

Print Page

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 25, 2008 Last modified: Monday, November 24, 2008 12:54 PM PST

## Water Taxi goes full time in 2010

*FULL TIME IN 2010. The Elliot Bay Water Taxi will become a year round service beginning January 2010. The service carried 182,000 riders this summer and has seen a 70 percent increase in ridership over the past three years. **Photo Illustration by Patrick Robinson***

By Rose Egge

The Elliot Bay Water Taxi will become a year round service beginning January 2010, the King County Ferry District Board decided last week.

The action was prompted by Washington State Governor Christine Gregoire's announcement that the Alaskan Way Viaduct will come down. While a plan to replace the viaduct has yet to be determined, King County Council member Dow Constantine says that the water taxi will provide West Seattle residents with an alternative means of transportation to and from downtown Seattle.

"Those who work downtown want to use the Water Taxi year round," said Constantine. "Their needs don't end in October."

The Elliot Bay Water taxi carried 182,000 riders this summer and has seen a 70 percent increase in ridership over the past three years. Constantine says the demand for a year round service has been building since the water taxi started operating 10 years ago.

"We would not have been able to make this commitment without enthusiastic support from the people of West Seattle," said Constantine. "It provides the backing we need to take this next step."

Before year round service can begin, the Water Taxi's existing dock at Seacrest Park will need to be replaced. The boat currently used could also be replaced by a vessel that can better handle rough waters and is more fuel efficient. New, enclosed bike storage may also be installed at Seacrest.

Shuttles to the Water Taxi will also be year round in 2010.

"Inevitably ridership will be lower to begin with, but the longer we provide the service the more people will come to rely on it," said Constantine.

To help Ballard residents commute, a feasibility study of a passenger ferry route between Shilshore and Downtown Seattle was also approved for the county's 2009 budget

Continuation of King County's passenger ferry from Vashon Island to Downtown Seattle was also approved by the board.

The King County Ferry District Board also recently voted to lower the ferry district tax rate in 2009. Phillips explained that tax payers will be paying 5 cents per thousand dollars of property instead of 5.5 cents.

"This is a difficult time," said Phillips. "Families are watching their budgets very closely and this honors the fact that tax payers are in tough shape."

The King County Ferry District is a county wide, special-purpose district that was formed in 2007. King County's nine council members serve as the district's supervisors.

Rose Egge may be reached at 932.0300 or [rose@robinsonnews.com](mailto:rose@robinsonnews.com)

[-- CLOSE WINDOW --](#)