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Lummi Island Ferry Dock to Be Relocated

The Lummi Nation has informed Whatcom County of its future plans to redevelop Gooseberry Point that will not accommodate the ferry dock in its present location. A 25-year lease for the tidelands and approaches expires on February 14, 2010. The current lease signed by both parties in the mid 1980's contains an option for another 25 years. However, the Lummi Nation has stated its position that because the lease was not signed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the option to renew the term is invalid and will not be allowed.

Negotiations with The Lummi Nation have produced two options:

Option One, proposed earlier this year by the Lummi Nation would require relocation of the dock to other reservation land, requiring a new lease and terms. Option One at an estimated cost of \$17,413,500 includes further county investment in road and sidewalk improvements on the Lummi Reservation with a defined schedule and expected results. That amount also includes \$6,000 a month for tideland rent but does not include a new "Treaty Fishing Rights" fee per trip of an amount that has yet to be proposed. In 2008 the Whatcom Chief made 12,626 one way trips. The term for Option One is 5 years, 10 and 1/2 months. Additionally under "Option One", Whatcom County would be responsible for all dock relocation costs estimated to be several million dollars.

Option Two was developed by Whatcom County Public Works staff, the administration and the Lummi Nation. Option Two is preferred by the Lummi Nation and includes a new five-year lease that would allow the ferry dock to remain on Gooseberry Point until February 15, 2015. The total estimated cost of the new lease would be \$300,000 for the duration of the lease. Option two also includes the additional "Treaty Fishing Rights" fee per trip.

The new five-year lease would provide Whatcom County time to develop a new strategy for providing transportation services to Lummi Island. Whatcom County Public Works Ferry Division is in the process of developing a series of options for executive and council consideration that will allow for continued ferry services to Lummi Island.

The Whatcom County Public Works Ferry Division operates the Lummi Island Ferry (Whatcom Chief) linking residents and visitors on Lummi Island to the mainland at Gooseberry Point. The ferry dock site is located partly on tribal tidelands held in trust by the United States for the Lummi Nation.

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