



GUEMES ISLAND FERRY NEWSLETTER

JULY 2026



Here comes the heat wave!

We hope you all stayed cool this week after our brief heat wave. We are deep in budget preparation at Skagit County, but here are a few brief updates before we see you at the annual community meeting in August!



Bulletin Board Updates

2026 Annual Meeting

The Skagit County Ferry Division will host the 2026 annual community meeting on Wednesday, August 19th, from 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. at the Guemes Island Community Hall. We plan to focus our presentation on the 2026 Ferry Fare Revenue Target Report, draft 2027 Ferry Fare Schedule, and upcoming budget discussions.



Temporary Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Report

The TAG provided a presentation of its recommendation to the County Commissioners for replacement of the Guemes Island Ferry. If you missed the presentation, you may watch a recording on the TV21 [archive](#) or on the Ferry Replacement Project [website](#).

The TAG is developing its final report and will be published on our website by the end of August.

2027 Drydock Period

The ferry is required by the U.S. Coast Guard to undergo a drydock in March 2027. Please be advised the car ferry will be out of service early next spring. We plan to offer passenger service during this time. More details will be shared in early 2027.

2027 Budget and Fare Setting Schedule

Budget season at Skagit County officially kicked off on July 13th with our annual budget call. Skagit County is continuing to face a significant budget imbalance. If the 2027 budget were adopted with the same service levels as 2026, grown with inflation, current projects indicate there would be an approximate \$10 million deficit in the General Fund for 2027.

This deficit is not the result of a single decision, department, or economic event, rather it reflects a continuing trend in which expenditure growth is outpacing sustainable revenue growth. The County will be evaluating long-term sustainable changes to services and programs to ensure financial stability.

To learn more about the County Commissioners' priorities for the upcoming budget season, read the Commissioners' full message on our [website](#).

The County Commissioners also launched [Euna OpenBook](#) this month, which provides a live, interactive view of the County's financial information. You may now visit our OpenBook website to view county-wide revenue and expense reports from 2024 - 2026, budget messages from the Commissioners, as well as monthly updates to our current year financials. We have created separate visualizations for the Guemes Island Ferry Division so you can view a comparison of 2024 – 2026 expenses and revenues.

We have several upcoming meetings, public comment periods, and work sessions that the community can join and provide feedback. See the schedule below for upcoming events to keep an eye out for! More details will be shared throughout the summer and early fall.

August 4: The draft ferry fare revenue target report and draft 2027 ferry fare schedule will be posted to the ferry website for public review.

August 4 – August 18: Early public comment period for the ferry fare revenue target report and 2027 fare schedule. These early comments will be shared with the Commissioners at the August 18 televised presentation.

August 6: The County Commissioners will host a work session from 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room on the draft ferry fare revenue target report and proposed 2027 ferry fare schedule. There will be no public comment taken at this meeting. Interested parties may listen to the conversation in-person or via Zoom

August 18: The County Commissioners will host a televised presentation from 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room on the draft ferry fare revenue target report and proposed 2027 ferry fare schedule. There will be no public comment taken at this meeting. Interested parties may join in-person or via Zoom, or watch via TV21.

August 19: Public Works staff will host the annual community meeting at the Guemes Island Community Hall from 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. to discuss and answer questions regarding the 2027 ferry fare revenue target report, fare schedule, and ongoing projects.

September 3 – September 22: Formal written public comment period on the proposed 2027 ferry fare schedule.

September 22: The County Commissioners will host a public hearing on the proposed 2027 ferry fare schedule from 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room. You may join the hearing and provide comments in-person or via Zoom. The hearing will be televised on TV21, and if you choose to watch it on TV, you will not be able to provide public comments.

October: The Commissioners will host the annual series of budget work sessions throughout October. The schedule has not been set yet, but the dates will be shared later this summer. We will keep you updated on when Public Works will be discussing its budget.

October 20: The Commissioners will consider adoption of the 2027 ferry fare schedule at 8:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

December 7: The Commissioners will host a public hearing at 11:00 a.m. to consider testimony on the 2027 budget. There will be a published written comment period for the draft 2027 budget.

December 14: The Commissioners will consider adoption of the 2027 budget at 2:00 p.m.

Please be advised, these dates and times may change due to the Commissioners' schedule. If meetings are changed, we will send you an updated schedule.

If you have any questions about the upcoming meetings, please email ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us.



Anacortes Bridge Apron

Apron Flaps Project

The Ferry Division will be replacing the flaps on the Anacortes and Guemes Island bridge aprons. These are the parts of the bridge at the very end that raise up and down to meet the ferry and help load and unload cars and passengers.

Skagit County Public Works released a [Request for Bids](#) to solicit a contractor for the Apron Flap Replacement Project and the results have been posted on our [website](#). We anticipate construction will happen later this summer or early fall.

We expect this project to take five working days to finish. We are working on plans to offer passenger-only service to Guemes Island while the Anacortes flaps are being replaced. Unfortunately, while the Guemes flaps are being replaced, we will not be able to offer ferry service because the bridge on the island side will be unavailable.

This is a maintenance project to replace the flaps due to age, corrosion, and wear. The aprons still need to be replaced, as they were constructed in 1979-1980. A capital project for the full replacement of the aprons will also include recoating the bridges and updating the hydraulic and electrical systems at both

terminals. The county has received a federal grant for \$5.79M. This year, the county will contract a design and environmental consultant, with construction possibly by 2028.

Contact Information for Customer Support and Services

Guemes Island Ferry Business Office

500 I Avenue, Anacortes, WA 98221

Phone: (360) 416-1466

Email: ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us

Website: www.skagitcounty.net/ferry

The ferry business office is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Please note, our phone number has recently changed. If you call our business office outside business hours, or if there is no answer during business hours, please leave us a voicemail. We return voicemails by the next business day.

Feedback? We'd love to hear from you!

If you have thoughts, ideas, or feedback on our monthly newsletter,

Jenn Rogers, Communications and Engagement Manager, would love to hear from you!

You can e-mail her at jrogers@co.skagit.wa.us