



2011 Guemes Island Ferry Operations Progress Report

Prepared June 22, 2011 by Skagit County Public Works

This purpose of this progress report is to update the Ferry Committee, interested organizations, and citizens at large of the status of ferry related projects and topics of interest contained in the 2011 Ferry Operations Work Plan. Effective and collaborative discussion is encouraged on issues and topics contained within the Work Plan or this report.

Level of Service Standards

Skagit County is currently in the process of assembling a scope of work in order to send out a Request for Proposals for the purposes of possibly hiring a consultant experienced in ferry transportation planning to assist the County and the citizens of Guemes in adopting Level of Service Standards for the Guemes Island Ferry. It is anticipated that the Request for Proposals will be out by September 1, 2011.

Ferry Schedule

Skagit County is in the process of reviewing the sailing schedule for the purposes of determining whether there is a need to expand the number of runs during high demand times of the year, and establishing different summer and winter schedules. Public Works will be working with the Ferry Committee and WSU Extension to put out a survey to the residents of Guemes Island in order to assist with the decision making process. Although we were hoping to establish different “peak” and “non-peak” sailing schedules by June 1, 2011, we realized that more evaluation time is needed. We appreciate your patience.

Effective July 1, 2011, an adjusted sailing schedule will be published, and will address some of the demand issues during the peak season; specifically, adjustments to the Sunday afternoon/evening schedule allow for a majority of the runs to take place after 6:00pm. The adjusted sailing schedule includes a few additional changes, such as the 7:00pm on Friday and Saturday evenings has been changed to 7:45pm in order to be more consistent with the evening schedule Monday through Thursday.

Skagit County Public Works met with the Ferry Committee June 2, 2011, for the purposes of discussing the sailing schedule. At Skagit County’s request, the Ferry Committee has offered to assist with the survey process. The input of the citizens of Guemes will be very appreciated and we look forward to hearing from you.

Ferry Ticketing

The presentation and approval of a new 2011 fare schedule, accomplished one of the goals set forth in the 2011 Ferry Operations Work Plan. The goal of the 2011 fare schedule was to develop a ticket structure that will deliver the appropriate fare recovery for Skagit County in 2011. Public Works

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Ferry Ticketing (cont)

continues to review the ticket structure together with advisory input received from the Ferry Committee, other organizations, and citizens at large.

Beginning June 22, 2011, ferry users can purchase punch cards through the mail. Punch cards can be purchased using the online order form available at www.skagitcounty.net/ferry. Customers can choose to mail in a check or money order along with their punch card order form to: 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA, 98273. To place an order by phone using a credit card, customers can call (360) 336-9400, and place their order with the receptionist. Customers should allow 7-10 business days to receive their punch cards in the mail.

Skagit County is currently in the process of setting up a contract for a ticket kiosk and online tickets sales. We are working with a company called Virtual Ticketing Solutions to set up an automated ticketing system for the Guemes Island Ferry. The contract, which is currently in legal review, is a relatively new type of contract for Skagit County; therefore, there is a lengthier contract writing and approval process.

Fare Recovery Model

Public Works is currently working on amending Resolution R20100050 for the purposes of adjusting the reporting requirements for the BCC Presentations of the Ferry Fare Revenue Target Report, as well as the Ferry Operations Annual Report. R20100050 dictates the presentation take place in the fall of each year. Because a new fare schedule took effect June 1, 2011, Public Works would prefer to allow for a full year's worth of data to be compiled prior to presentation. The Annual Report can include a financial look ahead. Public Works will be recommending to the Board that the Annual Report be presented in November, 2011, rather than September, as set forth in Resolution R20100050.

Public Works continues to provide operating costs and data to the Guemes Island Ferry Committee. At their specific request, we reconstructed our data base in order to provide them with specific operating costs in a particular format. Additionally, Public Works will continue to meet with the Committee on discuss operating costs associated with the Guemes Island Ferry.

ADA Accessibility

Skagit County met with the Guemes Island Ferry Committee and Skagit Transit on May 3, 2011, for the purposes of discussing the possibility of a Skagit Transit bus turn-around to be located within the Anacortes Ferry Terminal. Public Works has received a lot of input regarding the distance that a person with mobility issues has to travel from the dock to the Skagit Transit bus stop located on 6th Street. The Ferry Committee also expressed to Public Works that we need to encourage folks to utilize public transportation, due to parking challenges at the ferry facilities.

Effective May 23, 2011, folks are able to take advantage of Skagit Transit's 49 plus dial-a-ride service that picks people up within the Anacortes terminal area, courtesy of a new bus stop provided by Skagit Transit.

Public Forum

As set forth in Resolution R20100050, Skagit County Public Works intends to gather public advisory input on the Guemes Island Ferry Operations Work Plan. Any citizen or interested organization may provide input through the Public Forum process. The first Public Forum in 2011 was held March 24,

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2011 at the Guemes Island Community Hall. Thank you to all of the folks who were able to attend and participate. So far in 2011, we received several great suggestions that we have been able to implement.

Several comments received have been requests for Public Works to let the citizens know that we are listening by reporting on suggestions made at Public meetings; specifically, by implementing the suggestion, or by explaining why we cannot implement the idea. The request was made for citizen's comments to be included in the minutes from the Public Forum, which they now are.

- We received a suggestion to reschedule the ferry fueling days from Wednesday to another day so that the hazardous materials run and the lunchtime fueling did not happen the same day. We have moved our fueling days to Tuesdays as a result of this suggestion.
- A bus shelter has been placed on the Anacortes patio so that people who have dogs have a nice, warm, dry place to wait for the ferry with their pets. A resident of Guemes suggested this as an alternative to bringing them inside the building.
- At the Public Forum, when the idea of a customer survey was introduced, one resident suggested that Public Works contact Kay Haaland at WSU Extension. Rachel Beck, Ferry Operations Division Manager, recently met with Kay Haaland to discuss the survey. She was very helpful and we appreciate the suggestion to meet with her.
- Ferry users now have the option of ordering frequent user punch cards through the mail with the Guemes Island Ferry punch card order form. Customers can pay with a check or money order using the online form at www.skagitcounty.net/ferry. This was the result of comments received from folks who wish to have an option to purchase a punch card without visiting the Anacortes terminal. At the recent Public Forum, one customer requested to be able to pay for a mailed punch card with a credit card, and we have now procedures set up so that customers can order a punch card to be mailed to them by calling (360) 336-9400.
- Several folks have requested more webcams to view the Anacortes and Guemes Island ferry holding lanes. This is in the works, and we are in the final contract/planning stages. Upon approval by the Board of Skagit County Commissioners, we hope to see the camera installation take place by the end of summer.

Public Works will provide a status update on all topics of interest included in the 2011 Work Plan, as well as items discussed in the Progress Report at the next Public Forum meeting, which will be held in August, 2011 (date to be determined).

Note: It is anticipated that the Public Works Department may incorporate citizen advisory input from the Guemes Island Ferry Committee, other interested organizations or citizens at large, and that the County may meet with these parties throughout the year to gather information on specific topics incorporated within the Annual Ferry Fare Target Revenue Report and the Annual Work Plan.

If you would like to request financial data reports, or have suggestions or comments relating to the Work Plan, this progress report or ferry operations in general, or if you would like to request a meeting with Public Works, please contact Rachel Beck, Ferry Operations Division Manager, at (360) 419-768, or by email at rachelb@co.skagit.wa.us, or in writing to 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA, 98273.