*reliability\** is the most important thing Skagit County should consider when designing a new ferry. What is *\*MOST\** important to you in terms of reliability?

- Half of respondents answered that fewer unplanned maintenance outages were the most important aspect of reliability.
- On-time sailings was seen as important for work commuters.

*“I personally don’t care if the ferry leaves a few minutes late, but unplanned outages are by far the most disruptive.”*

*“Being able to count on reliable transit is essential to the health and welfare of islanders.”*

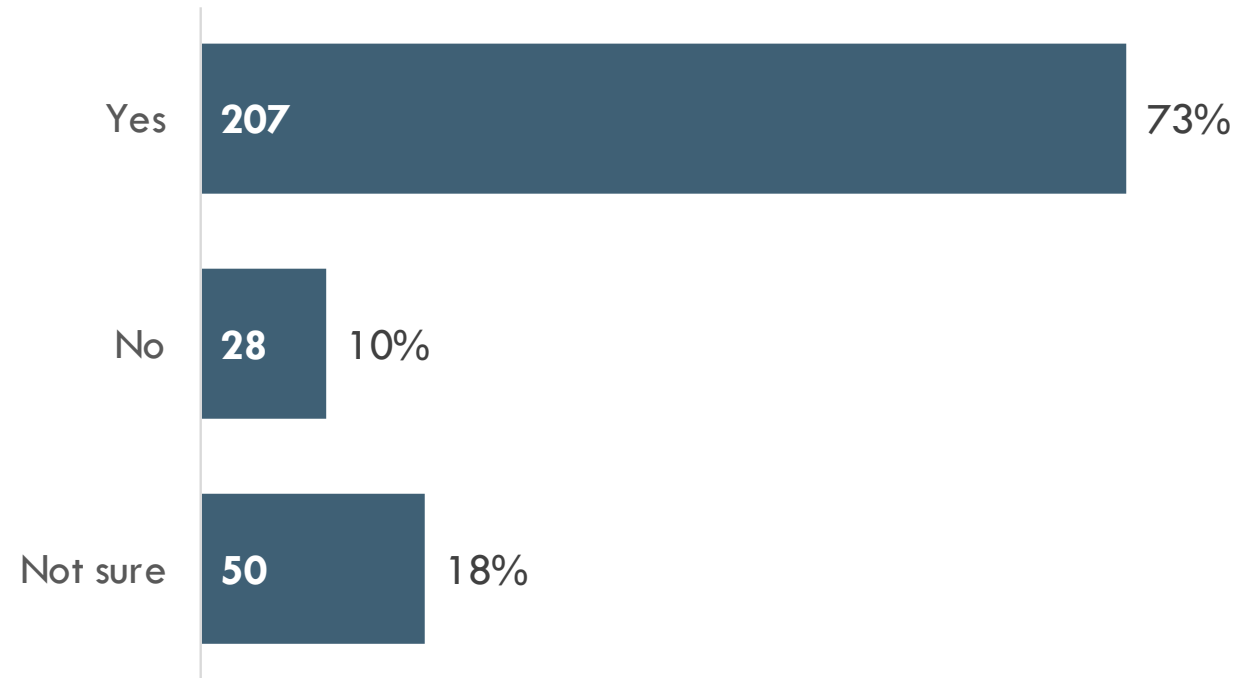
*“For those that commute, the boat must adhere to the agreed upon schedule.”*



# The new ferry will be larger than the current vessel. With that in mind, do you think it's important for the new ferry to still make two round-trips per hour?

- A large majority (73%) think it's important for the new vessel to maintain two round-trips per hour.
- Commenters cited reducing congestion or similar reasons to support maintaining two round-trips per hour.
- There were also comments about vessel's car capacity and other modes of transportation in favor of a more frequent schedule.

*"The vessel, crew, and infrastructure are in place. Use them. We are paying for them whether the vessel is underway or not. Returning to a "service to customer" mentality needs to be stressed."*

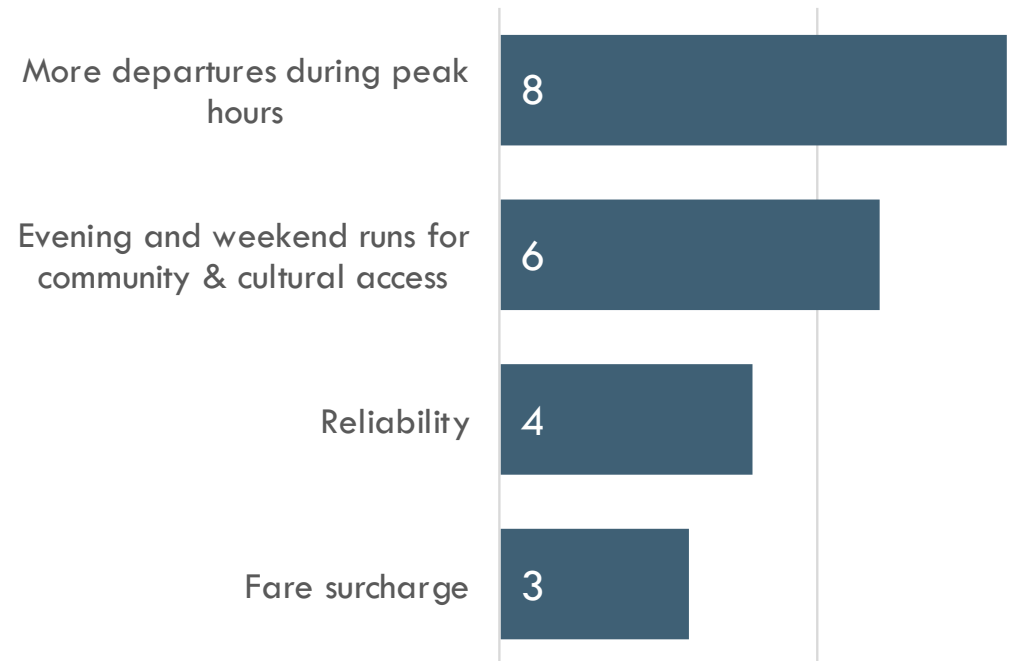


# Survey Ideas for Scheduling

- Most comments regarding scheduling supported maintaining or adding departures.
- Comments noted a lack of evening and weekend runs prevents community and cultural access.
- Some comments noted a willingness to pay a fare surcharge at certain times of day if it is used to support expanded service.
- Reliability was brought up in terms of vessel departures and the number of vehicles using the ferry. Comments raised concerns over missing a ferry when it hits capacity and not being able to predict when that happens.
- Some commenters suggesting more runs during peak times and if necessary less frequent service when demand is lower.

*“People’s schedules don’t change based on the size of the ferry.”*

## Number of comments suggesting:

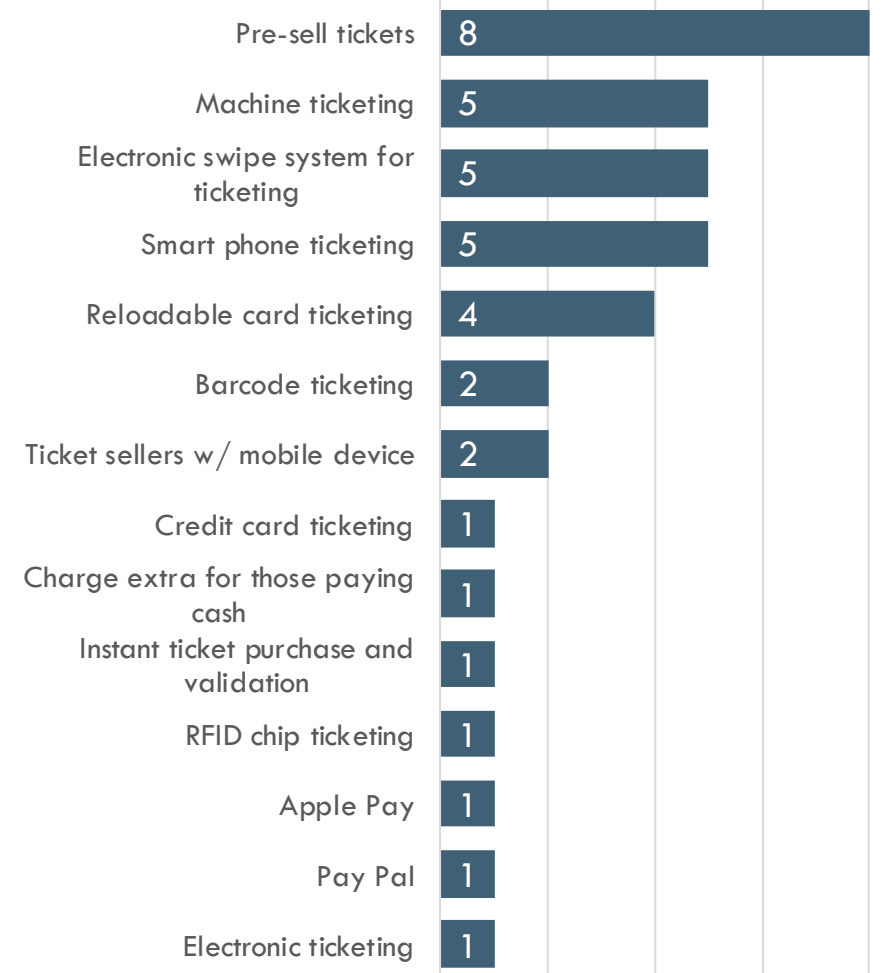


# Survey Ideas for Ticketing

- Many comments included ideas for the ticketing system, and almost every comment on the system noted that the speed needed to be improved.
- More options for payment or types of tickets were also supported.

*“There MUST be a change in ticketing procedures. People should be able to purchase a ticket whenever they get into line, and then be able to validate it instantly. Metro stations all over the country and other countries can move people quickly, and so can we.”*

## Number of comments suggesting:



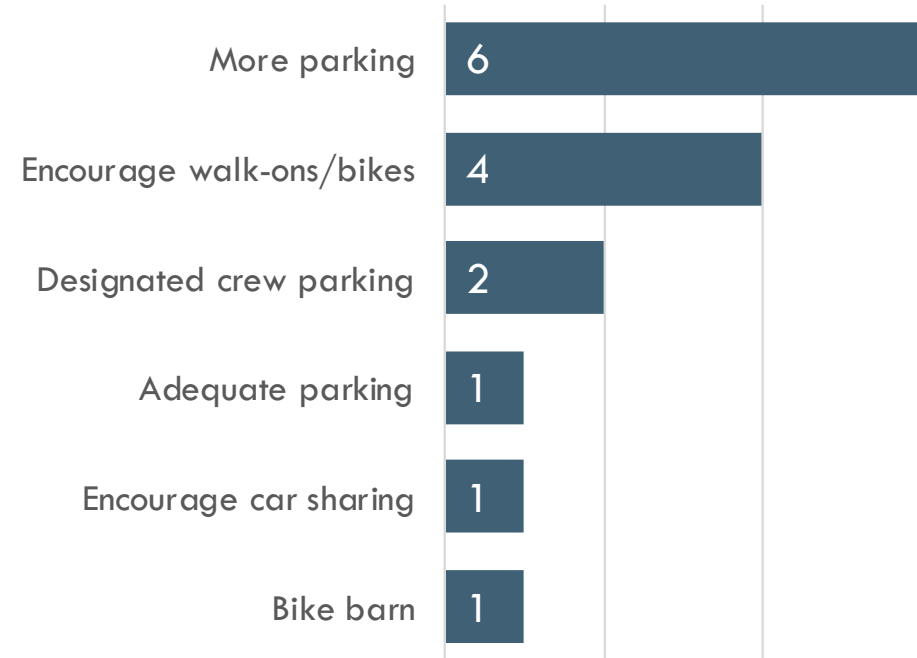


# Survey Ideas for Parking

- Most comments on parking mentioned a need for parking.
- A ‘bike barn’ was suggested to encourage fewer car trips and save space.
- Designated crew parking was a suggested idea.
- Parking was seen as a need to encourage walk-ons and bikes. Some suggested walk-ons/bikes should have a lower fare.
- Encouraging car sharing and having spaces was seen as a way to reduce parking needs for some.

*“One of the problems on the Anacortes side for the community is Guemes residents parking on city streets and is particularly bad during ‘haul outs’”*  
*“Walk-on and bike space is too crowded. New ferry system should encourage more walk-on and bike traffic.”*  
*“Not taking a vehicle also saves space for other cars.”*

## Number of comments suggesting:



# Survey Ideas for Queuing/Loading

- Most ideas for queuing and loading were about specifying lane types.
- One idea for queuing was a crew member should be managing/reducing the space between vehicles in the queue.
- A couple of commenters suggested that vehicles unload off the vessel before pedestrians/bicycles.

*“I would love to see more signage to help newcomers understand the loading and ticketing process.”*

*“Many of the loading delays ... result from a lack of clear communication about the process.”*

*“When disembarking the ferry, passengers should have to wait until all cars are unloaded. The way the current system is causes passengers to be attempting to cross in front of vehicles getting off the ferry which leads to further delay and potential accidents.”*

## Number of comments suggesting:

