



## FCA OUTLINES POLICY POSITION ON FERRY TERMINAL UPGRADE

By Mike Dey, FCA President

*In May 2021, the FCA Board began communicating our position on upgrades to the Fauntleroy Ferry Terminal. This article states that policy position with minor updates.*

The Fauntleroy community has been working and dealing with Washington State Ferries (WSF) for more than 40 years and, during all those years, the ferry system has continually sought to enlarge the ferry terminal here.

Shortly after planning got under way to upgrade the terminal, the FCA Board took a close look and decided that supporting six changes to the facility was in the community's best interest:

- removing existing piles and deteriorating components of the trestle and transfer span.
- retaining the same footprint and over-water coverage as the existing terminal.
- upgrading structures to be environmentally safe, seismically secure, and elevated for projected sea-level rise.
- improving ticketing efficiency.
- discouraging continued traffic growth, especially of single occupancy vehicles.

We then provided city elected officials with the rationale for our position as summarized on page 2, where you'll also **find much more ferry-related information.**



## COHO FRY NOW GOING WITH THE FLOW

May's salmon release season on Fauntleroy Creek looked a lot like seasons before the pandemic. Volunteers organized by the Fauntleroy Watershed Council assisted about 500 students in releasing just over 1,500 coho fry reared through the Salmon in the Schools program.

Elementary students and preschoolers from West Seattle schools were eager for a field trip in Fauntleroy Park even if they had to wear a mask. They were supported by 140+ adults as well as the all-volunteer release team of Dennis Hinton, Pete Draughon, Shannon Ninburg, and Tom Trulin. Release season ended with a post-Memorial Day community release.

At the same time, volunteers were wrapping up the monitoring of net traps to count smolts leaving the park and lower creek for their two years in saltwater. This year's count was down (11 compared with 49 in 2021), likely because the pandemic reduced the number of schools rearing fry last year. They also counted upwards of 300 live fry in the lower smolt trap - some of the "home hatch" from last fall's robust spawning season.



**In addition to releasing their coho fry with volunteer Dennis Hinton, Pathfinder students took a look at some of the insect species that live in the creek and become food for the fry as they grow.** Photo by Tom Trulin

# FERRY POLICY POSITION (CONTINUED)

## Background

The City of Seattle leases land to the state for operation of the ferry terminal in this residential neighborhood. The lease requires city approval of any changes to the terminal, particularly because it is out of compliance with residential zoning regulations.

Despite consistent opposition from this community and from city, county, and state elected officials, WSF has continually pushed for expansion. In 1979, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) sought legislative funding to expand the dock and add a second loading slip, which Fauntleroy opposed.

A legislative study in 1979 concluded that the dock was acceptable in Fauntleroy as long as the volume of cars did not exceed 1,250,000 per year. Also, it recommended that the state phase out the terminal altogether by 1984. After the report's release in 1980, then-mayor Charles Royer announced his opposition to any expansion.

In 1983, an effort began to get Fauntleroy Way SW designated a state highway, like Aurora Ave. or Lake City Way. In 1986, the Seattle Department of Engineering opposed the idea, as did Mayor Royer. In 1989, the Legislature dropped the proposal.

In 1991, WSDOT again requested legislative funding to expand the terminal to two loading slips and three toll booths. In 1992, then-senator Phil Talmadge publicly opposed expansion, as did then-county council-member Greg Nickels in 1997.

That same year, the Seattle City Council unanimously approved Resolution 29566 stating that (1) the dock should not be expanded and that (2) the ferry system should reduce traffic through Fauntleroy. In late 2008, WSDOT again sought legislative funding to expand the terminal, and in early 2009, County Executive Dow Constantine added his opposition.

## Vehicle projections

In its 2040 long-range plan, the ferry system noted that 1,650,000 vehicles used this terminal in 2017 and projected that, by 2040, the number will have grown to 1,900,000. Such high volume clearly exceeds the 1,250,000 maximum identified in 1980 and clearly defies the City Council's resolution to reduce traffic through Fauntleroy and greater West Seattle.

## Why expansion is not needed

Expansion will not result in getting any more cars and foot passengers to or from Vashon and Southworth any faster. Skirting this fact, WSF points to two "operational efficiencies" to justify expanding the present terminal. Each, however, is a problem of the system's own making:

**(1) Lack of efficient ticketing:** The ferry system claims that dock expansion is needed because, during the afternoon commute, the toll booths cannot process vehicles fast enough to get vehicles loaded for on-time departure of full boats.

Three other terminals have much larger holding capacities, plus overhead loading of walk-on passengers. None, however, consistently meets the system's 95% on-time departure target nor matches Fauntleroy's departure

performance. Clearly, holding capacity and overhead loading (a desire of the ferry system's for Fauntleroy) are not the culprits.

What controls the number of cars and foot passengers that get back and forth from Vashon and Southwest is the size of the boats and the speed at which they travel.

As Mardi Clements details in her accompanying article, pre-ticketing would go a long way toward solving the efficiency problem. The state's rejoinder has been that the same automated system needs to work at all terminals. To the contrary, it offers reservations on selected routes only and has a history of doing pilot studies.

**(2) Failure to reduce single-occupancy vehicles:** West Seattle's population has increased by 13% over the last six years, and newcomers and long-time residents alike have experienced the public-safety hazards and annoyances of increased traffic.

One recent response by the city was to reduce the speed limit on Fauntleroy Way to 25 mph. The city is also taking steps to make public transit more attractive for commuters, but the ferry system has yet to follow suit.

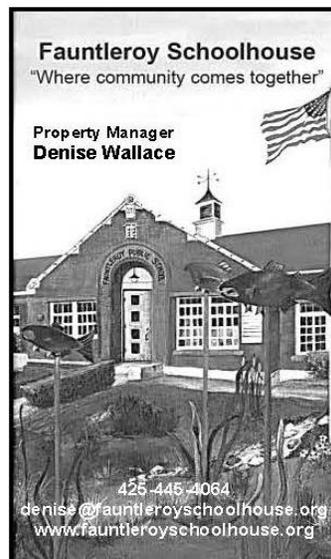
The ferry system projects that, once the high bridge reopens, up to 250,000 more vehicles per year will come over it to reach the terminal here. In 2019, single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs) were 80% of those using this terminal, a percentage that has not changed since 1991. Other terminals are typically close to 60%.

If use of SOVs at Fauntleroy were simply to match usage at other terminals, 320,000 fewer cars per year would pass through this and other West Seattle neighborhoods (not to mention having a positive impact on air quality and global warming).

## In conclusion

This and other West Seattle neighborhoods support repairing/replacing unsafe structures and increasing trestle height in line with the projected rise in sea levels. We also support improving ticketing efficiency and discouraging continued traffic growth.

What we have been adamantly opposed to for 43 years is unjustified expansion of this terminal beyond its current footprint.



# MAXIMIZE THROUGH-PUT NOW!

By Mardi Clements

A win-win-win for Fauntleroy, Vashon, Southworth, and Washington State Ferries is to require advanced online ticketing or to install Good To Go! Do this to maximize full boats leaving on schedule during peak demand on weekdays *and* weekends.

The number of boats, the size of boats, and the schedule of sailings is not changing for the next 20 years - which means the number of vehicles and passengers that can cross to and from Vashon or Southworth is also not changing for the next 20 years.

Keeping the boats full and on schedule by improved vehicle processing is the best way to maximize throughput and move vehicles quickly and efficiently off Fauntleroy Way SW.

Advanced online ticketing of vehicles is existing technology, it is already being used by many regular commuters, and they need only seconds to clear the toll booths. Maintaining the current weekday peak demand sailing schedule depends entirely on pre-ticketed drivers. Processing 124 vehicles (a boat load) through two toll booths takes 6-10 minutes if all of them already have a ticket. If none of them has a ticket, processing takes 62-186 minutes! No one has time for that.

Good To Go! uses electronic transponders, and multiple independent studies have been advising for decades that WSF use it. WSF says it remains under analysis and a hope for the future. Advanced online ticketing is available *now*.

If the queue of vehicles on Fauntleroy Way were just for ticket holders, any size dock would fill faster than the boats could load. No delay at the toll booths. No "choke point." Travelers already buy their tickets online before getting on planes, trains, light rail, and buses. Why not for these boats?

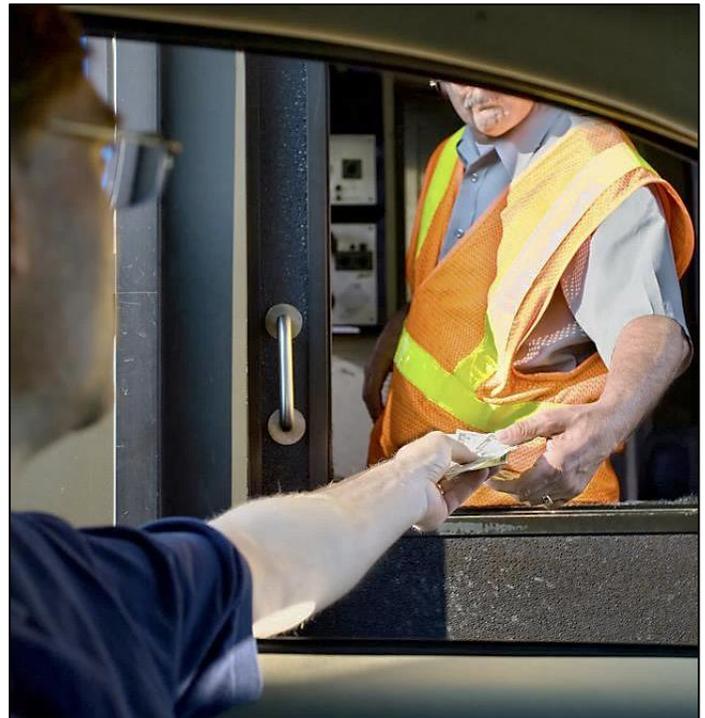
Dwell time (15-20 minutes) is the amount of time the boat is allotted to unload and load. If dwell time is exceeded, the boat is no longer on schedule.

At peak demand times, boats regularly have prolonged dwell times for various reasons and go off schedule, lining up two or more boatloads of vehicles on Fauntleroy Way. (This line-up is worse on weekends when most travelers are not pre-ticketed.) Advanced ticketing would allow vehicles to quickly pass through the toll booths and help eliminate this choke point.

Imagine a dock holding 186 vehicles (the largest WSF is proposing). After 124 vehicles leave on a full boat, 62 vehicles from the queue on Fauntleroy Way will be needed to fill the next boat. If they are not pre-ticketed, processing them through the toll booths will take 30-90 minutes.

No size dock will eliminate the queue on Fauntleroy Way. That line will always be there during peak times. Better to use the 200+ vehicle holding lane along Fauntleroy Way as a ticket-holders' line.

For 20 hours a day with current dock size, vehicles do not overflow onto Fauntleroy Way and on-time performance is 91-94% - above WSF's system-wide average. Vehicle line-ups occur on Fauntleroy Way during peak demand because of inefficient processing through the toll booths and, of course, other reasons.



Advanced ticketing is already available and it's a fast and economical way to keep boats on schedule! WSF already has a robust website to buy tickets, plus knowledgeable staff on the phones.

WSF should make a policy decision now to require advanced ticketing, well before construction begins. When the dock upgrade is finished, WSF should institute Good to Go! or a similar automated tolling system.

## ONLINE OPEN HOUSE WELCOMES VISITORS THROUGH JUNE 13

By Hadley Rodero, Washington State Ferries

Washington State Ferries (WSF) is still early in the process of analyzing how to upgrade the Fauntleroy Ferry Terminal, but we are making good progress.

With the help of the project's community and technical advisory groups, we have identified nine alternatives that have passed our initial screening process and will move forward for more rigorous screening.

WSF is hosting an online open house through **Monday, June 13**. Visit [engage.wsdot.wa.gov/fauntleroy-terminal/](http://engage.wsdot.wa.gov/fauntleroy-terminal/) anytime **to see diagrams of the nine options** and share your thinking about them.

If you would like to receive project updates or submit a comment of question, call 206-470-0524 or email [fauntleroytermproj@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:fauntleroytermproj@wsdot.wa.gov). For full details, visit [wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/major-projects/sr-160-fauntleroy-terminal-trestle-transfer-span-replacement](http://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/major-projects/sr-160-fauntleroy-terminal-trestle-transfer-span-replacement).



# FERRY-USE DATA ABOUT VEHICLES, RESERVATIONS, AND RIDERS

By Gary Dawson

Because of the pandemic, the number of vehicles with drivers using the Fauntleroy Ferry Terminal was down to just over 1,200,000 in 2021, according to the ferry system. That same year, some 577,000 vehicle passengers and 180,000 walk-on riders used this terminal.

Fare data from Washington State Ferries (WSF) show that 1,024,000 of those vehicles were up to 22 feet in length (cars, vans, pickups). The other 177,000 were oversized and in other categories.

Discounted, multi-use passes are available for frequent users with vehicles of 22 feet or less. Walk-on passengers may purchase monthly passes that, like multi-use passes, are non-refundable.

Commercial customers with vehicles less than 40 feet in length may apply at terminals or online for a business account. Oversized vehicles must make special arrangements and get preapproval.

All large vehicles must stop at a toll booth for ticket purchase or presentation and, in some cases, be measured to establish the fare. This is why the ferry system advises drivers of commercial and oversized vehicles to avoid peak commute periods, if possible.

A reservation system on some routes enables commercial or tourist users to schedule their crossing time. Currently, it applies only to Anacortes/San Juan/Sidney and Coupeville/Port Townsend routes.

During development of this reservation system, WSF excluded some routes, including Fauntleroy/Vashon/Southworth. This triangle route did not make the cut because it has a high percentage of frequent and consistent users and also because the terminal here does not have a staging facility where vehicles might await their scheduled crossing.

WSF produces a long-range plan every 10 years, which is to be informed by data from origin and destination surveys done at terminals and on board vessels. These surveys typically cover purpose and frequency of travel, routes traveled, weekday or weekend, walk-on, driver or passenger, and demographic information (such as age and income level).

Surveying is done every six or seven years, most recently in 2012-14. While we await the results of new

RIDERSHIP FORECAST						
As published in WSF's 2040 Long-Range Plan						
Route Segment	Walk-on and Bike-on Passengers			Vehicles/Drivers		
	2017	2040	% Increase	2017	2040	% Increase
Fauntleroy/Vashon	890,800	1,112,000	25%	1,094,400	1,241,600	13%
Fauntleroy/Southworth	356,200	588,900	65%	556,600	663,800	19%

surveying, data from summer 2013 is still informative. Weekday ferry use then was 62.3% for work/school, 17.9% for recreation/shopping, and 19.8% for personal business/other. As you might expect, weekend use was quite different: 12.7% for work/school; 63.5% for recreation/shopping, and 23.8% for personal business/other.

Above are WSF ridership actuals and forecasts based on data from WSF's 2040 long-range plan. If the projections come to pass, approximately 1,900,000 vehicles (nearly 80% of them single occupancy) will be using the Fauntleroy terminal by 2040. That's 700,000 more vehicles than what the state determined in 1980 would be this terminal's maximum capacity.

## INFREQUENT FERRY USERS COULD BE BETTER SERVED

By Chuck Sawyer

As noted in FCA Board's May 2021 position statement, we support upgrades that will make the ferry terminal environmentally safe, seismically secure, and elevated to deal with projected sea level rise. We do not support expansion of the dock's footprint.

Our analysis of unloading and loading times during peak west-bound hours indicates that a larger dock would not provide operational efficiencies. Remember the number of passengers and vehicles that cross is a function of the size and speed of the ferries. That will not change.

Unless nearly all vehicles are pre-ticketed ("nearly" because not all ferry users are frequent travelers), the current choke point at the toll booths will remain.

We suggest WSF implement the following changes to improve service for infrequent travelers:

- Promote online ticket sales for all vehicles by offering infrequent travelers the same ticket discounts available to frequent travelers.
- Promote use of Good-to-Go! by providing the same discounts as frequent travelers have when purchasing tickets online.
- Replace the ticket booths at the dock with a booth in the vicinity of 47th Ave. SW and Fauntleroy Way SW for vehicles that are not pre-paid. The holding lane along Fauntleroy Way would then become the queue for those who had just purchased their tickets.



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# UPGRADE COULD BOTH BENEFIT, DEGRADE NEARSHORE HABITAT

By Judy Pickens, Fauntleroy Watershed Council

Nearshore habitat is critical for the many species that shelter in Fauntleroy Cove as well as for the salmon smolts that leave Fauntleroy Creek every spring to fatten before venturing into open water.

The cove is also where salmon spawners rest before entering the creek to complete their life cycle. Given that the creek usually discharges under the ferry trestle, water quality there is especially important to their success.

Goals for upgrading the Fauntleroy Ferry Terminal portend certain improvements for this nearshore habitat, but designs that Washington State Ferries (WSF) has put forward to expand the dock are likely to degrade this sensitive habitat.

## Potential improvements

An upgrade to bring trestle design up to WSF water-quality standards could keep polluted trestle runoff from entering the cove. At present, it simply runs off the side. A state-of-the-art system would collect vehicular fluids and other pollutants for responsible disposal off site.

Another upgrade to WSF's current standards would greatly reduce the number of piles supporting the trestle. Prevailing winds from the southwest push drift logs under the trestle and, when trapped, they clog the creek channel. Volunteers often need to disperse them in the fall to ensure spawner access to the mouth of the creek. With fewer piles, tidal action may disperse drift logs naturally.

## Habitat concerns

WSF is presenting options to expand the dock's vehicle holding capacity to the north or to the west. Either presents habitat concerns because of increased overwater coverage.

Studies in 1999 and 2001 concluded that overwater structures create sharp, underwater light contrasts with shade during the day and artificial lighting at night. Fish exposed to such contrasts may have increased risk of mortality because of delays in migration, loss of schooling protection, and change in migratory routes as they seek deeper water. Reduced light levels can also significantly affect marine plant distribution and abundance.

In 2002, a state study examined the effects of large overwater structures on juvenile salmon and their prey at three ferry terminals. Researchers concluded that density, diversity, and composition of bottom flora and fauna can be negatively affected by regular vessel disturbance, shading and physical disturbance, altered grain-size from propeller wash or piling.

In 2010, another state study examined if fiber-optic lighting might reduce the effects of overwater coverage by ferry terminals on juvenile salmon. Testing at the Port Townsend terminal found that such lighting had promise but could not determine if it would completely mitigate effects of coverage.

In 2019, a state study found that ferry propeller action during arrival and departure, sailing frequency, vessel size, and natural topography were sufficient to disturb gravel and cobble. Such disturbance can affect the abundance and diversity of nearshore flora and fauna.

Innovative research into premature death of salmon spawners in urban streams has found that tire-related chemicals are causing this pre-spawn mortality and that those chemicals are most concentrated in runoff from streets where speeding and braking are prevalent.

We are fortunate that, unlike in other Seattle creeks, pre-spawn mortality has not been an issue for Fauntleroy Creek's coho. However, if WSF fails to encourage single-occupancy alternatives and fails to improve

traffic flow with efficient ticketing, the result will be more speeding and braking, which will increase the risk that our salmon will die before they can spawn.



**Upgrading the ferry terminal will include installing a state-of-the-art collection system for pollutants now running off the dock into Fauntleroy Cove.** Photo by Chuck Sawyer

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# IN-PERSON ANNUAL MEETING BACK

By Mike Dey, FCA President

After two years of having our annual meeting virtually, the FCA Annual Meeting and Food Fest was back in the Fauntleroy Schoolhouse on May 3.

Business partners and other eateries providing samples of their fare were Husky Deli, Nola's Catering and Events, D-Squared, Wildwood Market, Endolyne Joe's, The Original Bakery, Indulge Desserts, The Unsweetened Tooth, and Daystar Retirement Village. Information tables represented Reading Partners, Fauntleroy Fall Festival, Morgan Junction Community Association, the Seattle Department of Transportation's Flip Your Trip program, and West Seattle Disaster Preparedness.

With safety concerns related to COVID uppermost, everyone who attended was comfortable. With the local vaccination rate just shy of 93%, we felt being in a large space would not run counter to any health advisories.

Turnout was down from our usual 200+ but was sufficiently robust for us to achieve three goals: finding a local volunteer to coordinate emergency preparedness here, identifying a membership database volunteer, and electing FCA officers for 2022.

Those leading FCA for another year are Susan Lantz-Dey, David Haggerty, Marty Westerman, Bruce Butterfield, Kris Ilgenfritz, Bill Wellington, Frank Immel, Alan Grainger, Sydney Hammerquist (membership secretary), Nils von Veh (secretary), Catherine Bailey (vice president), Alexis Zolner (treasurer) and Mike Dey (president).

We plan to host this popular event again next year.

# MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 101

By Sydney Hammerquist, Membership Chairwoman

If you are among the many members who have renewed your FCA membership for 2022, thank you!

If you haven't done so because you don't know when your renewal date is, you'll find it on the mailing label for this newsletter.

By renewing your membership annually or using our website ([fauntleroy.net](http://fauntleroy.net)) to switch to auto-renew, you'll continue to receive *Neighbors* each quarter. It's your best way to learn about projects and people, upcoming events, neighborhood history, and more.

Questions? Email [membershipfca@gmail.com](mailto:membershipfca@gmail.com).

# ON THE CALENDAR

**LINCOLN PARK WORK PARTIES:** The Friends of Lincoln Park group continues to host opportunities for volunteers to be involved in restoring and maintaining vegetation in the park. Find details and sign up at [seattle.greencitypartnerships.org/event/map/](http://seattle.greencitypartnerships.org/event/map/).

**WEST SEATTLE GARDEN TOUR:** Back after a two-year COVID hiatus, this popular tour of gardens on the Duwamish peninsula will be back for the 26th year on **Sunday, June 26, 9 am - 3 pm**. Tickets are available at [westseattlegardentour.org/tickets](http://westseattlegardentour.org/tickets) or retail locations. See the website for previews of this year's 11 gardens.

**2ND TIME SALE:** Fauntleroy Church's wildly popular annual community sale is back on the calendar! Plan on finding lots of bargains (and your neighbors) on Saturday, Sept. 17, and Sunday, Sept. 18.

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## FROM PAST TO PRESENT

# WHOLE COMMUNITY TURNED OUT TO BUILD FAUNTLEROY CHURCH

By Judy Pickens

*Long-time residents may know that the community turned out en masse to build the one-room chapel that was to become Fauntleroy Church. What is likely less well known is that the community turned out again to help build the current sanctuary 70 years ago this year.*

As formation of Seattle's residential neighborhoods shifted into high gear in the early 1900s, church leaders attempted to help fledgling congregations survive by assigning them territories. While logical at the time, this tactic assumed that neighbors shared a common theology.

Such was likely the case in early Fauntleroy. White families tended to be of Scottish and Congregational heritage, so establishing that Protestant denomination here made sense.

For Fauntleroy's first year-round residents, attending the Congregational church downtown required a somewhat perilous ride on the trolley, and parents hesitated to put their children on it. Their solution was to pool their resources to build an afternoon Sunday school on donated land in the woods by Fauntleroy Creek.

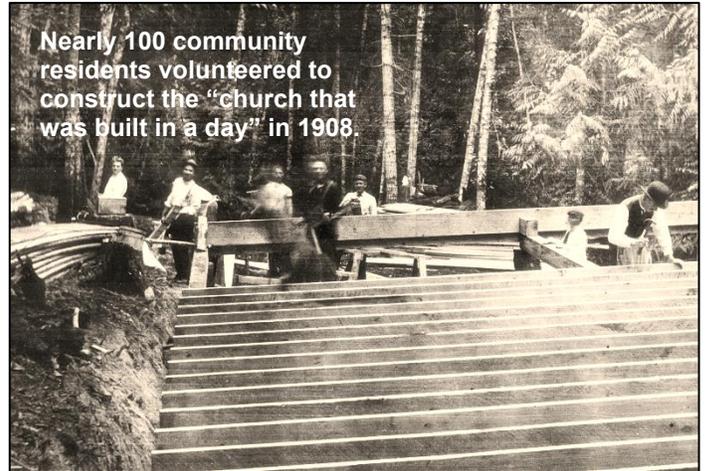
Given that this "church in the wildwood" was to seat 100, its construction was a significant undertaking. With lumber from a sawmill on SW Rose St. and tools brought from home, the men started at 5:00 on Saturday morning, July 25, 1908. According to Bill Sawyer's account, "By eight o'clock, 20 or so more men had arrived and were immediately put to work." Boys kept them supplied, the women folk brought a big lunch, and the crew grew to nearly 100.

"It is my belief that practically every man and most of the women of the community had some part in that day's work," he wrote. Shortly before the women returned with dinner, the walls were up and the rafters awaited shingling.

"Everyone went home feeling tired but happy," he concluded, "because they had worked together to build the beginning of a great church that would some day be the center of a great community."

"Fauntleroy Park Chapel" soon became "Fauntleroy Congregational Church," then "Fauntleroy Community Church." After the addition of a social room, and "the little brown church" served for another 30 years.

As World War II was winding down and Fauntleroy was about to explode with houses and babies. The



Nearly 100 community residents volunteered to construct the "church that was built in a day" in 1908.



Work parties were the norm in 1951 to build the sanctuary wing.

congregation dug deep to raise \$230,000 to build an ample facility, starting with the present 7,300 sq. ft. sanctuary wing.

The only way to build so much for so little (even in today's dollars) was to rely on volunteers to donate time and skills over many months. In 1951, the contractor set to work on major tasks while upwards of 60 people from the congregation and wider community worked evenings and weekends to do other essential work.

Member Roy Morse wrote, "Many a friendship was started while these men and women were using a shovel, a paint brush, or a screwdriver, or while serving coffee and doughnuts." Some volunteers decided to join the church after getting well acquainted during work parties.

In 1986, the congregation voted to drop "community" from their name; many members still live nearby but the church has a broader geographic reach. Its spectrum of beliefs is also much broader than a century ago.

What has not changed is the church's major presence in the Fauntleroy community. It has housed the YMCA since 1924 and provides both indoor and outdoor space for many community activities. While custodians and contractors now do major maintenance, volunteers continue to be essential to maintaining the 41,000 sq. ft. facility and its grounds.



# TRAFFIC CONCERNS CONTINUED ON FRONT BURNER THIS SPRING

By FCA President Mike Dey

Where is summer? I know it doesn't start here until July 5 but I thought last summer's early arrival might be a part of global warming that we would see again. Guess not. I'm ready for more sunshine and warmth, even though I appreciate that the rain fills our reservoirs.

This cool spring hasn't dampened FCA's advocacy on behalf of the neighborhood. While the high bridge remains out of service, we have had several interactions with the Seattle Department of Transportation, raising your concerns about cut-throughs on side streets, speeding, pedestrian safety, and the like.

We've made some progress but cannot make more until we see what impact reopening the high bridge will have on traffic that's been detouring from the ferry terminal and north end of West Seattle to reach the 1st Avenue South bridge.

The other major issue keeping us busy is proposed expansion of the ferry dock. As the articles dominating this newsletter attest, we consider expanding the dock a bad idea for not only Fauntleroy and West Seattle but also for Vashon and Southworth ferry users needing more efficient service. I encourage you to read these articles and send me any comments you have.

I hope the recent uptick in COVID numbers is near its



peak but please remain vigilant. Our high vaccination rate here does not guarantee protection.

I encourage you to join me in respecting people's personal space, wearing a mask in crowded areas with little ventilation, and getting your booster shot so that we can all enjoy summer, whenever it arrives.

## FCA LEADERSHIP

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Catherine Bailey, vice president

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