



## Ferry Notice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 19, 2025

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## Guemes Ferry Weekend Update

### Temporary Ferry Technical Advisory Group applications are now open!

In case you missed it, we sent out a [press release on September 10<sup>th</sup>](#) to announce the convening of a temporary technical advisory group (TAG) to evaluate and recommend options for replacement of the Guemes Island ferry. The TAG will consider previous ferry replacement studies and designs, including the all-electric ferry proposal, along with the results of the value engineering study conducted by Skagit County Public Works and a third-party consultant, to recommend replacement or refurbishment strategies for the Guemes Island ferry by August 31, 2026.

The TAG will include five members who are residents of Guemes Island and four members who are Skagit County residents at large, but not residents of Guemes Island. The at-large members will preferably be familiar with local vessel operations, private marine delivery or shuttle service, shipbuilding, naval architecture, emergency operations, or other relevant experience. **To read more about the organization, meeting schedule, and expectations for the TAG, please visit our [website](#).** Applications can be submitted through our [online portal](#) and are due by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, September 26<sup>th</sup>. If you have questions about the TAG or application process, please reach out to [ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us).

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### Ferry Budget Presentations and Work Session Recordings Online

We hosted the first work session and televised presentation with the Board of County Commissioners on the 2026 ferry fare revenue target report and the proposed 2026 ferry fare schedule. If you missed either meeting, you can rewatch the recordings and view the PowerPoint slides on our [website](#).

The next meeting scheduled for the proposed 2026 ferry fare schedule will be a public hearing on Tuesday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. You may participate in the public hearing in-person in the Commissioners' Hearing Room at 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, or via Zoom at the link on the Commissioner's [website](#).

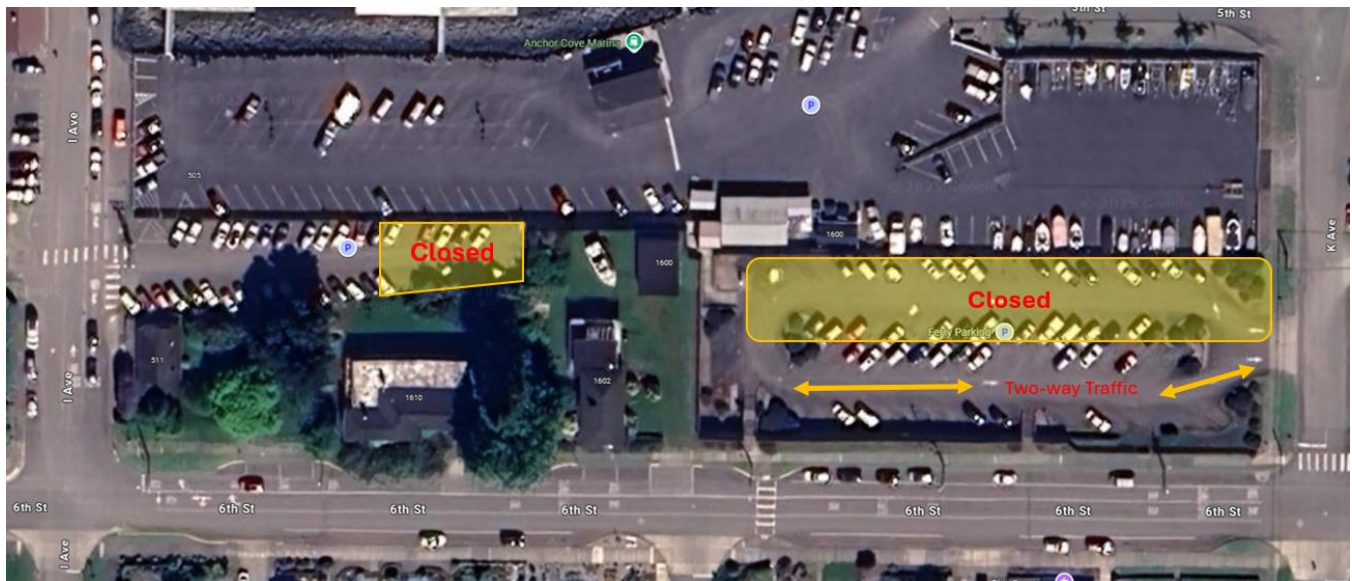
The 2026 ferry fare revenue target report and fare schedule documents have been posted to the ferry [website](#). You may submit comments on these documents to [ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us) or via mail to 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA 98273 with the subject line: Ferry 2026 Fare Proposal. Please include your comments in the body of the email rather than submitting them as an attachment. Written comments will be accepted through the end of the public hearing on October 21<sup>st</sup> at 2:30 p.m.

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## Upcoming Parking Lot Closures

Staff will be conducting storm water systems maintenance in both Anacortes parking lots on October 14th, which means we will have some partial lot closures from 8:30 p.m. on October 13th through 6:00 a.m. on October 16th.

Please refer to the map below to see which areas of the two Anacortes parking lots will be closed for maintenance. You can also see in the photo to the right what the maintenance will look like in progress.



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## Upcoming Maintenance Items

The Ferry Division Chief Engineer will be changing oil in the main engines next week during one or two of the lunch hours. This has not been scheduled for a specific day(s) yet, but please be advised when oil changes happen during the lunch hour there will not be a second 11:15 a.m. run.

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## Skagit Transit to End Guemes Island Bus Pilot

Due to low ridership, Skagit Transit has announced its decision to conclude the Guemes Island bus pilot at the end of September. Please see the message below shared by Skagit Transit CEO, Crystle Stidham, to the residents of Guemes Island.

Dear Members of the Guemes Island Ferry Board,

In June, following the haul out, Skagit Transit began operating a pilot shuttle service to connect with the Guemes Island ferry. The pilot was scheduled to run through December, with a performance metric of 200 rides per week established as the threshold for continuation.

Ridership during the pilot has been below this target. We recorded 200 rides in June (0.9 rides per service hour), 376 in July (1.5 rides per service hour), 210 in August (0.8 rides per service hour), and just 124 rides to date in September (0.9 rides per service hour).

In July, we conducted a survey of Guemes Island residents to better understand their transit needs. We received 76 responses. The majority of residents indicated that the shuttle schedule did not meet their needs, as it did not operate late enough on weekdays, lacked Sunday service, and offered limited connections on the Anacortes side. While the feedback was valuable, we are not currently able to expand the service to the level requested due to operating costs, operator wages and benefits, and the ferry fare.

As a result, the shuttle service will be discontinued at the end of September. However, we do not view this pilot as a failure. Rather, it has provided us with important insight into what would be necessary to make the service successful. We now know that expanded hours, weekend service, and stronger connections on the Anacortes side are key to meeting the community's needs.

We will actively seek grant funding and other opportunities that would allow us to provide the level of service residents have asked for in a financially sustainable way.

Thank you for your partnership and for working with us to explore transportation solutions for Guemes Island residents. We remain committed to improving mobility options and will continue to collaborate with you on future opportunities.

Any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Skagit Transit service should be sent to Skagit Transit at [custserv@skagittransit.org](mailto:custserv@skagittransit.org) or by calling 360-757-880.

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### **Anacortes Ferry Line is Still Down**

The phone line to the Anacortes ferry office is still down and will remain out of service for a while longer. We need to switch our phones over to a new system entirely in order to restore service. We are working on this effort as quickly as possible and looking for interim solutions to help customers over the phone. In the meantime, please call 360-416-1400 or email (preferable) [ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us)

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