

Captain's Corner: What is a double run?

Many of you know that the Guemes Ferry may make one extra trip at 11:15 a.m. when the vessel is overloaded. This extra trip is called a “double” run. It means that if there are too many cars in line for the 11:15 a.m. sailing, the ferry will come back and do a second run.

What you might not know is that this double run doesn't happen automatically. There are certain conditions that must be met for it to happen.

Some days, we use the time between the 11:15 a.m. and 1 p.m. sailings to complete routine machinery maintenance and repairs. Sometimes we know about that work in advance (for example, oil changes, fuel-

ing or other general maintenance work). Other times, we don't, like when we have an equipment failure that needs to be addressed right away.

When there will NOT be a double run at 11:15 a.m., we hang a red sign on the dock – visible from the ferry webcam – that indicates “no 2nd 11:15 run,” regardless of how many cars are in line or left behind.

So, how do you know if there will be a double run? The most reliable way is to check the ferry webcam online at skagitcounty.net/guemesferry.

How do you find out when the ferry will be fueling? It happens every other Tuesday; you can check our online schedule for dates (bit.ly/GuemesFueling).

PNW companies help launch first all-electric ferry

by Edith Walden

Following an eleven-month haul-out, the converted Gee's Bend Ferry in Alabama began car and passenger service as the first zero-emissions, electrically powered car-and-passenger ferry in the United States on April 10 this year. The all-electric ferry was designed by naval architecture firm Glosten, and the conversion project was managed by HMS Consulting. Both companies are headquartered in Seattle.

Glosten is currently contracted to complete the design for the replacement of Skagit County's Guemes Island Ferry.

The Gee's Bend Ferry travels 1.5 nautical miles across the Alabama River from Boykin (population 275), also known as Gee's Bend, to the county seat in Camden (population 2,010) – a 38-mile circuitous trip by car. The ferry trip takes about 15 minutes, and it can carry 18-20 vehicles and 149 passengers. The ferry makes five round-trips daily and recharges the batteries at both landings, although the vessel is capable of mak-



photo courtesy HMS Ferries

The Gee's Bend Ferry in Alabama, designed by Glosten, is the first zero-emissions, electrically powered car-and-passenger ferry in the US.

ing a round trip with just one charge.

Construction on the double-ended, 136-foot ferry (with ramps) started in the 1990s with money allocated from Congress; it didn't pass Coast Guard inspections and begin service until 2006.

The conversion from four diesel engines to four electric motors and two battery banks required gutting

the entire vessel and its internal mechanisms, as well as rebuilding the pilothouse and extending the port and starboard deckhouses. The project was funded in part with a \$1.09 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and matching funds of \$765,350 from the Alabama Department of Transportation, the owner of the ferry.



November 2019

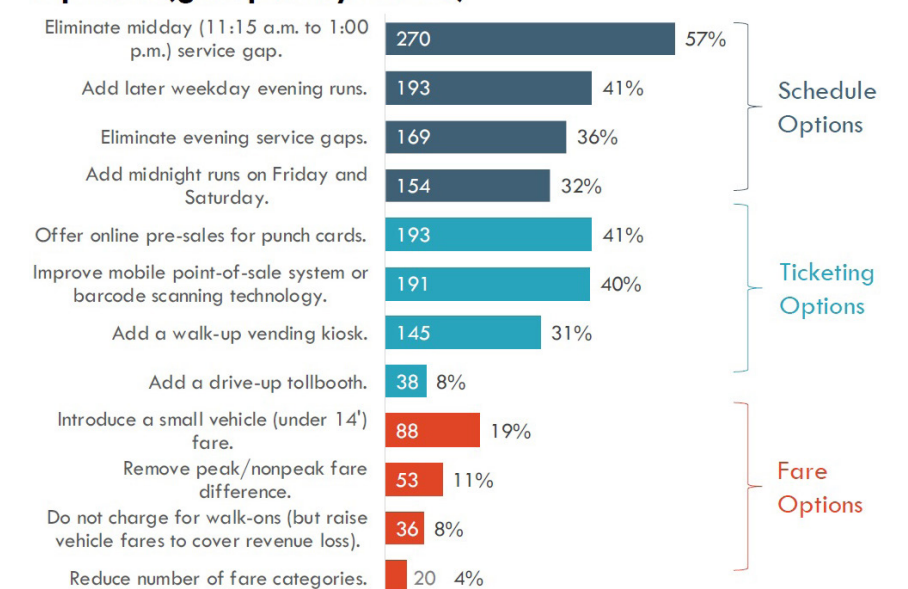
Survey results show system priorities

Eliminating the midday gap and finding a way to offer online ticket sales were two of the highest priorities identified by the ferry community, according to the results of the recent Guemes Ferry Operations & Service Analysis online survey.

While the top goal among 537 respondents was to add a midday run, opinions differed on how best to meet that goal. Respondents were nearly evenly split when it came to increasing ticket costs to pay for that improved service or not. Of respondents, 47 percent strongly supported a ticket cost increase, but 45 percent preferred no increase, with the county investing in only low- or no-cost service improvement options.

The survey is part of the work Skagit County is doing with its consultants, BERK Consulting and KPFF, to conduct an operations and service analysis that

Options (grouped by theme)



Feedback from the recent Operations & Service Analysis survey is grouped by topic. Skagit County is using this feedback to research options for improving ticket sales and scheduling. Full results online at: publicinput.com/4955

will consider current and future ferry operations and service.

The study addresses staffing, ticketing, loading/unloading, vehicle queuing, parking and other items for the ferry system.

BERK and KPFF are working

with the county staff, and seeking feedback from the Guemes Island Ferry Committee and the ferry community for advisory purposes.

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Do you have comments? Please let us know by Dec. 5

By email: ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us

By mail: Skagit County
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Guemes Ferry Public Forum

- Scheduled for 6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 7, at the Guemes Island Community Center, 7549 Guemes Island Road.
- BERK, KPFF and Skagit County Public Works staff will attend the forum.



What you said

“I work in Anacortes and rarely get to go home during the week even if I get off at nine. We need later runs during the week. I should be able to go home after work at nine o'clock and not have to live out of a bag.

“Create an online ticket purchase option. It would speed up loading and ticketing a lot.

“We do not need another extension of runs during week-day nights. The change from 6pm to 8:30pm has created a tremendous population increase already on the island. When people move to an island, they should not expect the same services they had while in the city.

“Consider smart phone technology for ticketing for those that have a smart phone.

“Please do not add any more sailings. A little inconvenience is part of island living... Those of us who have chosen to live here have thereby chosen to live with some inconveniences and unpredictability. That is part of the deal, so please, no additional sailings.

“Buy your ticket online and scan it at the dock (like your boarding pass at the airport.)

“We just need reliable service which we already get for the most part so later runs and fewer gaps would address most of what we need right now.

View all survey results and comments online: publicinput.com/4955

Continued: Survey results show system priorities

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The next opportunity for public feedback will be a Nov. 7 Public Forum on Guemes Island, as well as a second online survey open from Nov. 7 through Dec. 5.

Comments can also be submitted by email to ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us or by mail to Skagit County, 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon WA 98273, no later than Dec. 5, 2019.

Upon completion of the study, BERK and KPFF will present two investment alternatives to Skagit

County: a minimum investment package and an additional investment package.

Skagit County will make a recommendation based off the findings of the study. The Skagit County Board of Commissioners will make the final decision on how to proceed.

The study is expected to be complete in early 2020, with a formal presentation to the Board of Commissioners in late January or early February.

More information about the project, including meeting materials and audio, can be found online at publicinput.com/guemesferry.

STUDY TIMELINE

June 13 — Kick-off meeting with BERK, KPFF, Public Works and Guemes Island Ferry Committee

July 17 — Guemes Island Community meeting with Commissioners, Public Works, BERK and KPFF

Aug. 15 - Sept. 15 — Online Ferry Operations & Service Analysis survey

Oct. 3 — Meeting with Public Works, BERK, KPFF & GIFIC

— WE ARE HERE —

Nov. 7 — Guemes Island Ferry Operations Public Forum, 6 p.m. Guemes Island Community Center, 7549 Guemes Island Road

Nov. 7 - Dec. 5 — Online Service Objectives and Cost survey

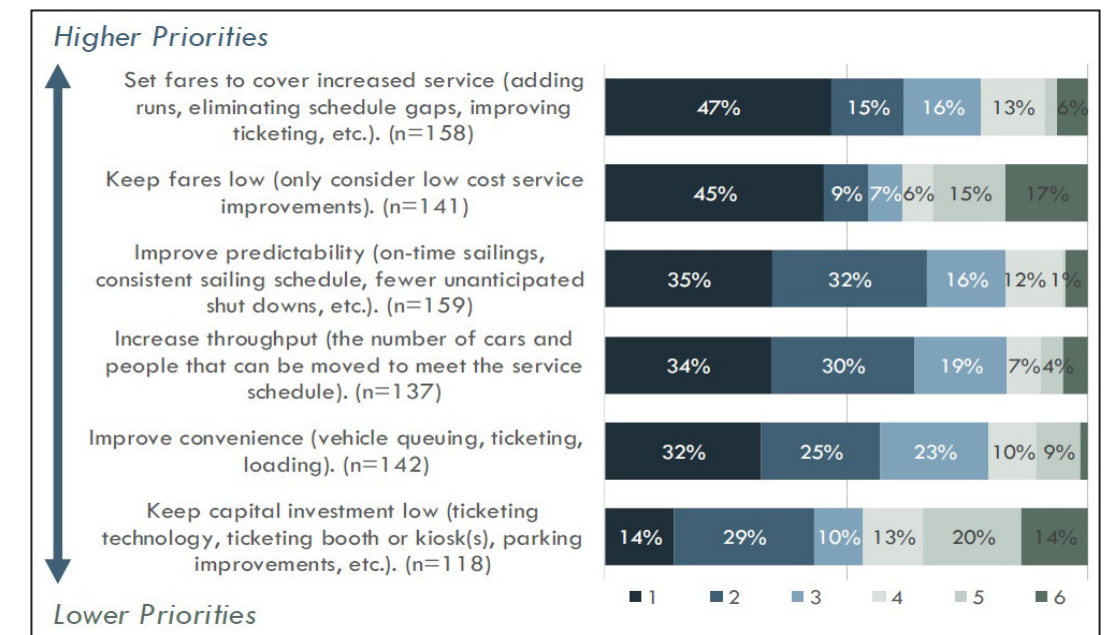
Dec. 5 — Public comment period closes

Jan. - Feb. 2020 — Presentation to Board of Commissioners, followed by final work product (memos, investment strategies) as approved by the county.

Public Works & Ferry Committee discuss survey results

Skagit County Public Works, BERK Consulting and KPFF met with the Guemes Island Ferry Committee and the public on Oct. 3 to review the results of the recent online survey (see page 1) regarding possible operation and service improvements for the ferry. The discussion focused on the upcoming presentation of specific options – and the price – for the ferry community to consider.

BERK and KPFF presented opportunities, challenges and rough estimates for capital and operating expenses for the most requested improvement options: fare collection, more efficient loading, additional sailings and better access to/from the ferry. For example, ticketing options include a ticket vending machine, online/mobile app, smart card and a tollbooth. The estimated



capital cost ranges from \$20,000 to \$200,000, and the technology could either improve the fare collection process and therefore improve on-time departures, or be subject to technical difficulties and add too much cost to the ticket price. Ongoing maintenance costs associated with each option are also estimated. The Ferry

Committee suggested that Public Works present those costs as the estimated increase in ticket price so that riders can better understand the direct impact of the options.

For a thorough presentation of the survey results and proposed options, plan to attend the Ferry Public Forum on Nov. 7 at 6 p.m.

at the Guemes Island Community Center. To read the BERK/KPFF presentation to the Ferry Committee, visit publicinput.com/guemes-ferry and scroll down to the documents section to find the Oct. 3 PDF.

Register your opinions on the next online survey, beginning Nov. 7, at publicinput.com/5799.

Seeking feedback on schedule, ticketing

The final opportunity for Guemes Ferry riders to provide feedback on their preferences for schedule options, online ticketing and parking improvements will come as an online survey launching Nov. 7 at publicinput.com/5799.

Adding runs, eliminating the midday service gap and moving to online ticketing will all have an impact on ticket prices. This survey will help riders better understand what the added ticket cost might be for each different option, and will help the county understand how to prioritize scheduling and ticketing improvements.

The survey will close Dec. 5, 2019, which is also the final day to submit public comment on the operations and service study.

Ferry options under consideration

ELIMINATING MIDDAY GAP

- Add one run 7 days/week
- Add one run 5 days/week
- Double run as-needed 5 days/week

SCHEDULING

- Add one run weeknights, M-Th
- Add one run Fri/Sat nights
- Add one extra run Sunday nights during nonpeak season

ONLINE TICKETING

- Purchase from computer, laptop, tablet or mobile, then show purser proof of purchase
- Add a kiosk for cash/debit/credit transactions for those without internet access

PARKING

- Resurface and stripe Guemes parking lot