

Skagit County Ferry Replacement News

April 2018

Vessel replacement project update

Skagit County has applied for \$10 million through the County Ferry Capital Improvement Program administered by the County Road Administration Board (CRAB). A technical review committee was created to review our project application.

The review process has concluded, and the work from the committee revealed that we have met the technical requirements for the program. Their current recommendation for funding is based on whether or not the county forms a ferry district.

If we form a ferry district, the technical review committee recommends that we be eligible for 50% of the project cost, currently estimated at \$10 million (the maximum amount available).

Without a ferry district the committee recommends that we receive 30% of the project cost, currently estimated at \$7.5 million. The technical review committee's recommendations have been



submitted to the CRAB board; we meet with the CRAB board at their spring meeting on April 19.

The CRAB board could decide on April 19 whether to award Skagit County the funds, or they could wait until their summer meeting in July to make a decision. Either way, funding would not officially be approved by the state legislature, or available to Skagit County, until summer of 2019.

Voice thoughts on proposed surcharge

The Board of Skagit County Commissioners has determined that the M/V Guemes has reached the end of its useful and economic life and needs to be replaced. The Board is considering implementing a ferry vessel replacement surcharge (per RCW 36.54.200). Revenues generated from the surcharge could **only** be used for vessel replacement.

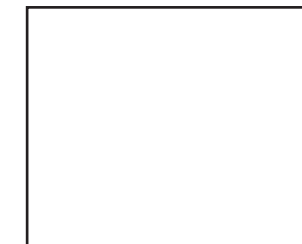
The Board is considering a surcharge of \$1 per adult passenger fare sold, \$0.50 per senior/youth/disabled passenger fare sold, \$1 per motorcycle fare sold, \$2 per vehicle fare sold and \$5 per oversize vehicle fare sold. Frequent-user punch card prices would be adjusted and discounted accordingly.

PUBLIC HEARING

- 9 a.m. Tuesday, April 17
Commissioners Hearing Room
1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon
- Documents: skagitcounty.net/ferry
- Comments: ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us

Other proposed changes to the fare schedule include extending the expiration of vehicle punch cards from 90 days to 120 days and eliminating the fee for bicycles.

Capt. Rachel Rowe | 360-416-1400 | rowe@co.skagit.wa.us | www.skagitcounty.net/ferryreplacement



Skagit County
Public Works Department
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Mount Vernon WA 98273-5625



Skagit County Ferry Replacement News

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Ferry Committee/Public Works meeting

What: Discuss the ferry replacement project & ferry ticketing

Who: Guemes Island Ferry Committee & Public Works

When: 2 to 4 p.m. Friday, May 11

Where: Anacortes Library, lobby meeting room

The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.



Preliminary cost estimate for smaller 28-car vessel

At their March 2 meeting with Skagit County Public Works, the Guemes Island Ferry Committee submitted a request to estimate the cost for a 28-car vessel with fewer emergency response design requirements.

Glosten completed this task and presented Skagit County with a preliminary cost estimate. Reducing vessel size by 4 cars represents a 15% reduction in overall capital cost; a 32-car vessel would cost roughly \$26 million and a 28-car vessel roughly \$22 million.

While the report does not discuss impacts to operational costs, a reduction in vessel size will generally reduce operating costs.

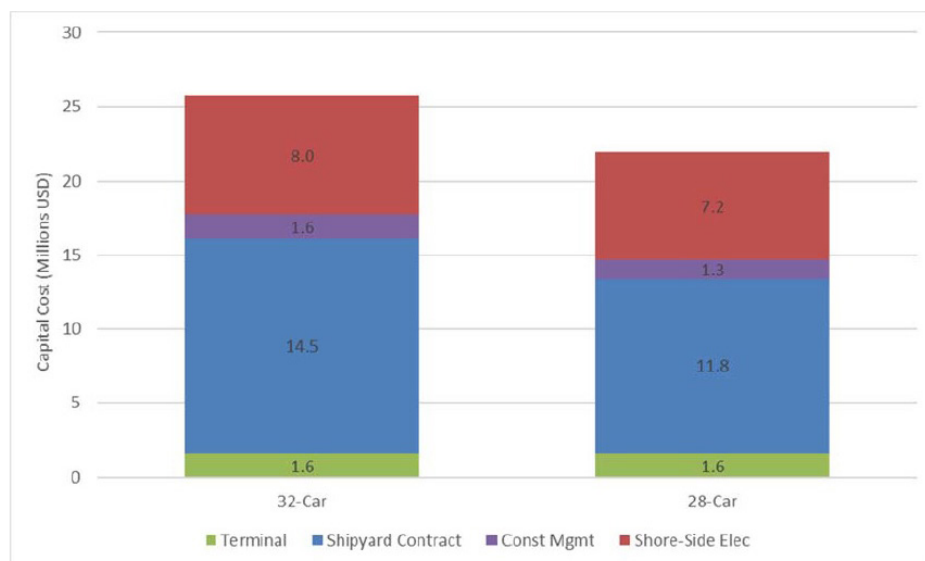


Figure 1 Program capital cost estimate by vessel option

The estimate only evaluates the all-electric propulsion system, anticipating that other propulsion options will scale similarly in terms of cost.

The analysis notes that terminal and dolphin upgrade costs remain the same for a 28-car vessel; costs for shoreside electrical decrease slightly, from \$8 million to \$7.2 million. The emergency services costs (e.g. a shoreside backup generator) for the vessel remain the same, at \$329,000, regardless of vessel size. That amounts

to roughly 1% of the overall cost.

While documents we delivered to the CRAB board discuss plans for a 32-car vessel, those are merely concept design documents (30% design) and prove that we have a viable concept, that we need to replace our ferry, and that we have a reasonable plan to fund it. If we get CRAB funding, we can still modify the vessel design. We're only locked into a design when we get to 90% design, which won't be for another year at least.

Vessel Surcharge FAQs

We've tried to answer all your questions in one place online. Visit skagitcounty.net/ferry, scroll down, and click "[Skagit County vessel replacement surcharge Q&A.](#)"

Here's a sample of your questions & our answers:

Why begin collecting funds for a new ferry when it is far from clear yet that you will find or raise the money to construct a new vessel?

We know that the current vessel will not last forever, and that one day we will need to replace the M/V Guemes. The same goes for all of the equipment Skagit County owns. For example, when we

buy a dump truck, we know one day we will need to replace it. It is financially prudent to establish a replacement fund for all County equipment before it needs to be replaced – the ferry is no exception.

Are the funds being collected specifically to be applied to a new vessel?

Yes, funds collected would **only** be used for a new vessel. By law, Public Works cannot use these funds for any other purpose.

How long will the surcharge be in effect?

That's up to the Skagit County Board of Commissioners. We should have instituted a replacement surcharge in 1979, when the current vessel went into service. Because that didn't happen, we bear the full cost of replacement today.

Ferry operating costs reduced by 80 percent on Norway's Ampere

by Edith Walden

In May, the world's first all-electric vehicle ferry, Norway's MS Ampere, will mark the end of its third year of service. The 260-foot vessel carries 360 passengers and 120 cars on its 3.5-mile crossing.

Operator Norled recently announced that the Ampere has reduced operating costs by 80 percent and CO2 emissions by 95 percent, compared to fuel-powered alternatives. In addition to energy costs that are lower than diesel, maintenance costs are also lower because an electric motor is simpler and lasts three times longer than a typical internal combustion engine.

Norway currently has two all-electric car ferries in service and will add 10 more to its fleet this year. Another 60 are planned to be launched by 2021, and by 2023, the country



Norway's Ampere launched in 2015. Photo courtesy of Siemens AG

expects its entire ferry fleet to be all-electric or equipped with hybrid technology for longer routes.

In addition to ferries, all-electric cargo and container ships, canal barges, and supply vessels are in design or ready to launch soon for short routes in Finland, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, and China.

For more information about the Ampere and the world's conversion to electric marine vessels, see:

<http://bit.ly/ElectrekArticle>
<http://bit.ly/YaleEnviroArticle>

Ferry public forum set for April 28

We've set our spring ferry public forum for **1:30 p.m. Saturday, April 28**, at the Guemes Island Community Center, 7549 Guemes Island Road.

Please join Skagit County Commissioners Ken Dahlstedt and Ron Wesen, along with representatives from Skagit County Public Works, for a discussion about the following agenda items:

Ferry replacement project

- SEPA review update
- 28-car ferry preliminary cost estimate

Vessel replacement surcharge

- Proposal details
- Public comment received

Fare Revenue Target Report

- No general fare increase recommended
- Report is available online at skagitcounty.net/ferry.

Longing for the five-cent ferry of 1912?

by Edith Walden

In 1912, the 40-foot Elk went into service between Anacortes and Guemes Island. The Elk could carry 35 passengers and the fare was five cents per one-way passage. The schedule was six trips per day. Five cents in 1912 is equivalent to \$12.23 in 2018 for a one-way passenger trip.

In 1916, Charley Gant, editor of the Guemes newspaper, the Beachcomber, wrote this:

"There may come a time when the county will give us a free ferry to Guemes, but that time is not now. And there may come a time when the county will give us no ferry at all. The slogan of the settlers of Guemes and the merchants of Anacortes has been: A five cent ferry making five trips daily. We have secured a five-cent ferry making six trips daily, and it is the best service Guemes has ever had."



Harry Rickaby's Elk was a popular transport for groups out for a picnic on local islands. Here Ben March of Sinclair (Cottonwood) Island is rowing ashore to help ferry passengers to the Elk.

Photo from the March 2012 Guemes Tide courtesy of Mary March Leach, Cottonwood Collection