

Request for Qualifications

Attention Prospective Consultants,

Skagit County Public Works, Ferry Division, invites the submittal of written Statements of Qualifications and cost estimates from qualified Consultants who are interested in providing services for a rate study for the Guemes Island Ferry system. The task schedule listed in the scope of work can be used to formulate the cost estimate. Consultants interested in submitting qualifications must have previous relevant experience providing similar work for public ferry systems.

Scope of Work:

This study will evaluate the current rate structure for the Guemes Island Ferry system and make recommendations for rate adjustments planned for 2023. Skagit County, operator of the ferry system, seeks to implement electronic fare collection by the end of 2023. Recommendations of the study should consider and prioritize the future of fare collection.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- Reduce the overall amount of fare categories offered
 - Reduce/eliminate underused fare categories
- Eliminate the peak/non-peak rate schedules and recommend one year-round rate schedule
- Evaluate the need for a senior discount
- Recommend a needs-based/senior/disabled discount methodology and pricing strategy
- Collect, analyze, and use demographic and economic data
- Streamline discounts for multi-ride rates (punch cards) /or alternate tiers of payments
- Recommend credit card processing fees appropriate to pass on to the customer
- Evaluate charging oversize vehicles by weight instead of length
 - Charge trailers by length on top of vehicle fare (0' - 20', 20' - 30', and over 30')
 - Evaluate offering punch cards for oversize vehicles and trailers
- Encourage punch card sales/use/buying online
- Make recommendations for youth fares
- Recommend rate for HAZMAT runs
- Recommend rate for the school district
- Recommend a student rate/discount or exemption
- Recommend rate for after-hours runs
- Recommend rate for bicycles
- Recommend a standard ratio for the cost of vehicle fares relative to walk-on fares
 - Consideration needs to be given to encouraging walk-on ridership and carpooling while considering limited parking options and overall revenue impacts
- Recommend a pricing strategy for parking
- Evaluate commercial accounts and recommend a strategy
 - Consider punch cards for commercial accounts to reduce overhead/billing costs
- Recommend a rate for smaller vehicles (for example, WSDOT Ferries "under 14 feet" category)
 - Or consider the weight vs. length of smaller vehicles
- Evaluate appropriate traffic impact fees and make recommendations
- Evaluate the vessel replacement surcharge and make recommendations
- Evaluate fixed cost per run compared to average revenue per run
- Analyze through-put and recommend additional scheduled runs to increase revenue
- Recommend any other sources of ancillary revenue not addressed in the scope of work

- Evaluate a comparable County ferry system's rate schedule (e.g., Whatcom County Lummi Island Ferry) as a basis for developing the Guemes Island Ferry rate schedule
- Review whether existing vessel replacement surcharge is set appropriately to finance future ferry per resolution R20180123

In addition to recommending a rate schedule, the Consultant shall recommend future potential fare policies for consideration by the Board of Skagit County Commissioners (Board).

- Recommend rescinding the 65% fare recovery methodology in place currently and replace with a strategy for future fare changes
 - Consider linking future fare changes to an external cost index so they change in a predictable manner
 - Develop a framework linking fares to formulas so that as costs change, no new decisions must be made about which fares should bear which portion of cost changes
 - Recommend a cap on the road fund subsidy each year with a revenue recovery designed to fund the remainder of expenditures

The Board sets fare policies for Skagit County. Recommendations resulting from the study will ultimately be presented to the Board for consideration/possible adoption following a public process.

Estimated Schedule of Tasks:

Task 1: Data request/preliminary analysis (1 week)

The Consultant will request from the County the following detailed reports to gather the data necessary to initiate the project. The last 10 years of data can be provided, and additional data can be requested. The Consultant will set up a shared file site for the transfer of data.

- Ferry Fare Revenue Target Reports
- Detailed ticket sales reports
- Detailed revenue reports
- Ridership statistics
- Detailed fare box revenue projections/actuals
- Road fund subsidy history
- Resolutions for fare recovery methodology and rate policies
- Operations studies
- Public input surveys
- Vessel replacement surcharge files
- Annual deficit reimbursement reports
- Applicable codes and legislation governing the use of road fund dollars
- 14-year capital improvement plans
- Detailed expenditure reports
- Punch card sales reports

The most recent information can be accessed on Skagit County's website at [GUEMES ISLAND FERRY DOCUMENT AND REPORT ARCHIVE \(skagitcounty.net\)](https://www.skagitcounty.net/guemes-island-ferry-document-and-report-archive).

Task 2: Virtual kick-off meeting (Week 2)

Once Task 1 has been completed, the Consultant will schedule a virtual kick-off meeting/site visit with the County Project Manager and County staff. The kick-off meeting will serve as a mechanism to discuss preliminary findings of our research, inventory existing information, continue the data collection process, and identify project issues, goals, roles, and responsibilities. Interviews will be conducted with Ferry

Division management, Public Works Director, Public Works Controller, accounting technicians and operations staff to provide additional background information.

Task 3: Develop the rate schedule and other deliverables (Weeks 3-4)

Develop a rate schedule based on information gathered in the preliminary analysis and the kick-off meeting. Proposed rate schedule should be entered in an excel-based model. Segregate costs and revenue sources so that the model can be used in the future to calculate rate sensitivity.

Task 4: Technical memo/review preliminary findings with staff (Week 5)

A technical memo detailing the preliminary findings and results from the first three tasks, the draft rate schedule and other deliverables will be submitted to the County project manager for review and input. A virtual meeting with the Public Works Director, Public Works Controller, Ferry Division Management, and other staff will be held to review the findings and solicit direction from County staff.

Task 5: Prepare draft report (Weeks 6-7)

The Consultant will develop a draft report to include a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the work in the first four tasks.

Task 6: Presentation/public meeting for draft report (Week 8)

The Consultant will participate in a public meeting with the Board to present the draft report for public/stakeholder input prior to finalizing the report.

Task 7: Finalize Report (Weeks 9-10)

If changes to the draft report are necessary or requested throughout the public process/county staff review period, then the report shall be updated, and a final comprehensive report will be submitted that summarizes the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The final report will be presented to the Board for possible adoption of a rate schedule.

Timeline is estimated; an additional two weeks may be granted if County Project Manager and/or Consultant deem it necessary.

Submittal:

Cover letter shall include the following information: Firm name, phone number, and email address; name of principal in charge, project manager and key personnel. The submittal package shall be limited to one page cover letter and a maximum of six (6) pages of qualifications (single-sided, letter size), stating qualifications. Submittals that exceed the maximum number of pages or do not include the specified data will not be accepted.

Evaluations & Rankings:

Submittals will be evaluated and ranked based on the following criteria:

- 1) Experience with previous rate studies for public ferry systems
- 2) Key personnel
- 3) Experience with disciplines stated
- 4) Approach in carrying out the scope of work
- 5) Ability to meet schedule and budget
- 6) Familiarity with relevant codes and standards
- 7) Past performance/references

Please submit your Statement of Qualifications and cost estimate under the subject heading: **“Guemes Island Ferry Rate Study”** to Captain Rachel Rowe, Ferry Operations Division Manager, Skagit County Public Works, via email at: rrowe@co.skagit.wa.us no later than Tuesday, November 1, at 4:00 p.m. No submittals will be accepted after that date and time. Any questions regarding this study shall be directed to Captain Rachel Rowe, at (360) 333-1496, or by email.

Persons with disabilities may request this information be prepared and supplied in alternate forms by calling Brenda Olson at (360) 416-1436, or by email at brendao@co.skagit.wa.us.

Skagit County, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, (78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged businesses enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.