



# San Juan County, Washington

## Engagement Island: How San Juan County Brought Citizens Together



Increased online engagement for highly dispersed population of 18,000

1000+

residents responded to public works survey

2,300

visits to 32-Hour Work Week project



Increased Spanish engagement on surveys

### OVERVIEW

The Public Works Department of San Juan County, WA, needed a way to engage a geographically dispersed population to enact programs that benefit everyone – not just a vocal minority.

### SITUATION | CONNECTING CITIZENS A LITERAL SEA APART

Made up of more than 170 islands, residents often identify more with their home island than the county at large.

“We heard from residents on social media, but also understood that only represented a small part of the population,” said Erin Wygant, the county’s communications coordinator. “We wanted something where everyone interested could participate.”

### SOLUTION | DIRECTLY REACH OUT TO CITIZENS VIA A DEDICATED ONLINE PORTAL

San Juan County Public Works created a project page with Granicus EngagementHQ to connect with citizens. The department posted a survey, “How should San Juan County prioritize Public Works projects?” that was live for over a month. Each section asked questions about facility use, general condition, desire for improvements, and Road Fund usage.

“The engagement site allowed us to focus on a single set of topics and get the wide swath of responses we wanted to make an informed decision,” Wygant said. “We gathered real input to understand our residents better and be transparent in the department’s decisions.”

### RESULTS | SEA CHANGE: SURVEY LEADS TO ACTION

The survey identified four key areas for improvement:

- Motorists, bikers, and pedestrians were all concerned about narrow shoulders, limited visibility, and accessibility.
- Existing shoulders were considered unsafe or not suitable.
- Citizens wanted investment in trails, non-motorized corridors, and infrastructure over culvert replacement and general maintenance.
- Respondents supported the maintenance of marine facilities regardless of personal use.

### MUST HAVE SOLUTION

EngagementHQ

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Erin Wygant  
San Juan County  
Communications Coordinator