

JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING #4

Wednesday, September 7, 2022

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. (Virtual)

Attendees:

Committee Members: Councilmember Kim Daughtry (Lake Stevens), Mayor Cassie Franklin (Everett), Mayor Joe Marine (Mukilteo), Councilmember Tom Merrill (Snohomish), Council President Brenda Stonecipher (Everett), Councilmember Ben Zarlingo (Everett)

Staff: Roland Behee (CT), Nick Harper (Everett), Tom Hingson (Everett), Ric Ilgenfritz (CT), Maureen Nikonov (Everett), Deb Osborne (CT)

Facilitator: John Howell (Cedar River Group)

Meeting topics:

- This meeting was originally intended for discussing fleets and facilities, but we are not ready to talk about transfer of capital assets yet.
- We will use this meeting to talk about the two conversations we've had with the ET and CT ATU leadership groups instead.

Joint Policy Committee Timeline - updated

Roland provided an update to the project schedule:

- ET provided CT with facility assessment documents and both agencies will be meeting to clarify recommendations.
- We'd like to add a meeting to the schedule and come back next month with more information on fleets and facilities, and then follow up in November on recommendations on the following:
 - Fare policy
 - Branding – what happens to the ET brand and how will service be reflected
- We will move forward on these issues with our marketing and communications staff and there will be opportunities later to engage intentionally with the public on this process.
- We anticipate we will be ready next year with the draft integrated service plan. Community engagement will be robust to ensure we're delivering value for customers and stakeholders. We want to incorporate any changes and then come back with a final recommendation on the potential service plan in April.
- At that point we will be in the final closing phases of this part of the process and putting together the draft plan for agencies to review and make decisions about moving forward.

Regarding service planning:

- There was a WSDOT transit coordination grant we were encouraged to apply for and we were awarded \$500k. We are using about half to secure Nelson Nygaard for the integrated network plan scope and the rest will be applied to further studies. This grant

will be administrated by CT, but ET's staff helped solidify the scope and there was unanimous agreement on the preferred firm. We anticipate a closely coordinated process as we move forward with Nelson Nygaard and the work on a potential service plan.

- We will make sure to leverage the earlier work done during the Rethink Transit phase and use transit markets and services data, with changing travel patterns and service levels. CT's plan to integrate with Lynnwood Link in 2024 will also be incorporated into the baseline. Research will be very important when we develop the draft network. We want to give a clear sense of what this could mean for the average person living in Everett.
- We want easy to understand metrics, showing impacts all across the network, and demonstrating the value to all stakeholders.
- We've outlined a very robust public process with Nelson Nygaard's help to ensure equitable engagement.
- Finally, we'll have the final report. We need to identify a clear service plan that everybody can understand. This will not only be lines on a map, but possibly alternative service zones as we look into on-demand transportation as well. There may be portions of overlay, or independent service, depending on the geography. This will be both a challenge and a new opportunity to describe a service to the public they are not yet familiar with.

Union Discussions:

Since our last meeting, we held our first formal, separate conversations with representatives from both ET and CT's unions about this process. Participants included senior managers from each agency, union leaders and facilitators. We reviewed the process, schedule and work completed to-date and gathered concerns and thoughts.

Everett Transit (ATU 883):

- Lots of strong opinions and passion at the meeting. Several issues emerged from this conversation, including general company culture, working conditions, seniority, credibility of maintaining service levels, paratransit/DART, governance structure. Staff reviewed the meeting notes with the committee members.
- ATU 883 would like regular conversations, once a month or every other month. ET wanted to wait until labor negotiations were over, so the two conversations weren't mixed together, but ATU 883 was disappointed that this was the first time they were engaged.
- The goal was to ensure ATU 883 understands this potential consolidation is a real possibility. The idea of merging has been around for so long that many dismiss it or think it will go away. We want the union representatives to be thinking more about what their concerns are, what do they want preserved, and what problems can be solved if the consolidation moves ahead.

Community Transit (ATU 1576):

- The biggest piece of the conversation with ATU 1576 was about the role of the international union in discussions about potential consolidation, and what role they would play in facilitating discussions about the resolution of seniority issues.
- ATU 1576 will be reaching out to the international union staff.
- ATU 1576's president alluded to the official at the international level who has relationships with both locals. There's a process to be determined on how to productively engage both locals with the international.
- Once it's time to discuss how consolidation could move forward, they expect management's input on how to deploy the drivers and engage the employees.
- They would like to meet regularly.

Discussion:

- The committee would like to have further discussion about paratransit service. In the past the Everett Council has discussed the long-term sustainability of paratransit services. There should be discussion about how to provide sustainable paratransit service over time, and how a consolidation would impact that service.
- This discussion about paratransit services should take place and it would require a public process should any changes be considered.
- We need to have conversations about governance structure and how it would work in a consolidated system, and how to memorialize any agreements regarding governance. Staff at both agencies can start thinking about these ideas.
- Without good information, it's easy for consolidation to seem like "absorption." The work that is being done needs to help employees understand the benefits and security that could come from a merger. There will be opportunities on both sides, but employees need concrete data they can physically see and understand. In the short term, it could cost money to ensure nobody loses anything, but in the long term, this will create opportunities. We need to do the homework and figure out how a consolidation could work and then share this information openly. Until then it will be difficult to have conversations with employees.
- The unions were very interested in the timeline for the service plan proposal and want to be involved and help. We need to find ways to include the union in designing the outcome. It is a lot easier to create change when people have ownership in the decision.
- ATU 883 has been in existence a lot longer than 1576. The presumption is the bigger union is the bigger body, but in seniority terms, that local number means something, or we are at least waiting on the international to clarify this, so this will be critical in helping both unions understand how everything fits together. It's our job to show them, and everyone, what potential opportunities are here that are being overlooked.
- The proposed service network, compensation and benefits are the kind of information we need to provide the unions with to paint a picture on how we can keep people whole. This will be very important in addressing trust issues and creating a comfort level going forward.

Next steps:

- Continue meeting with both unions and report back to the JPC on upcoming meetings.
- Learn more about the process that will be led by the international union reps and the potential role for both ET and CT management in that process.
- Both agencies have additional unions that need to be engaged. Although a smaller fraction, they are both important partners and represent a piece of the puzzle regarding how the unions would be affected by a consolidation.
- Schedule an October meeting to discuss fleets/facilities.