

Sound Transit Citizen Oversight Panel Virtual Meeting Summary

August 4, 2021

COP Members Present: Scott Lampe, James Peyton, Helen Powell, Larry Sauvé, Joe Scorcio

COP Members Absent: Fred Auch, Paul Thompson

Others Present: Kathy Albert, Katie Flores, Adam Montee

Procurement and Contracts Division (the Division) Update

- Ted Lucas – Chief Procurement and Contracts Officer
- April Alexander – Deputy Chief Procurement and Contracts Officer

Ted Lucas and April Alexander gave an update on the work of the Division, which is responsible for the procurement and administration of all Agency purchases and contracts. In recognition of its role, the Division has received the Pareto Award of Excellence in Public Procurement, the highest such award available nationally.

The Division's framework is governed by state and federal regulations, Board resolutions, and Agency policies articulated in a Procurement and Contract Administration Manual that is updated regularly. The Division is organized into four general sections: materials, technology, and services (MTS), design and construction (D&C), systems and operations (S&O), and agency agreements. The MTS section is responsible for the procurement of goods and services contracts and post award contract administration, as well as the Agency's small and micro purchase programs and Memberships and Sponsorships programs. The D&C section is responsible for the procurement of design and construction contracts and post award contract administration. The S&O section provides operational services and support for the various systems used by the entire Agency. The Agency agreements section processes interlocal, intergovernmental, and third-party agreements, as well as transit-oriented development projects. In addition, a technical advisor collaborates with external agencies and organizations to strengthen and improve project delivery processes for the Agency's capital expansion program.

A Board resolution effective February 19, 2019, granted the CEO authority to approve up to \$5 million for competitively procured design and construction contracts, and up to \$2 million for competitively procured materials, technology, and other services contracts. These increases improved the efficiency of the Board's work, as well as that of the Agency's executive directors.

The Division supports the Agency's commitment to procurement integrity through mandatory training for all employees who participate in the procurement process. A ten-page curriculum has been developed for the program, which is a model for other public and private entities. Employees receive updated training every two years, or prior to their participation in specific procurement processes.

The Agency began moving toward implementation of fully electronic and paperless processes prior to the onset of the pandemic. SharePoint and similar programs help manage work electronically, bids and proposals are submitted electronically, and pre-bid meetings and proposals are fully virtual. The Division continues to play an active role in the process, which is now focused on establishing 100 percent paperless records.

The Division also plays a key role in the Agency's commitments to continuous process improvement and equity, diversity, and inclusion. Employee engagement has been a particular focus over the past year and

a half, when remote work has been mandatory for most of the staff. At the time of the briefing, the first safely distanced, in-person gathering since the pandemic had been scheduled at a Renton park, and was eagerly anticipated.

Passenger Experience Office (the Office) Update

- Russ Arnold – Chief Passenger Experience Officer

Russ Arnold provided additional information as follow up to a June 16, 2021, COP update on the rider experience and operations metrics dashboard. Passenger focus is a core Agency value. The Office began with a staff of 1.5 FTE and has grown to just over 30 FTE, responsible for passenger services, wayfinding and signage, and research and innovation. The Office collaborates on numerous Agency initiatives, including passenger metrics and research, performance metrics, fare engagement, NextGen ORCA, station naming, and restroom policies.

Facilitating simplicity as passengers move through stations is a key objective of the Office. Various personas have been developed and tested for regular, occasional, and first-time riders, which include a number of characteristics such as persons with disabilities, limited English proficiency, tourists, seniors, and other characteristics that frame rider needs. Outcomes are used to further the passenger focus, including through station design, simplified signage and line naming, pay station identification, and fare collection policies, including the responsibilities and attire of fare Ambassadors.

Discussion

Procurement and Contracts Division – COP members noted the strong presentation from an excellent team. The Division’s commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion was commended.

Passenger Experience Office – COP members were delighted to see the signage improvements underway, which will improve station access for all riders. The use of various personas is an excellent means through which to continue improving the passenger experience. To maximize its effectiveness, the Office should be involved as early in the design process as possible.

The summary of the July 21, 2021, virtual COP meeting was approved.

Member Reports

Helen Powell described a recent, disturbing bus ride she’d taken that involved a passenger who wasn’t following the required mask protocols. The incident raised questions about how such situations should be addressed. Staff will follow up.

2021 Focus Areas

- Adequacy and appropriateness of station access, including use of emerging technologies
- Monitoring and review of social equity, racial equity, fare enforcement, and inclusion policies
- Uses of peer comparison data
- Asset management plan progress
- Reliability and availability of federal, state, local, and third-party funding sources
- Customer experience focused metrics across the RTA region and transit agencies within it
- COVID-19, contingency planning, and disaster preparedness
- Program realignment, interagency cooperation and interoperability

- Coordination with local jurisdictions to mitigate impacts of unauthorized parking around stations

Outstanding Questions

Processes to address riders who fail to follow required COVID-19 protocols.

Next Virtual Meeting: Wednesday, August 18, 8:30 – 11:00 AM