

Skagit County
Public Works Department/Ferry Division

Electric Ferry Replacement Project Overview of Work To Date/Milestones

**Technical Advisory Group – Meeting #1
November 17, 2025, 6:00 p.m.**

Rachel Rowe
Guemes Island Ferry Division Manager



Early Planning (2012-2016)

2012: 14-Year Capital Improvement Plan adopted → replacement year set for 2020, \$20M estimate

2013: Elliott Bay Design Group M/V Guemes Ferry Replacement Report → study concludes immediate replacement most cost-effective, environmental benefits noted

2014: EESImarine introduces all-electric ferry concept; WA Dept. of Commerce funding discussions

2015: “EZEferry” concept presented; Norway’s *Ampere* launched; Commissioners pass Resolution R20150428 directing feasibility analysis

2016: Ockerman Automation & Siemens present Ampere project & an all-electric ferry concept to Skagit County Commissioners

Design Milestones

2016: Propulsion & Power Feasibility Study → concludes all-electric propulsion is viable for the route

2017: Glosten hired; design studies & concept design completed

2018: Berk Consulting hired for Environmental Assessment & SEPA review

2019: 28-car ferry size selected; preliminary design reports; hydrographic survey

2020: RFIs issued; hull optimization study; preliminary design deliverables

2021: Preliminary design complete; Electrical Systems Integrator RFP & selection

2022: 90% vessel plans & specifications delivered

2023: Contract design finalized; vessel bid package issued; 2 bids received

- JT Marine Inc. \$24,385,471.72
- Ice Floe, LLC dba Nichols Brothers Boat Builders \$22,898,450.53

2024: Bid rejection; design paused pending funding outcome

Funding Milestones

2016: Skagit County Commissioners approve 2017 budget → \$165,000 for design studies

2017: CFCIP (County Ferry Capital Improvement Program) application submitted → \$7.5 - \$10 million

2018: CRAB (County Road Administration Board) approved \$7.5 million (conditional upon electric/plug-in hybrid propulsion)

2019: WA State Capital Construction Budget approved → \$1.5 million for shore side charging

2020: WA Dept. of Commerce ETS (Electrification of Transportation Systems) grant - \$989,000 (1:1 match)

2021: WA State Capital Construction Budget approved → \$474,000 for shore-side charging

THUD (Transportation, Housing, Urban Development)/FTA grant → \$2.5 million

2022: MAWA (Move Ahead Washington) package → \$14 million

2024: Additional \$10 million awarded after Initiative 2117 failed → Total funding reached \$37 million

Permitting Milestones

2018: Environmental Assessment & SEPA review completed

2020: Permitting discussions begin with vendors and agencies

2021: Confluence Environmental Company selected; permitting pre-application meeting with City of Anacortes

2022: Shoreline permit neighborhood meeting hosted by City of Anacortes

2023: Ongoing permitting alongside vessel bid package preparation

2024: Permitting continues (federal, state, local compliance) while project paused pending Initiative 2117 outcome

Legislative Milestones

2020

- HB 2486 introduced → marine battery tax exemption bill
- Skagit County supported through lobbying; Rep. Debra Lakanoff sponsored
- Governor Inslee signed HB 2486 → exempted marine battery sales & installations from sales tax

2021

- HB 1502 introduced → *best-value bidding* criteria for counties procuring/designing electric ferries
- Skagit County advocated for inclusion
- Governor Inslee signed HB 1502 → became law July 24, enabling best-value procurement

Public Engagement Milestones

2016-2018: Multiple meetings with the Guemes Island Ferry Committee, KOMO news coverage, Siemens/Ockerman presentations

2017: Community meeting introducing Glosten; public forum on Guemes Island

2018: Partnership roundtable with City of Anacortes, Samish Nation, PSE, WSDOT, residents

2019: Community meetings with Glosten, BERK, KPFF; presentations at national conferences (PVA, Pacific Maritime, Marine Log)

2020: Vendor Q&A sessions; permitting discussions

2021: Public forums; Senator Cantwell event at ferry terminal

2022 - 2024: Neighborhood shoreline permit meetings; ongoing permit engagement