

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – ISSUE REVIEW**

January 9, 2013

**Subject**

Game Day Service Policy

**District Staff**

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**Background**

The King County Ferry District (KCFD), West Seattle Water Taxi route began providing extended service on weekday Game Days<sup>1</sup> beginning in 2010. This Sunday through Thursday Game Day extended service included expenses (labor and fuel net of increased farebox revenue) for providing water taxi service through the end of the game. At the time of adoption, only the Seattle Mariners had Sunday-Thursday games that ended late enough to require schedule accommodation.

With subsequent years, the game schedules for the Seattle Sounders and Seattle Seahawks schedules included Monday through Friday games that required accommodation in the West Seattle Water Taxi schedule. Furthermore, in 2012, college football was played at CenturyLink field while the Husky Stadium was undergoing renovations.

Using their general schedule setting authority as provided for in Section 3.2.1 of the adopted Interlocal Agreement between KCFD and King County, as well as the policy precedent established in the adoption of FD2009-23, which adopted the 2010 budget and included a complete schedule of service with the provision of extended service for Game Days, the Marine Division has accommodated the above mention Sunday-Thursday Game Day schedule impacts.

Furthermore, the adopted 2013 budget and schedule of service (FD2012-11), as attached to Attachment A: 2013 Work Plan included expenses and revenues associated accommodation of extended service for Seattle Mariners, Seattle Seahawks and Seattle Sounders Game Day service.

To date, the KCFD has not adopted a policy on Game Day service to guide the Marine Division's service planning. As such, the KCFD included the following expenditure restriction in FD2012-11:

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<sup>1</sup> Friday and Saturday games were already included as the schedule of service for Fridays and Saturdays included regularly scheduled water taxi service late enough to accommodate game end times.

"Of the operating budget, no funds may be expended for Sunday through Thursday game day service extended sailings until the King County Ferry District approves a policy on game day service"

This expenditure restriction has the effect of limiting the expenditure of approximately \$30,000 until a Game Day service policy is adopted.

The Marine Division has proposed a policy statement for consideration by the KCFD:

The Extended Service policy provides additional sailings on Sunday through Thursday nights during the summer sailing schedule for evening home games at Century Link and Safeco Field stadiums. Extended service is offered for the Seattle Mariners, Seattle Sounders, and Seattle Seahawks games. Extended service is not considered for games during the winter sailing schedule. Any additional sporting or special events played at these venues would be submitted for approval on a case-by-case basis to the Ferry District Chair.

**Extended service** is defined as a period of time in which sailings are added to the regular schedule, which includes additional labor and fuel.

### **Analysis**

While there was a variety of questions about the provision of Game Day service, staff found that the Board approved the concepts of Game Day service through explicit statements in their approved 2010 Annual Work Plan. At the time, Game Day service was focused on Seattle Mariners games at Safeco Field.

In 2010, there were personal and policy staff discussions with the Marine Division regarding the inclusion of Sounders games. Staff understood the discussion to be focused on the existing schedule and remaining cost neutral. With no Executive Committee action or formal proposal documentation, it is reasonable to believe that Ferry District staff and Marine Division staff had different understandings of the outcomes of those discussions. The result in practical terms, however, appears to be the addition of Century Link Field (formerly Qwest Field) games to the extended schedule.

For previous years, the Seahawks schedule did not align with much need for extended service. With the addition of Husky Football to Century Link Field and more visibility of the Seahawks (the NFL granted them a more visible schedule, not just Saturday and Sunday afternoon games), Century Link Field service manifested itself in a more prominent way for the West Seattle Water Taxi schedule.

For 2012 (through September), ridership during the extended service periods of time is shown in the attached chart. The total extended service costs were budgeted at approximately \$30,000 per year (fuel and labor combined). For this time period, there was six Century Link Field Events, which had costs of approximately \$3,500 and generated approximately \$5,000 of farebox revenue, with significant levels of ridership. In hindsight, it can be said that the extended service for Century Link Field games has generated sufficient revenue to be cost neutral.

### **2013 Budget Implications**

The 2013 proposed budget includes the provision of Game Day service for all scheduled baseball, soccer and football games that may occur Sunday through Thursday, during the peak sailing season of April through October. The total expenditure is budgeted at approximately \$30,000 and farebox revenue is estimated at \$16,000-\$21,000 (revenue estimate based on 2012 ridership).

Based on 2012 experience, extended service schedule implications for the 2013 proposed budget include (estimates only):

#### **Soccer and Football games**

- Expenses - \$3,000-\$5,000
- Revenues - \$4,000-\$8,000

#### **Baseball games**

- Expenses - \$25,000-\$27,000
- Revenues - \$8,000-\$13,000

#### **Estimated combined farebox recovery for the extended service<sup>2</sup>**

- 42% - 65%

### **Options**

**Option 1:** Approve a policy, as recommended by the Marine Division, to provide Sunday through Thursday extended service for Seattle Mariners, Seattle Seahawks and Seattle Sounders Game Days. (no budget action necessary)

**Option 2:** Direct staff to prepare an amendment to the 2013 budget to remove some or all Sunday-Thursday extended service for Game Day service.

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<sup>2</sup> Farebox recovery for extended service is calculated by dividing estimated additional expenses over regular service delivery divided by estimated additional farebox revenue.

