



AGENDA

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING SJC COUNCIL & TOWN COUNCIL

Wednesday, April 1, 2026 at 9:00 AM

Town Council Chambers - 60 Second Street

[Zoom Webinar Link](#) ~ Meeting ID: 860 6258 2578

Call to Order / Roll Call / Flag Salute

Welcome/Introductions/Set Agenda

Public Comment

Discussion Items

- Tourism and FIFA — presented by San Juan Islands Visitor's Bureau Executive Director Deborah Hoskinson
- Cross Border Forum - Presented by SJC Economic Development Council Executive Director Victoria Compton
- Ferries and the Mosquito Fleet Bill - presented by San Juan County Manager Jessica Hudson

Recess

Discussion and Action Items

- Review of 2026 Impactful State Legislation — presented by San Juan County Manager Jessica Hudson & Town Administrator Denice Kulseth

- Community Development Update — Presented by Community Development Directors Ryan Ericson (Town) & Sev Jones (SJC) along with SJC Affordable Housing Coordinator Ryan Page
 - Prioritization of Affordable Housing & Permitting
 - Vacation Rental Impact on Affordable Housing Stock

Public Comment

Closing Remarks and Future Agenda Items

Adjourn

Tourism & FIFA Update

April 1, 2026

Deborah Hoskinson, Executive Director

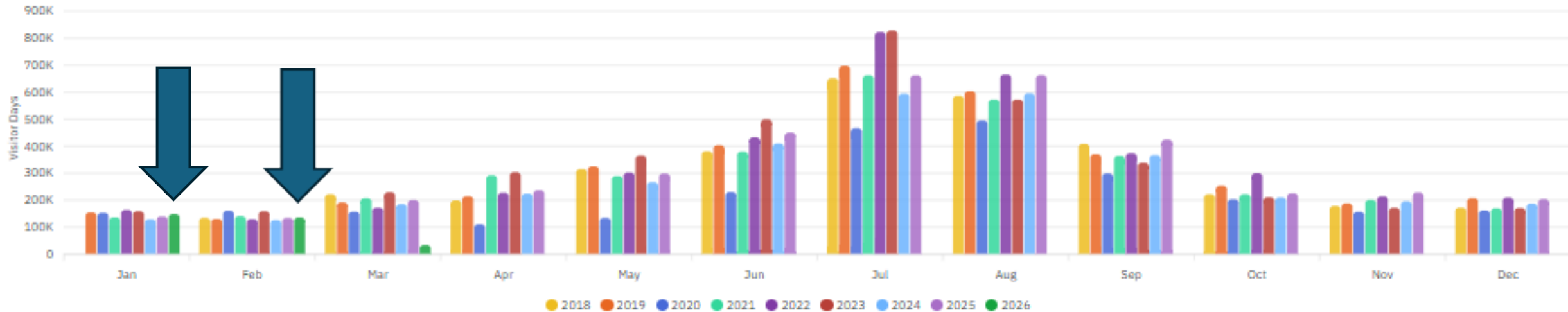


Datafy Data – January & February 2026

(Data lags by 6 weeks, so there were likely more visitors in Feb., more data coming soon)

Monthly Volume by Visitor Days

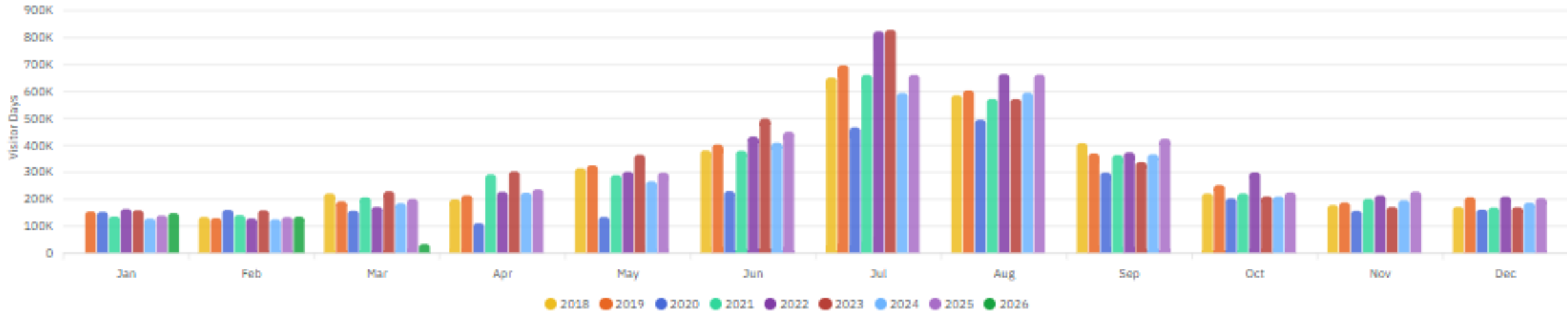
All Main Dates vs Compare Dates



Datafy Data – 2025 vs. 2024

Monthly Volume by Visitor Days

All Main Dates vs Compare Dates



Top POIs

POI	Share of Visitor Days 1/1/2025 - 12/31/2025	% Change in Visitor Days vs 1/1/2024 - 12/31/2024
San Juan Island	54.68%	↗ 7.44%
Orcas Island	33.13%	↗ 1.88%
Lopez Island	24.72%	↗ 3.09%

Graph Above:

- * 2025 in purple compared to 2024 in blue
- * 2025 visitor numbers were higher than 2024 every month

Information on the Left:

- * 54% of visitors spent time on San Juan Island/Friday Harbor
- * 33% of visitors spent time on Orcas Island
- * 24% of visitors spent time on Lopez Island
- * Some visitors visited more than 1 island

Datafy Data – 2025 vs. 2024

Top States

State	Share of Visitor Days 1/1/2025 - 12/31/2025	Change in Share of Visitor Days vs 1/1/2024 - 12/31/2024	% Change in Visitor Days vs 1/1/2024 - 12/31/2024
Washington	55.04%	- 3.3	↗ 5.31%
California	7.51%	- 0.1	↗ 10.63%
Oregon	6.74%	+ 0.3	↗ 17.71%
Texas	2.73%	+ 0.1	↗ 17.28%
Arizona	2.32%	+ 0.1	↗ 14.88%

Top MSAs (MSA – Metropolitan Statistical Area)

MSA	Share of Visitor Days 1/1/2025 - 12/31/2025	Change in Share of Visitor Days vs 1/1/2024 - 12/31/2024	% Change in Visitor Days vs 1/1/2024 - 12/31/2024
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue	28.39%	- 0.7	↗ 4.27%
Bellingham, WA	5.74%	- 0.6	↘ 3.21%
Bremerton-Silverdale, ...	4.62%	+ 0.5	↗ 19.21%
Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton	4.23%	+ 0.1	↗ 9.22%
Mount Vernon-Anacortes...	3.08%	- 0.4	↘ 4.75%

2025 Visitors Were From the Following States:

- * 55% from Washington
- * 7.5% from California
- * 6.7% from Oregon
- * “Share of Visitor Days” from WA was 55%, however, it was down -3.3% compared to 2024, likely due to negative ferry news, while “Visitor Days” were up 5.3%. WA is losing some market share to Oregon, Texas, Arizona, etc. visitors.

2025 Visitors Were From the Following Metro Areas:

- * 28% from Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue
- * 5.7% from Bellingham
- * 4.6% from Bremerton-Silverdale
- * 4.2% from Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton
- * “Share of Visitor Days” from Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue and Bellingham were down slightly (see general explanation on left)

Spring & Summer Outlook

from Spring Membership Brown
Bag Lunch Meetings to Date &
Board Members

(Deborah will give a quick verbal report)

Spring Ad Campaign: Bellingham to Portland with a concentration in Seattle-Tacoma

Spring 2026																																	
Week of	Holidays	Creative	Targeted Online Marketing									Targeted Digital Video/Broadcast					Print																
			Social Media	Social Media	Social Media	Social Media	Social Media	Daily Text	Google Dem and Geo Ads	Online Ads	KCTS Newsletters & Online Ads	NW Travel Newsletter	KCS 'out & about' Newsletter	MNTN Episode Video	KCTS TV	KROP Radio	KUCW Radio & Podcasts	NW Travel Magazine	425 Magazine	NW Travel Planner	Tulip Festival Brochure	WA State Visitor Guide											
Feb 16		Early Spring	Social Media Campaign	Niche Individual Radio Campaign	Niche Whole-Watching Campaign	Niche Harting Hill Campaign	Niche Portland Campaign	Daily Text	Google Dem and Geo Ads	Online Ads via Seattle, WA State Tourism	2/16 Bellingham, 2/20 & 2/27 KCTS 2/20-4/7			11-week Campaign																			
Feb 23																																	
Mar 2																																	
Mar 9																																	
Mar 16	Spring break week 3/16-22																				3/16/20 Newsletter				1-week Radio			March Issue					
Mar 23																					3/23 Bellingham, 3/27 & 4/3 KCTS 3/20-4/7							March/April Issue		March/April Issue	Distributed 3/16 - April		
Mar 30	4/5 Easter																				WA State Annual Visitors Guide release												
Apr 6																																	
Apr 13	Spring break											3/27/20 Newsletter																					
Apr 20								Daily Text																									
Apr 27											4/20 Bellingham, 4/24 & 4/27 KCTS 3/20-4/7																						
May 4	Mother's Day 5/10	Mid/Late Spring	Social Media Campaign	Niche Individual Radio Campaign	Niche Whole-Watching Campaign	Niche Harting Hill Campaign	Niche Portland Campaign	Daily Text	Google Dem and Geo Ads	Online Ads via Seattle, WA State Tourism				6-week Campaign	6-week Campaign																		
May 11																																	
May 18																																	
May 25	5/25 Memorial																																
Jun 1																																	
Jun 8																																	

Early Spring Advertising



Individual Island Ads



NORTHWEST

W A | O R | I D | I M | T I A K | B C | I W Y

TRAVEL & LIFE

The Destinations, Experiences & Escapes *Our Readers Love Most*

Best of Northwest TRAVEL 2026

Get your **OFFICIAL 2026 TRAVEL PLANNERS**

Plan a Spring Escape to Skagit Valley

Discover 7 Road Trips by Ferry

Enjoy a Charming getaway with 5 Unique City Stays

FRIDAY HARBOR WA 96250-1300
PO BOX 1308
SAN JUAN ISLAND VISITORS
120608N
1100072723
*****AUTO**3-DIGIT 982

FRONT STR
US POSTAGE
PAID
PORTLAND, OR
PERMIT NO 898

NWTRAVELMAG.COM

Media Relations

“7 Great Road Trips By Ferry”

FEATURE | 7 Great Road Trips by Ferry



ANACORTES ▶ SAN JUAN ISLANDS

Washington

The San Juan Islands Scenic Byway includes the ferry route from the city of Anacortes to three islands served by ferry: San Juan, Orcas and Lopez. The starting point of Anacortes is a historic and charming city that's considered the gateway to the San Juan Islands. At a minimum, give yourself a few extra hours to explore Commercial Avenue's shops, antique stores and galleries, and grab a meal at one of the many eateries on the avenue. Ideally, spend a night in Anacortes to absorb the full vibe of this maritime city before boarding the ferry the next day.

The ferry sails on the pristine waters of the Salish Sea between forested islands with rocky shores. This route is one of the most beautiful of the entire state ferry system. The three island destinations each have their own character. Lopez is rural with a small village feel. Farms, sheep, beaches, forests and an excellent bakery in the village arc what you'll discover. If you brought bicycles, the sparsely trafficked rural roads are perfect for exploring on two wheels.

From the air, Orcas Island is shaped like a horseshoe with a long sound splitting the two sides and the village of Eastsound at the top. Eastsound is rich with fine restaurants, independently owned shops and galleries full of local artisan creations, and luxury lodging. Exploring the island is a joy with new discoveries around every bend, like Moran State Park with Mt. Constitution and its panoramic views of the islands. At the risk of romanticizing, Orcas emanates a distinctly magical vibe. If fairies exist, they surely call this island home.

San Juan Island is home to the largest town in the archipelago: Friday Harbor. You could spend the entire visit in town checking out the shops, galleries, the San Juan Islands Museum of Art and the Whale Museum. The food scene highlights locally produced foods from sea to farm. Venture out of town to explore historic Roche Harbor, the San Juan Islands National Historical Park, and Lime Kiln Light State Park for the opportunity to spot orcas.

- ▶ Anacortes: anacortes.org
- ▶ San Juan Islands: visitsanjuans.com

7 Great Road Trips by Ferry | FEATURE



Insider Tip

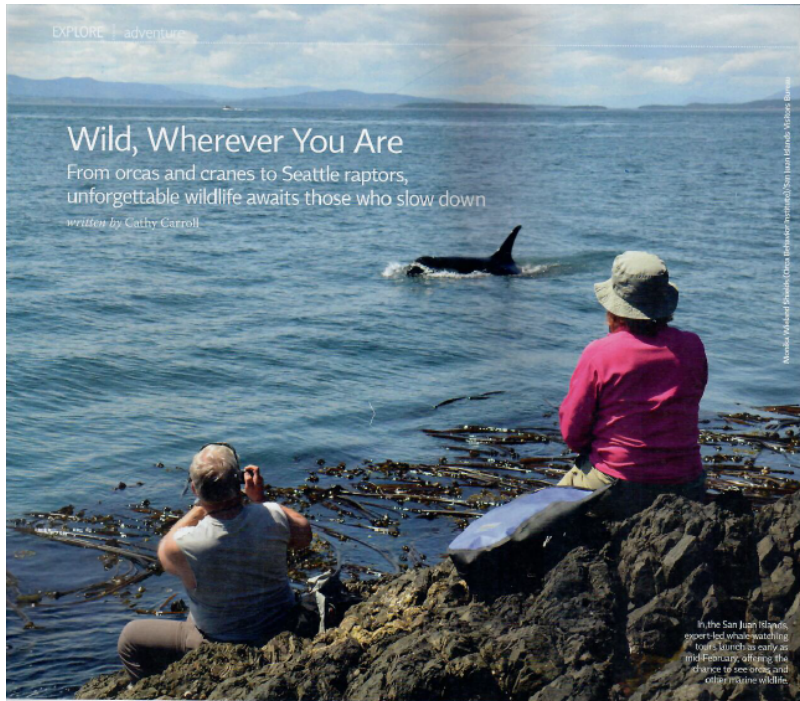
It would be a crime to visit Orcas Island without stopping at one of the best bakeries on the West Coast, located in Eastsound—Brown Bear Baking—operated by two gentlemen, both graduates of the prestigious San Francisco Baking Institute.





Media Relations

“Wild, Wherever You Are”



EXPLORE | adventure

Wild, Wherever You Are
From orcas and cranes to Seattle raptors, unforgettable wildlife awaits those who slow down
written by Cathy Carroll

David B. Williams



A great blue heron feeds on prey.

What makes urban encounters dramatic, Williams said, is not just the species themselves but their resilience: wild animals thriving amid traffic, noise, concrete and human activity. By simply tuning in—listening for frog choruses near restored wetlands, scanning shorelines for great blue herons hunting along Elliott Bay or noticing eagles returning to the city in late winter—you can witness predator and prey, migration and return, life and death, all without leaving town.

Williams grew up in Seattle and formerly worked as a park ranger in Utah's Arches National Park. "People would come to the park and ask all these questions: 'What's the geology? What's that plant? What's that animal?' I always encouraged people to ask those same questions when they got back home, figuring that the answers were always just as interesting, no matter where you're from," he said.

He recommends flocking to Seattle's Center for Urban Horticulture, adjacent to the Union Bay Natural Area. It draws more than 200 bird species to its wetlands, open water, shoreline, meadow and woodland. Watch for everything from pond-gliding geese and long-legged great blue herons to peregrine falcons diving overhead. Williams offers public talks and walks around the city too.

Songbirds such as red-winged blackbirds and ruby-crowned kinglets create the soundtrack. As spring approaches, Pacific treefrogs chime in with a chorus of classic "ribbits," especially in early morning and near sunset.

Even the stone of city buildings offers a glimpse of wild creatures, said Williams, a geologist. Embedded in 150-million-year-old German limestone, cinnamon roll-like swirls are ammonites, fossilized relatives of squid and octopus, extinct for 65 million years. Just glance down at the lobby floor of the Grand Hyatt or the stone walls of Swedish Medical Center's Cherry Hill Campus and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport's concourse A and B food courts, and you'll find them.

SAN JUAN ISLANDS Eagles to Orcas

The San Juan Islands are part of the Puget Loop of the Washington State Birding Trail, where more than 200 bird species visit,

more only in winter. More pairs of bald eagles nest here than anywhere in the lower forty-eight states. Harlequin ducks sport slate-blue feathers—easy to spot along the shore. Female hooded mergansers' cinnamon crests offer punk-rock plumage. Trumpeter swans, short-eared owls and northern harriers—hawks with owl-like faces—round out the menagerie.

Look to the Salish Sea in March and April for orcas returning from wintering in Puget Sound or the outer Washington coast. Certain families of Bigg's killer whales also spend early spring here including one of the most recognizable orcas in the world—Chainsaw. Born in 1978, his dorsal fin has two large notches easily seen from a distance, making him stand out among the black-and-white behemoths.

The islands' core community of naturalists, captains and researchers know every fin notch and marking of these wild inhabitants. Soak in their expertise aboard tours, which start in mid-February. Pro tip: All the guides talk to each other via radio once they leave the dock, so the chances of spotting whales are equal among outfitters. What varies is the style—from an open-air Zodiac where you wear a padded adventure suit to shield you from the elements, to cozy cabin cruisers where you can sip hot coffee and savor snacks while spotting spouters.

OTHELLO Sandhill Crane Festival

Each March, nearly 35,000 sandhill cranes arrive in Othello in southeastern Washington, dancing and whooping it up in a sort of bird Bumba-shoot. Males and females call out their distinctive "kar-r-r-r-o-o-o," bow to each other, flap their wings and spring into the air during courtship as they pause on their journey north. The Sandhill Crane Festival on March 20 through 22 includes talks, tours, hikes and activities with local experts offering insight into one of the Pacific Flyway's greatest migrations against the backdrop of the Saddle Mountains and sprawling cornfields.



The annual Sandhill Crane Festival in Othello running March 20 through 22 celebrates the thousands of cranes migrating into the Columbia Basin, with guided viewing tours and activities.

FROM EVERYDAY urban spaces to remote, windswept landscapes, revelatory wildlife encounters abound—from orcas surfacing around the San Juan Islands and thousands of sandhill cranes dancing and calling in courtship in rural Othello to raptors hunting amid Seattle skyscrapers. Wherever you are, it's about slowing down, training your eye and tapping into the knowledge of local experts who know these places best. Here are a few standout ways to experience that powerful connection to the natural world.

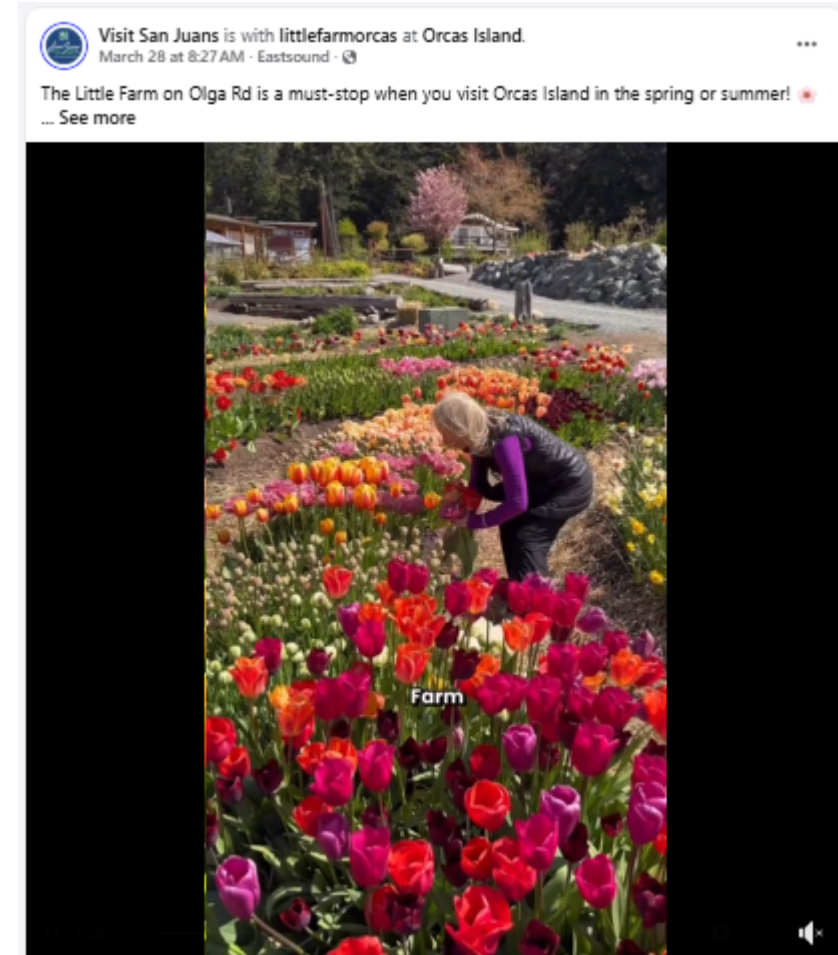
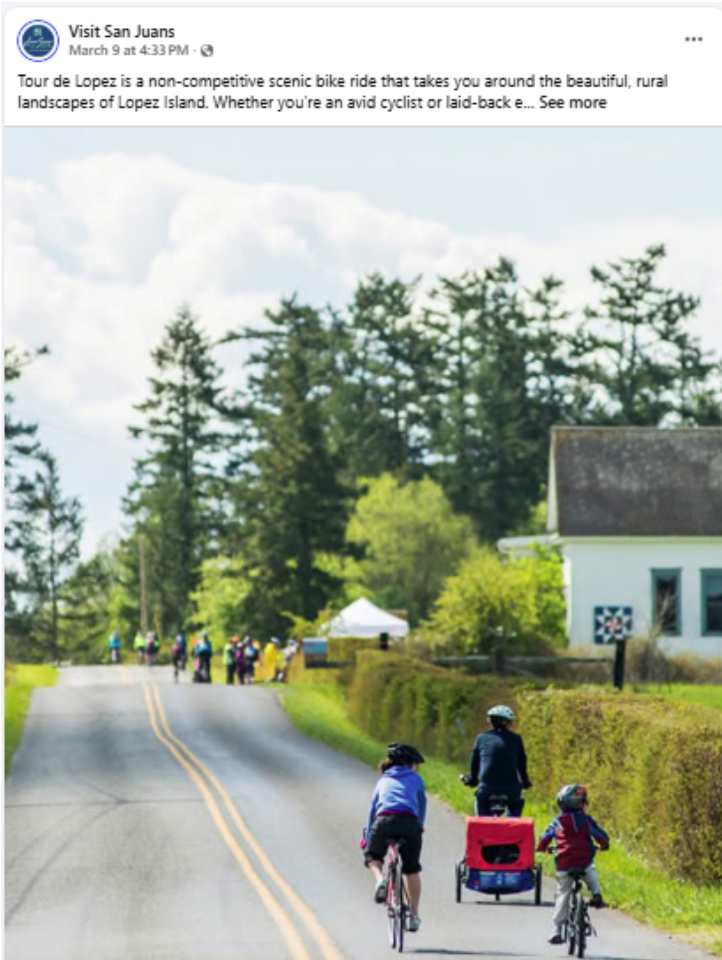
SEATTLE

The Wild in Plain Sight

Seattle's David B. Williams, a prolific author of natural history books, encourages city dwellers to discover the wildlife all around them—along freeways, marinas, city parks and their own backyards. The requirement: paying attention. Binoculars help, too. He details this in his latest book, *Wild in Seattle: Stories at the Crossroads of People and Place*.

"At Seward Park yesterday, in a span of five minutes, we saw a bald eagle, a barred owl and a pileated woodpecker," he said. "That's pretty darn cool to see a 14-inch-tall woodpecker banging his or her head against a tree. We probably all want to do that, but they can handle it."

Social Media



Visit Seattle FIFA E-News Updates

Forwarded to County & Town VIPs



Showing Up Together on a Global Stage



As we build toward the FIFA World Cup 2026™, Visit Seattle is launching a **citywide advertising campaign**, including **billboard and signage** placements that will run for six weeks around the tournament. This paid media effort is designed to express

civic pride, welcome the world, and showcase Seattle's identity beyond the stadium during the peak visitor period.

The initiative brings together Visit Seattle and local businesses to share high-visibility billboard placements across the city, creating a cohesive and welcoming presence that reflects Seattle's spirit, creativity, and passion for soccer. Each board will feature the [Let's Play SEA 26](#) look



New Playbook: **Welcoming the World to Seattle**

Designed for hotels, restaurants, attractions, transportation partners, and frontline staff, this practical guide helps teams deliver inclusive, globally-welcoming experiences—while aligning everyday service with the *Let's Play SEA 26* spirit.

Built to be actionable and easy to integrate into existing operations, the playbook focuses on preparing Seattle businesses for international visitors and turning first-time guests into future Seattle advocates. We will share further details on how to access and use this playbook soon.

Visit Seattle FIFA Webpage

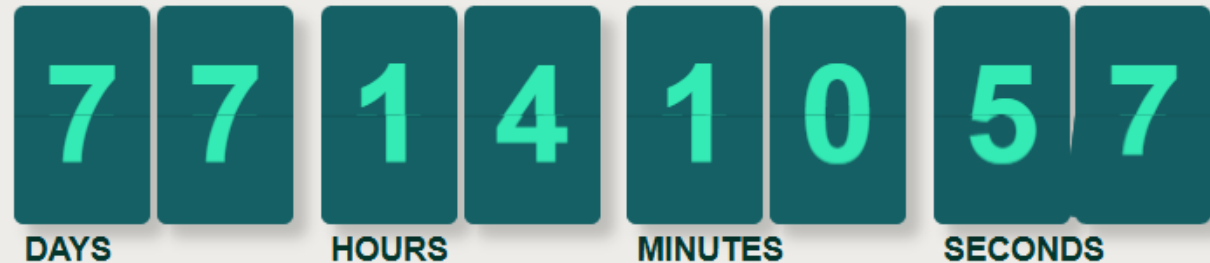
VISIT
seattle

Things To Do Food & Drink Places to Stay Explore

PLAN YOUR TRIP



FIFA World Cup 26™ is Coming to the Emerald City!



We are thrilled to welcome the world to Seattle as a host city for this global event

One of the most anticipated events in sports, [FIFA World Cup 26™](#) will be hosted across North America with games in the US, Mexico, and Canada. Seattle is excited to host six matches from June 15-July 6.

[Learn More >>](#)



Visit Seattle FIFA Webpage

visit **seattle** Things To Do Food & Drink Places to Stay Explore **PLAN YOUR TRIP**  

Let's Play SEA 26 – Together, Everywhere

7 7 1 4 0 9 3 1

DAYS HOURS MINUTES SECONDS

In Seattle, the World Cup energy flows from the pitch into every part of the city, surrounded by mountains, water, and evergreen forests that make this place unlike any other.

Whether you're cheering in the stadium, gathering in parks, or exploring neighborhoods, you're a part of a celebration that stretches from the urban core to the great outdoors.

This is [a city that plays with heart](#), with [nature as its backdrop](#) and [community at its core](#).



Visit Seattle FIFA Webpage

GROUP STAGE MATCHES

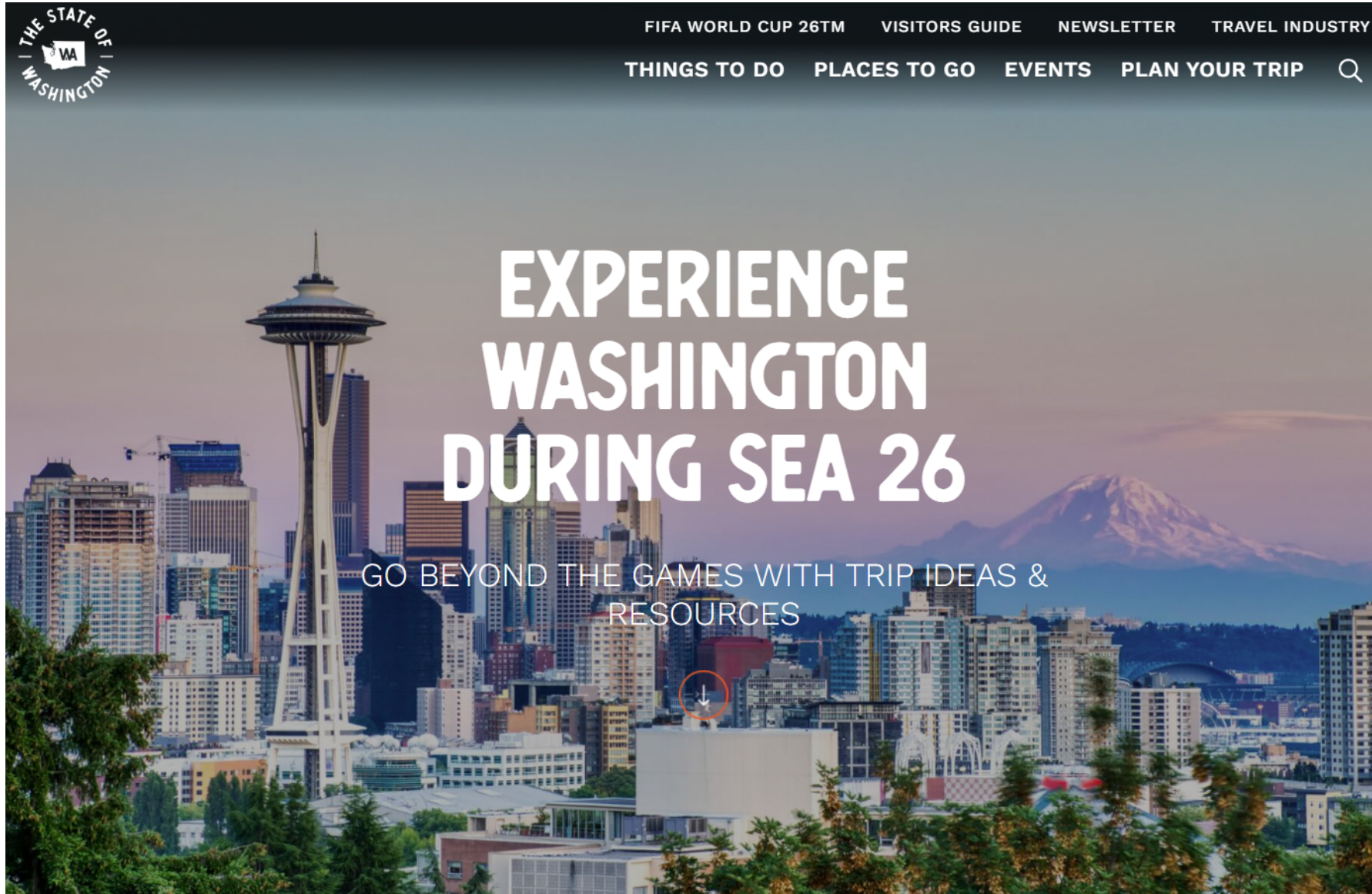
BELGIUM		V		EGYPT
JUNE 15 • 12:00PM PT				
USA		V		AUSTRALIA
JUNE 19 • 12:00PM PT				
ITA/NIR/WAL/BIH		V		QATAR
JUNE 24 • 12:00PM PT				
EGYPT		V		IR IRAN
JUNE 26 • 8:00PM PT				

The Matches

Seattle is set to host six unforgettable FIFA World Cup 26™ matches at Seattle Stadium, including one R32, and one R16, bringing the world's most passionate fans and top international teams to the heart of the city.

[Get Ready for Action](#)

WA State Tourism FIFA Webpage

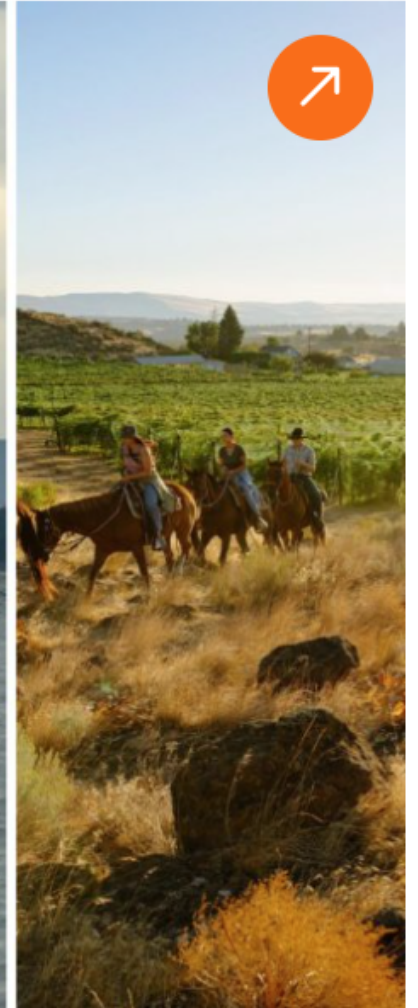


FIFA WORLD CUP 26™

COME FOR MATCHES, STAY FOR DISCOVERY

With Seattle hosting six matches in summer 2026, it's the perfect time to explore all Washington State has to offer. From rain forests and islands to Wine Country, the perfect getaway awaits.

[Learn More](#)





Guide to Whale Watching in Washington



From the Olympic Coast to the Salish Sea, here are some of the best places to spot whales.

[Read More](#)



FIFA WORLD CUP 26™

VISITORS GUIDE

NEWSLETTER

TRAVEL INDUSTRY

THINGS TO DO

PLACES TO GO

EVENTS

PLAN YOUR TRIP



Where to See Whales in Washington

San Juan Islands



Orcas at Lime Kiln Point | Photo Credit: Jim Maya



Photo Credit: Monika Wieland Shields, Orca Behavior Institute

An iconic archipelago in the heart of the Salish Sea, the [San Juan Islands](#) are renowned for whale watching. Its waters are home to two types of orcas, plus humpbacks, minke, and gray whales. Peak season is considered mid-June through early September, whales can often be spotted from April through October. On the west side of San Juan, [Lime Kiln Point State Park](#), also known as Whale Watch Park, is one of the best places in the world to spot whales (especially orcas) from shore. A [Discover Pass](#) is required within the park.

Vancouver BC Tourism FIFA Webpage

DESTINATION VANCOUVER

FIFA World Cup 2026™

Explore Vancouver

Inspiration

Plan Your Trip

AI Concierge

VANCOUVER WORLD CUP 2026

From Stadium to Seawall

FIFA

VANCOUVER

Plan your FIFA experience in Vancouver! 🌐

Skagit Valley Tourism FIFA Webpage

Stay in between Seattle & Vancouver BC



DINE

SIP

STAY

DISCOVER

EVENTS

PLAN YOUR TRIP



EN



PLAN YOUR TRIP *to the Big Game* SOCCER 2026

Skagit Valley offers the perfect Pacific Northwest escape during the 2026 global soccer celebration. Known for its charming small towns and outdoor adventures, we're just a short drive away from major match venues: Seattle, WA and Vancouver, BC.

THE BIG GAME



Our Homepage



[Islands](#) [Stay](#) [Things To Do](#) [Getting Here](#) [Stewardship](#)



Spring in the Islands

Hike to breathtaking views, watch for whales and wildlife, bike along scenic trails, explore by kayak, and savor fresh, local cuisine.

[Explore Specials & Events!](#)

Summer in the San Juan Islands



Plan your summer adventure to the Islands and experience whale watching, kayaking, hiking, biking, and more.

[Book Your Getaway!](#)

Summer Soccer in Seattle

Welcome Soccer Players & Fans!



With Seattle hosting six matches in June & July, it's a great time to take a pre or post trip to the San Juan Islands.

[Learn More!](#)

Our FIFA webpage



Welcome Soccer Players & Fans!



Visit Seattle for the matches, then head to the spectacular San Juan Islands!

With Seattle hosting six matches in June & July 2026, it's a great time to take a pre or post trip to the San Juan Islands. Set your mind to "island time" for whale watching, kayaking, hiking, biking, great food & drink, as well as plenty of history, arts & island culture.



Welcome Posters

will be distributed to all islands' hospitality-facing businesses and non-profits to display in their windows, etc.



**Thank you & do you
have any questions?**



Cross-Border Initiative:

From conversation to action

MARCH 2026 • BUILDING RESILIENCE ACROSS THE SALISH SEA





Why This Matters Now

- Cross-border uncertainty is rising:
 - Economic – tariffs, border issues
 - Political – rhetoric, immigration
- Our communities are deeply interconnected
- We cannot solve regional challenges in isolation

What We Did

- October 2025 Forum
- Elected officials, governmental agencies, First Nations leaders, business owners, economic development agencies, community leaders
- Cross-border participation, US + Canada

Focus: relationships, not rhetoric



Participants

- Tribal leaders (Saanich, Cowichan, Lummi, WSA NEC)
- Elected officials: M.P. May, Congressman Larsen, Governor Ferguson's office, MLA's, Sidney Mayor, SGI
- Governmental entities Islands Trust, San Juan County, Town of Friday Harbor, Port of Friday Harbor, SGI, State of WA, Parks Canada
- Economic Development entities (EDC of San Juan County, Rural Islands Economic Partnership, Saanich Chamber, WSMA)



Core Insight: **The relationship IS the resilience**



- Repeated across sessions
- Applies to economy, environment, governance

Cross-Border Forum Feedback: Key Themes



COLLABORATION

Strong collaboration
and shared vision



FIRST NATIONS PARTNERSHIPS

Active First
Nations engagement



ECONOMIC IMPACT

Significant economic
impacts (e.g.,
Sidney ferry)



ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS

Pollution response
and sustainability



GOVERNANCE & POLICY

Coordinated
framework, accountability



ACTION & NEXT STEPS

Outreach, organizing
meetings
positive messaging

What We Heard (Key Themes)

- Collaboration & shared vision
- First Nations partnership & leadership
- Economic resilience
- Environmental stewardship
- Governance & accountability
- Action & communication
- Strong demand for ongoing coordination (not one-off events)
- Need for formal structure: working group/secretariat
- Shared challenge: **Increasing cooperation, not reducing it**

Why It Matters Regionally



- Ferry + transportation = economic lifelines, equitable outcomes
- Environmental risks don't respect borders
- Businesses operate cross-border daily
- Emergency response requires coordination
- Translation: this is **core infrastructure governance**, not "nice to have"

What We're Doing Now

- Committee collaboration
- Advocacy at local, state, federal levels
- May 22 virtual forum
- Fall 2026 forum in Sidney
- Structure: speakers, polling, breakouts (economic & environmental)
- Focus on: practical collaboration, non-partisan dialogue





Call to Action

- **We need your partnership to:**
- Participate in the May and fall forums
- Share priorities and challenges
- Help shape a cross-border coordination model
- Stay engaged beyond a single event
- ***This only works if we build it together.***

*Thank you for everything you do
to catalyze equitable,
collaborative outcomes.*



Cross-Border Forum 2025

Executive Summary

Prepared by the EDC of San Juan County, based on session notes recorded by MP May's office and participant feedback

Overview

This briefing synthesizes participant reflections from the Cross-Border Forum feedback forms and discussions. It highlights the most salient cross-cutting themes, supported by representative quotations and participant-indicated next steps.

The 2025 Forum reaffirmed that “Our relationships are the resilience.” Across every discussion — from economic to environmental to community well-being — participants emphasized that strong relationships are the foundation of cross-border cooperation, shared stewardship, and collective action.

Top Takeaways (in order of prevalence)

Collaboration & Partnerships — noted throughout the Forum as the single most consistent priority. Participants emphasized the need to formalize connections through a coordinating structure or 'secretariat,' ensuring that cross-border work continues beyond events. Common keywords: collaborate, connect, partnership, network, trust.

First Nations Partnerships — emphasized across all sessions as vital to both environmental and economic resilience. Participants called for co-designed processes and recognition of First Nations leadership in stewardship and governance. Common keywords: First Nations, Indigenous, Lummi, Tsawout, relationship, knowledge.

Economic Resilience — discussions highlighted both stressors and strengths. Tariffs, supply chain fragility, housing and energy costs, and cross-border uncertainty are undermining local economies. Yet, participants noted that these pressures are also strengthening cooperation and dialogue. Common keywords: business, economy, housing, trade, workforce.

Environmental Stewardship — shoreline and marine discussions underscored the need for harmonized regulations, shared emergency response (oil-spill and derelict vessel removal), and expanded collaboration across agencies and borders. Participants emphasized blending First Nations and scientific knowledge systems for practical, local-scale solutions. Common keywords: environment, shoreline, sustainability, safety, stewardship.

Governance & Policy — recurring emphasis on establishing a formal cross-border mechanism for coordination and accountability. Participants supported developing a

working group or secretariat, shared communications platform, and asset map to connect initiatives. Common keywords: coordination, governance, fund, legislative, policy.

Community Engagement & Communications — the plenary discussions produced a clear action item: a communications and media strategy to share success stories and amplify local voices. Proposals included a co-authored media release, social media storytelling, and a central website hub for updates and resources. Common keywords: community, communication, outreach, awareness.

Representative Quotes

“Working together across borders reminded me how interconnected our communities truly are — we can’t build resilience in isolation.”

“The relationship is the resilience.”

“We must continue to make connections and create initiatives at the local level, ignoring voices that call for division.”

“The pressures are strengthening cross-border relationships, which have existed for thousands of years and will remain standing strong.”

Suggested Next Steps (participant-indicated, synthesized)

- Formalize governance and coordination through a cross-border secretariat or working group to manage ongoing efforts.
- Convene follow-up meetings in early 2026 to review progress, align funding, and sustain partnerships.
- Advance transportation connectivity, particularly the restoration of ferry routes vital to both sides of the border.
- Align environmental stewardship and economic resilience, integrating First Nations leadership and harmonized policy frameworks, and ensuring that existing policies and joint initiatives remain viable.
- Launch a joint communications strategy — shared stories, media outreach, and a central information hub to sustain public engagement.

All feedback and session notes were reviewed manually and analyzed using qualitative coding and frequency mapping to identify cross-cutting themes. Direct participant quotations are included verbatim to preserve authenticity.

Cross-Border Forum Highlights – October 17, 2025

Building resilient communities through shared stewardship, connection, and collaboration.

Top Six Takeaways

Collaboration & Partnerships — Most consistent theme across sessions. Participants called for a formal coordinating structure or “secretariat” to sustain cross-border cooperation and trust.

First Nations Partnerships — Central to environmental and economic resilience. Participants emphasized co-designed processes and recognition of First Nations leadership in stewardship and governance.

Economic Resilience — Regional economies face pressure from tariffs, housing, and energy costs, yet these challenges are fostering deeper cross-border cooperation and dialogue.

Environmental Stewardship — Shared focus on harmonized marine and shoreline policies, coordinated emergency response, and blending First Nations and scientific knowledge for local-scale solutions.

Governance & Policy — Support for a cross-border working group, shared communications platform, and asset map to connect initiatives and ensure accountability.

Community Engagement & Communications — Clear action item: a joint media and outreach strategy to amplify local voices and share cross-border success stories.

Representative Quote

“Working together across borders reminded me how interconnected our communities truly are — we can’t build resilience in isolation.”

Most Common Words

Connection, collaboration, environment, partnership, community, ferry, resilience, First Nations, economy, communication

Suggested Next Steps

- Formalize governance and coordination through a cross-border working group or secretariat.
- Convene a follow-up forum in early 2026 to review progress and align funding priorities.
- Restore and strengthen transportation connectivity, especially key ferry routes.
- Integrate First Nations leadership into policy and program development.
- Launch a joint communications strategy to sustain collaboration and public engagement.

Prepared by the EDC of San Juan County, based on session notes recorded by MP May’s office and participant feedback

Ottawa

Room 349, Confederation Building
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Tel.: 613-996-1119
Fax: 613-996-0850



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Ottawa

Pièce 349, Édifice de la Confédération
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0A6
Tél. : 613-996-1119
Télééc. : 613-996-0850

Constituency

9711 Fourth Street Suite 1
Sidney, British Columbia V8L 2Y8
Tel.: 250-657-2000
Fax: 250-657-2004

Elizabeth May
Member of Parliament / Député(e)
Saanich — Gulf Islands

Circonscription

9711, rue Fourth suite 1
Sidney (Colombie-Britannique) V8L 2Y8
Tél. : 250-657-2000
Télééc. : 250-657-2004

Re: Thank you for supporting cross-border collaboration.

October 24, 2025

To whom it may concern,

I have long dreamed of bringing together key stakeholders across the Salish Sea bioregion, deepening collaboration to advance shared priorities.

As you are aware, on October 17, 2025, elected officials, First Nations representatives, civil society leaders, and business advocates from Canada and the United States convened at Mary Winspear Centre in Sidney, BC for a *Cross-Border Forum* dedicated to strengthening relationships across the Salish Sea bioregion.

We approached the day with a willingness to colour outside of the lines. Esteemed participants included Tsawout Hereditary Chief Eric Pelkey, Cowichan Tribes Chief Cindy Daniels, Lummi Treaty Protection Director Brandon Morris, Sidney Mayor Cliff McNeil-Smith, North Saanich and the Islands MLA Rob Botterell, Islands Trust Chair Laura Patrick, James Rolph from Washington State Lt. Governor Denny Heck's office, and Jeremy Harrison-Smith from Governor Ferguson's office. U.S. Representative Larsen extended remarks virtually.

Each leader offered their unique insight and perspective while highlighting the importance of protecting this region's economic and environmental wellbeing, together.

Through collaborative discussion groups, we concluded that the *resilience is the relationship*. Connections made now will help us to better weather times of uncertainty and crisis moving forward. We also committed to concrete steps, including planning another Forum for March, developing a shared strategy to communicate ongoing efforts with the public, and spearheading a more permanent body for cross-border engagement, such as a Secretariat.

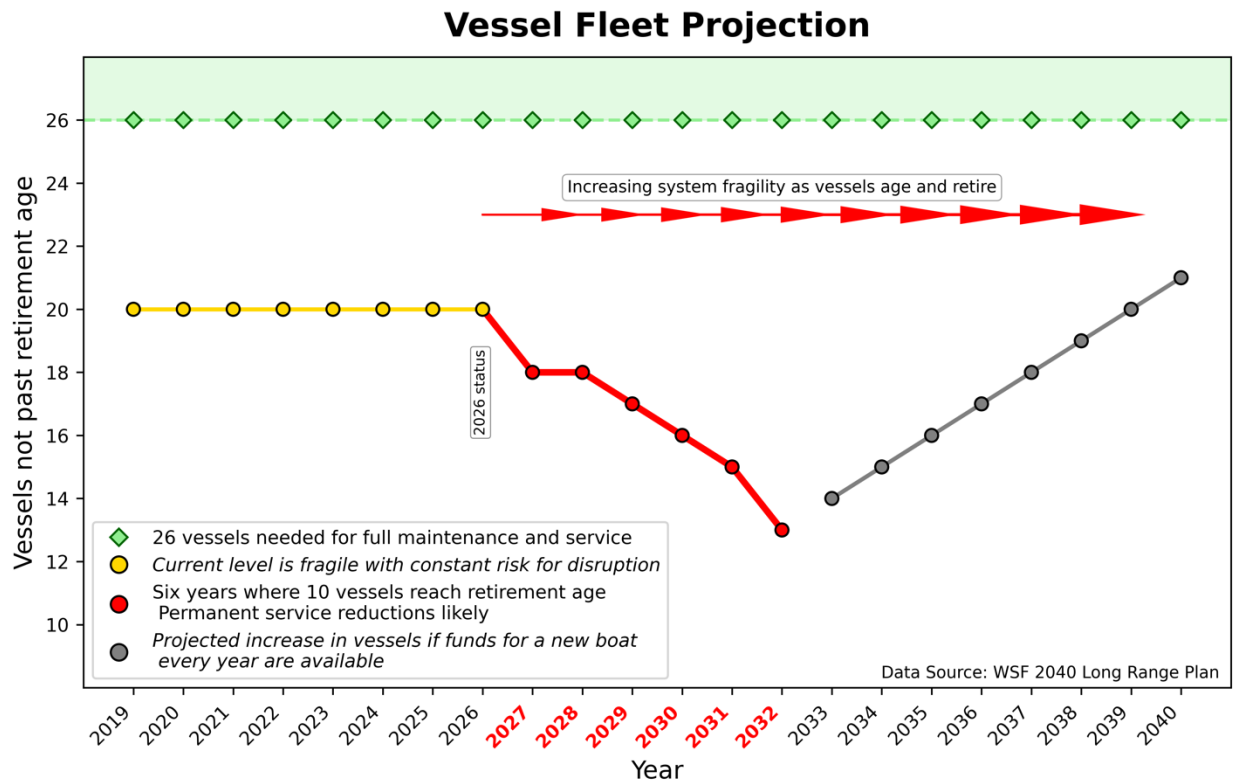
I extend my heartfelt gratitude to you for the financial support you provided this unique forum. Your contribution allowed us to convene in-person, while helping ensure the event was inclusive and accessible. I am inspired by the courage and commitment of those who participated, and I look forward to continuing this vital partnership. Thank you for joining us in bringing this vision to life.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth May, O.C.
Member of Parliament
Saanich-Gulf Islands
Leader of the Green Party of Canada

A Certain Crisis – by Ken Burness, Lopez Island, San Juan County (Mar. 2026)

Testimony to the State House and Senate Transportation Committees in Dec. 2025 and Jan. 2026 has focused attention on Washington State Ferries with its critical shortage of vessels and perilous reliance on 11 vessels that are past or very near retirement age. Testimony rated the health of WSF to be fragile with current levels of service at high risk for disruption. By 2032, even with 3 new vessels, WSF will only have 13 vessels not past retirement age out of the 26 vessels needed to provide robust service levels and adequate maintenance for the fleet. In coming years, the additional needed vessel capacity will be inadequately filled by an ever-decreasing number of ever-aging and ever more unreliable vessels. WSF is heading towards collapse with permanent reductions in service.



Evidence of the mounting problems that WSF faced in the 20 years following the passage of Initiative 695 in 1999 was there for all to see but not acted upon. Today evidence of a future WSF crippled by a shortage of vessels is sounding an alarm, with a response that is far from adequate. A proposal from Gov. Ferguson to fund an additional three ferries was rejected in Feb. 2026 by both Transportation Committees, with one chair stating that “it is just too soon.” In fact, it is too late. With this decision the Rubicon has been crossed. The last five years have been very difficult for WSF. The coming ten years will see current service levels ever more impossible to maintain.



**REVIEW OF
2026
IMPACTFUL
LEGISLATION**

JESSICA HUDSON, COUNTY MANAGER

2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Timing

- Short session lasting just 60 days, from January 12th through March 12th
- From WSAC: “Historically, short sessions were intended to address supplemental budget issues and shortcomings identified in policies already implemented, but modern short sessions have been used more frequently to continue working on, and even introduce, major policy initiatives. This session included several new, major policy proposals.”

2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Governor Signature

A bill will become law without the Governor's signature if they do not sign or veto it within a certain period of time. There are two different deadlines, depending on when a bill is delivered to the Governor:

- Bills delivered more than 5 days before the Legislature adjourns have 5 days to be acted on, not counting Sundays
- Bills delivered within 5 days of the Legislature adjourning have 20 days to be acted on, not counting Sundays

BILLS OF INTEREST TO COUNTIES

PASSED BILLS

- HB1345 Housing and Development; establishing limitations on detached accessory dwelling units outside of urban growth areas
 - Delivered to Governor March 6, not signed but now passed
- HB2442 County Administration/Auditors; authorizes several new revenue options for County governments.
 - Delivered to Governor March 12, not yet signed, Governor has until April 4th to sign/veto/let time lapse
- SB6066 Public Works/Risk Management; Allows Counties, Cities, Towns or WSDOT to create crash prevention zones
 - Governor signed March 20
- Special Mention “Millionaires Tax”- all local funding for public defense removed from bill
 - Delivered to Governor March 13, not yet signed

BILLS OF INTEREST TO COUNTIES

DEAD BILLS

- SB6239; Creating an Alternative Voluntary Tort Claim Process for State and Localities
- HB 1592/SB 5404; 50/50 Cost split between State and County for current Public Defense Costs
- HB 2559; Authorizing local governments to impose a new short-term rental tax up to 4% to fund affordable housing
- HB2183; Required Counties covered by GMA to create extreme heat response plans
- HB2233; Banned the use of plastic bags at grocery stores/excluded from restaurants, and increased pass-through fee for disposable bags to \$0.15 in 2028 and \$.018 in 2030

2026
Legislative Session
AWC Recap



Housing supply

Provide time to implement recent state housing legislation. Increase housing investments to meet needs across the housing continuum. Support tools to better coordinate urban growth area development and funding options such as a local option real estate excise tax (REET) and short-term rental tax.

Pro: Made significant capital budget investments in housing and homelessness, including for manufactured home park acquisition and preservation.

Pro: Increased flexibility with existing local government housing revenues (**SB 6027, HB 2442**).

Pro: Passed additional reforms to condominium liability laws to promote stacked flats (**HB 2304**).

Pro: Did not pass requirement for cities to allow mobile dwelling units on every lot with little regulatory or health and safety review (**HB 1443**).

Con: Did not adopt the local option short-term rental tax (**HB 2559**) or the local option sales tax remittance program (**HB 1717**) to fund affordable housing.

Con: Did not include new local option REET authority for affordable housing in local revenue bill.

Other: Passed commercial zoning bill that opens up residential development potential while preserving the ability of cities to grow vibrant neighborhoods and stable tax bases (**SB 6026**).



Transportation

Increase sustainable revenue that supports local transportation preservation, maintenance, and operations and includes direct distributions to cities and towns. Continue to support efforts to improve traffic safety and explore revenue tools.

Not much to report...
here ...



Other significant issues

Cities identified several other significant policies to work on during the 2026 session.

Pro: Addressed rising labor and materials costs by increasing the amount up to which cities can utilize the small works roster process to award public works projects (**HB 2420**).

Con: Diverted \$375 million from the Public Works Assistance Account to the operating budget; backfilled with \$280 million in new bond funding, plus \$10 million in other funds to address impacts on public works infrastructure from 2025 catastrophic weather events.

Thanks to AWC for
their tireless work on
behalf of WA cities
and towns!



SAN JUAN COUNTY
WASHINGTON

TOWN OF
FRIDAY HARBOR
WASHINGTON

Friday Harbor and San Juan County Affordable Housing Discussion

(a multijurisdictional collaboration to consider current and potential policies and incentives to promote affordable housing throughout the Islands)

April 1, 2026

Ryan Ericson, Friday Harbor CDP Director/Building Official

Ryan Page, SJI Housing Program Coordinator

Sev Jones, SJI DCD Director



Affordable Housing Discussion Topics

- Affordable Housing Priorities
 - County Comprehensive Plan
 - Town Comprehensive Plan
 - Funding
 - Construction
 - Infrastructure
- Affordable Housing Permitting
- Legislative Policy Vacation Rentals
 - Affordable housing
 - Conversion of Commercial Space



County Comprehensive Plan

Housing Element

- Goals

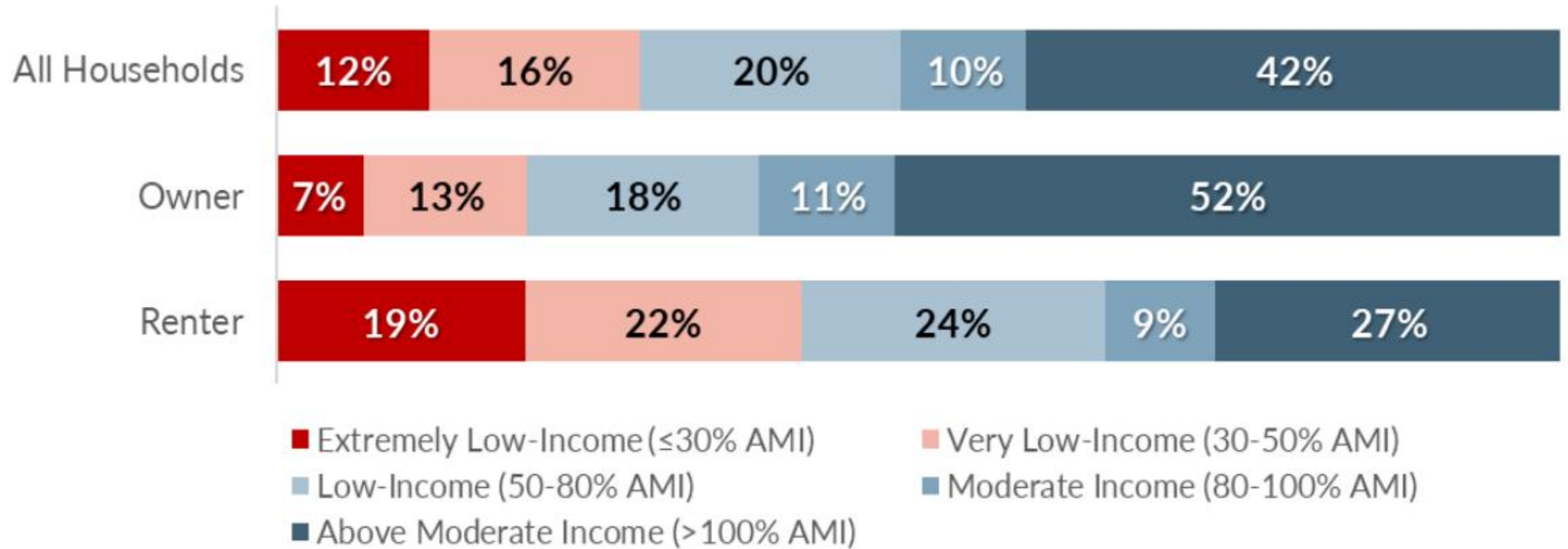
- Policies

Land Capacity Analysis – Housing Element

Location	% of Total	Total	0-30%		≥30-50%	≥50-80%	≥80-100%	≥100-120%	>120%	STEP
			Non-PSH	PSH						
Friday Harbor + UGA	28.8%	916	311	26	279	63	38	38	161	10
Eastsound	16.2%	515	175	15	157	35	21	21	91	6
Lopez Village	7.7%	244	83	7	74	17	10	10	43	3
Rural Areas / LAMIRDS / AC	47.3%	1504	0	0	0	316	189	190	809	17

Existing Households by Income Band

Town of Friday Harbor



Land Capacity Analysis

Location	% of Total	Total	0-30%		>30-50%	>50-80%	>80-100%	>100-120%	>120%	STEP**
			Non-PSH*	PSH						
Friday Harbor + UGA	28.8%	916	311	26	279	63	38	38	161	10
Current Percent Households need next 20 years	28.8%	916	101	9	147	182	92	385		10
Alleviate Cost Burden Renters				52	70	88				

Existing Conditions Housing Capacity

Friday Harbor + UGA	Buildable Acres	Housing Capacity Vacant	Housing Capacity Underutilized	Housing Capacity Partially Utilized	Total Net Housing Capacity
SFR	47.92	134		57	191
MF	10.90	68	38		106
Total					297

Existing Conditions Housing Capacity

Subarea Totals	Total Net Housing Capacity
Town of Friday Harbor	297
Proposed UGA 1	14
Proposed UGA 2	99
Proposed UGA 3	28
Proposed UGA 4	0
Proposed UGA 5	142
Total	580



Affordable Housing Permitting

Council Questions?



Legislative Policy Vacation Rentals

Council Questions?