

July 15, 2026

Mayor Cassie Franklin
2930 Wetmore Avenue, Suite 10-A
Everett, WA 98201

Dear Mayor Franklin:

A consolidation of Everett Transit with Community Transit presents a tremendous opportunity for increasing and improving transit service in Everett.

The Rethink Transit and More Transit Together studies demonstrated consolidation would more than double the number of stops with at least 15-minute frequency.

Number of Bus Stops with at Least 15 minute frequency in 2036

Funding Scenarios	0.6% Sales Tax	0.9% Sales Tax	1.2% Sales Tax & Consolidation
At Peak	225	349	593
Midday	219	330	590

Source: Rethink Transit Study, Presentation to Everett City Council, Jan. 27, 2021

This is huge. As transit policy expert Jarrett Walker says, “Frequency is Freedom.” Walker explains, “High frequency means transit is coming soon, which means that it approximates the feeling of liberty you have with your private vehicle – that you can go anytime.”¹

Improving transit is an essential strategy towards the City of Everett’s transportation future. As light rail arrives, the city will need excellent local transit service to connect people to the train. Better local transit service will allow people to ditch their car and instead ride the bus to rail. This will reduce the need to provide expensive parking garages near transit (at a cost of \$100,000 to \$150,000 per stall), and instead prioritize land near light rail for housing and jobs, further increasing ridership.

Improved local transit services will also help Everett fully realize its potential as a metropolitan city. The natural space efficiency of transit means the city will be able to accommodate more people traveling on the public right-of-way, and accommodate more housing and commercial space.

The Rethink Transit study’s findings on access to jobs reinforce the importance of improving transit service to the city’s economic growth. The study found that the number of jobs within 30 minutes only grows 11 percent with an increase of the sales tax to 0.9%, but consolidation brings a whopping 45 percent increase in job access.

¹ See Jarrett Walker, *Basics: The Transit Ridership Recipe*, HUMAN TRANSIT, <https://humantransit.org/basics/the-transit-ridership-recipe>.

Number of Jobs Available to an Everett resident with a 30-minute transit ride in 2036

Funding Scenarios	0.6% Sales Tax	0.9% Sales Tax	1.2% Sales Tax & Consolidation
Jobs	52,800	58,600	76,300

Source: Rethink Transit Study, Presentation to Everett City Council, Jan. 27, 2021

If the transit improvements and job access gains contemplated by the Rethink Transit and More Transit Together studies are realized, a doubling of the sales tax is well worth the investment.

Community members have raised questions about whether Everett's tax dollars may support service elsewhere in the county rather than service in the city. As a baseline measure, Everett Transit provides one revenue service hour for every \$190 of sales tax revenue whereas Community Transit provides one revenue service hour for every \$307 — a difference of 38 percent.²

Thus, to maximize the opportunity presented by consolidation, it's important that the City of Everett enter into a strong interlocal agreement.

Recommendations

To fully realize the benefits of consolidation, I recommend the following actions be taken.

1. Enter into a Strong Interlocal Agreement

At the foundation of the relationship needs to be an interlocal agreement (ILA) with strong mechanisms to ensure the agreement is more than a list of hopes and dreams but is instead a legal framework to which the City of Everett can hold Community Transit accountable.

Although the City of Everett will no longer control the budget of its transit service, Community Transit will still operate across the city's public right-of-way as a privilege. The City can condition the ILA based on this privilege. In addition, while the build-out of the *Swift* Gold and Silver lines present a significant opportunity to improve the mobility and safety of Broadway and Casino Road, these projects are also key leverage points

2. Commit to Rethink Transit Service Levels

The best way to ensure Everett taxpayers' dollars are not peanut-buttered across the whole county is to stipulate in the ILA that Community Transit will meet the 2036 service hours projections outlined in the Rethink Transit Study. This should include the study's estimated percentage of bus stops with 15-minute service in 2036.

² Ratios derived from the six-year transit development plans of the agencies, factoring fixed-route transit, paratransit, and microtransit.

3. Untangle the Downtown Transit Knot

Frequency is Freedom, but there are also other important factors for great transit service, such as the time it takes someone to get from where they are to their destination. Today, several Everett Transit routes take circuitous paths winding through the streets of downtown and Everett Station. This adds several minutes to transit trips that should be quick and easy, especially those trips that are meant to go *through* downtown.

Snotrac hosted Jarrett Walker as a guest speaker in 2023 and I specifically asked him about this situation. His recommendation was to unwind the knot and instead rely on a grid-based transit network for downtown and the station, enabling quick transfers between north-south and east-west routes.

This can easily be accomplished by increasing the frequency of the Route 6 to at least 10-minute headways, providing a solid east-west connection from the Waterfront to Downtown to Everett Station to the Riverfront. This would allow the rest of the routes to be straightened out with a true north-south orientation, including Routes 4, 7, 8, 18, 19, and 29.

The ILA will not spell out the exact knot untangling,³ but the ILA should express a commitment to making it happen through service planning efforts in 2027.

4. Restructure the Board

The governance structure to Community Transit is one of the most important considerations for whether and how the City of Everett can maximize the benefits of consolidation. Governance is the most direct method to maintain accountability.

If the City of Everett is added to the Community Transit geography, the city would represent 14 percent of the overall population within the agency's boundaries. Within an agency board of nine members, Everett's population size should entitle the city to one board member.

But the City of Everett should take this moment as an opportunity for even greater governance reform. Today, the agency board is split between Large, Medium, and Small city representatives and two county representatives.

This structure creates significant potential risk of underrepresentation of community needs by geography. For example, Mountlake Terrace and Mukilteo (Medium cities) have more in common with Lynnwood and Edmonds (Large cities) than they do with Arlington (a fellow Medium city). Instead of grouping cities by their size, the cities should be grouped by their proximity to each other. Otherwise there's a risk that 100% of the board members could be from outside of Southeast County or 100% could be within Southeast County — neither of which meets basic principles of apportionment for democratic representation.

If there are nine districts, each district should have approximately 85,000 people. City and county councilmembers could still be the designated individuals to serve on the board, and appointments could be made nearly the same way as done today.

³ For a concept of an "untangled transit knot," see attachment A.

While making this change to the board, the agency should also include the two additional community members now allowed to serve on the board, pursuant to House Bill 1418 (adopted in 2025).⁴ The legislation was approved on a bipartisan basis, including all Democratic legislators from Snohomish County, as well as Senators Goehner, Muzzall, and Wagoner, and Representatives Eslick and Low.

Under HB 1418, public transportation benefit area agencies such as Community Transit can expand their boards to eleven positions by adding one representative who is transit-reliant and one representative from an organization that serves transit-reliant communities. These positions would be appointed by the other board members, so there is little risk for disruptive wild-card individuals joining the board.

Adding these community member positions will help ensure that the governing body includes people who are deeply committed to transit as a service and not just serving due to a general personal interest in civic involvement. In addition, adding these positions would create the possibility for additional individuals from Everett to serve on the Board.

5. Transparency & Accountability

Today, Everett Transit's director reports directly to the mayor — or at least to a deputy position to the mayor. While this direct report will be lost with consolidation, there are other important ways that Community Transit can show it's being responsive to its new taxpayers.

- Attend and provide a regular report at every monthly meeting of the Everett Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), just as Everett Transit does today.
- Provide quarterly briefings to the city council's built environment committee.
- Provide an annual briefing to the full Everett City Council.

6. People with Disabilities and Older Age

Paratransit riders love Everett Transit. Based on the anecdotal stories told to Snotrac over the years, many riders believe Everett Transit's paratransit drivers provide a personal touch and a care for their passengers to a greater degree than TransDev-managed DART drivers. This personal touch will not be easily replicated nor enforced through an ILA.

Many Everett paratransit riders already use DART for trips outside of the city. They report trips that are longer, as TransDev tends to include more passengers on each DART trip, resulting in longer rides that take more time. DART riders have also reported more challenges in getting their return trips from medical appointments fulfilled.

I know these are quality concerns that Community Transit staff are working hard to correct. The City of Everett should set high expectations that these challenges are addressed, and

⁴ House Bill 1418 (2025),
<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1418&Year=2025&Initiative=False>

hold the agency accountable through the ILA, the governance changes, and regular reporting to TAC and city council.

There are two additional issues of the DART/Paratransit service that have not yet been discussed enough.

First, the fare for Everett Transit's Paratransit service is \$2, whereas Community Transit's DART fare is \$2.50. While this may not seem like a significant difference, the vast majority of people with disabilities have very low incomes. The ORCA LIFT and Regional Reduced Fare Permit (RRFP) programs do not apply to paratransit services. It is objectively not fair that a more able-bodied individual can get an ORCA LIFT card to pay \$1 per trip or an RRFP to pay \$0 per trip, and yet a more disabled and less economically advantaged individual must pay a full fare of \$2.50. I encourage the ILA to stipulate that the LIFT and RRFP programs will apply to DART moving forward.

Second, Everett Transit provides paratransit for anyone age 65 and up, not just people with disabilities. One of the federal requirements for operating paratransit service is that an agency's paratransit eligibility policy must be the same across the entire service area. Thus, Community Transit will be hard-pressed to continue this service for older adults in Everett. The ILA should stipulate alternative services to be explored, such as Community Transit implementing one of the following:

- Contract with Homage Senior Services to provide door-to-door services for older adults in Everett. Homage already ostensibly is funded by the county and state to provide door-to-door service for all adults over age 55 who are low-income in the county, except where Community Transit and Everett Transit already provide such service. Their funding is quite limited, however, so they would need additional financial assistance to expand their service levels in Everett to serve the older adults currently carried by Everett Transit Paratransit.
- Create a citywide Zip microtransit service that is only for older adults and people with disabilities. While Community Transit would still provide DART service in Everett, an additional age- and ability-restricted Zip service would be an even better and most cost effective alternative to DART for many riders.

7. Integrate Design Teams for *Swift* Gold and Silver Lines

Over the next decade, Community Transit will design and implement two revolutionary infrastructure and service projects in Everett: the *Swift* Gold and Silver lines. Both projects could change the fabric of the city, how we get around, and the economic development and character along these corridors. To fully realize the potential of these projects, the projects need a fully integrated design team with Everett Public Works and Planning, working alongside Community Transit staff.

The current structure of Community Transit staff and consultants bringing iterations of the corridor designs to interagency meetings is insufficient and creates potential risk. These corridors will need significant investment by the city (and state and federal grants) in

improved sidewalks, intersections, watermains, and paving, as well as development code updates for new standards for curbcuts, setbacks, lighting, landscaping, storefront design, etc. For the city to plan, fund, and build at the necessary scale for Broadway and Casino Road, the city must be planning the corridor as a co-equal to Community Transit..

The lack of a strong city presence in the envisioning of the corridor and in the community engagement strategy also presents a large political risk. Without clear channels for the community to share their hopes and dreams for the corridors in a context that is bigger than transit (including housing, jobs, parks, character, and public safety), community members may turn in opposition to these much needed transit projects.

The ILA should specify a stronger role for the City of Everett in the *Swift* projects moving forward.

8. Commit to responding to the community needs

With the closure of Fred Meyer, Everett Transit and the mayor's office did a superb job in proactively working with the Casino Road community to meet their needs — including making the Route 12 fare free and adding a shuttle service to help increase access to other nearby groceries and general shopping centers . With the knowledge that this level of attention to a neighborhood need is less likely to happen in a larger agency, the ILA should emphasize the expectation that this retail-touch to community needs should continue.

9. Commit to Local Partnerships, including Snotrac and Everett Station District BIA

Everett Transit has been a superb local partner, including serving as a match contributor toward Snotrac's state grants (both through in-kind office space and financial contributions), and as a ratepayer in the Everett Station District BIA. Should Community Transit no longer contribute Everett Transit's payments to the Everett Station District BIA, ambassador services for keeping the neighborhood clean and safe would significantly diminish. Likewise, should Community Transit no longer honor Everett Transit's match share toward Snotrac's grants, our ability to coordinate conversations on transportation issues across the county and to provide bilingual mobility navigation and travel training services in South Everett would diminish. It's important these contributions continue and be specified in the ILA.

10. Use CTR Program to Support Local Community Development Efforts

Managed by Everett Transit, the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program is a key tool for affecting the behavior of people to carpool, bus, bike, or walk instead of drive to work. It's also one of the key relationship points-of-contact that the city has with its largest employers.

I encourage the city to maintain this relationship with its largest employers while building supportive local institutions for community development. Proven models exist in Seattle, Bellevue, Redmond, and Tacoma for (A) maintaining relationships with their large employers and (B) supporting new commercial and residential development through

transportation demand management (TDM) strategies that lessen the need for building parking, thereby lowering development costs.

These cities contract with local transportation management organizations (respectively, Commute Seattle, Connect Bellevue, Move Redmond, and Tacoma On the Go), who lead the cities CTR programs and also provide city-mandated TDM services at new residential and commercial buildings. This is how the region's biggest cities do this work, and Everett should too.

In Everett, Snotrac and Stations Unidos share a closer working relationship. As a community development corporation, Stations Unidos is working to support transit-oriented development, both through its own real estate projects and by supporting projects of others. Snotrac has built a strong bilingual mobility navigation program that could be easily tailored to provide CTR services to large employers and TDM services to new development.

As new development occurs throughout the city, Snotrac and Stations Unidos want to help the city and the developers reduce the cost of development by building fewer parking spaces. But to justify fewer parking spaces, additional strategies need to be deployed to enable people to walk, bike, and bus — such as providing free ORCA passes, creating bike social groups, and holding commuter competitions.

Contracting with Snotrac and/or Stations Unidos to conduct the CTR program positions the city to maintain good relationships with its largest employers while also supporting the emergence of Stations Unidos as a community development corporation that's working in partnership with the city to facilitate transit-oriented development throughout the city.

11. Commit to TOD

With the transfer of ownership of properties from Everett Transit to Community Transit, it's important that the agency remains committed to the vision of the 2018 Metro Everett Plan and the "community hub" concept of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan to build TOD. There are transit-owned properties at both Everett Station and at the future light rail station of Southwest Everett Industrial that could be considered for redevelopment. I encourage a simple policy statement in the ILA that states Community Transit desires maximizing housing and jobs on and adjacent to its properties, especially near high-capacity transit, and potentially supporting development through shared-use parking agreements.

The consolidation of Community Transit and Everett Transit is a historic opportunity. Let's make the most of it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brock", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brock Howell, Executive Director

Snohomish County Transportation Coalition
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206-856-4788

Attachment A

Example of restructured Everett Transit routes to untangle the downtown transit knot

UNTANGLE THE KNOT

The map illustrates the Mukilteo Light Rail network with 11 distinct routes, each represented by a different color and numbered 1 through 11. The routes are as follows:

- Route 1 (Blue):** Connects the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal to the Seaway Transit Center via Harborview Park and Japanese Gulch.
- Route 2 (Red):** Connects the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal to the Seaway Transit Center via Boxcar Park and Gran Ave Park.
- Route 3 (Orange):** Connects the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal to the Seaway Transit Center via Boxcar Park and Gran Ave Park.
- Route 4 (Green):** Connects the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal to the Seaway Transit Center via Boxcar Park and Gran Ave Park.
- Route 5 (Purple):** Connects the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal to the Seaway Transit Center via Boxcar Park and Gran Ave Park.
- Route 6 (Brown):** Connects the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal to the Seaway Transit Center via Boxcar Park and Gran Ave Park.
- Route 7 (Pink):** Connects the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal to the Seaway Transit Center via Boxcar Park and Gran Ave Park.
- Route 8 (Yellow):** Connects the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal to the Seaway Transit Center via Boxcar Park and Gran Ave Park.
- Route 9 (Light Blue):** Connects the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal to the Seaway Transit Center via Boxcar Park and Gran Ave Park.
- Route 10 (Light Green):** Connects the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal to the Seaway Transit Center via Boxcar Park and Gran Ave Park.
- Route 11 (Light Purple):** Connects the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal to the Seaway Transit Center via Boxcar Park and Gran Ave Park.

Key locations and landmarks shown on the map include:

- Stations:** Mukilteo Ferry Terminal, College Station, Seaway Transit Center, South Everett Freeway Station, Mariner Park & Ride, McCollum Park & Ride.
- Landmarks:** Mukilteo Lighthouse Park, Japanese Gulch, Paine Field Airport, Silver Lake, Haugen Homestead Park.
- Streets:** W Mukilteo Blvd, Harborview Blvd, Seaway Blvd, Airport Rd, 100th St SW, 112th St SW, 120th St SW, 128th St, 116th St SE, 132nd St.
- Parks:** Boxcar Park, Gran Ave Park, Howarth Park, Forest Park, Johnston-Kelly Park, Hannabrook Park, Phil Johnson Ballfields, Merrill Creek Pkwy, Seaway Park, Kaasch Park Athletic Complex, McCollum Park Athletic Field.

A compass rose in the bottom left corner indicates North (N) and a scale bar shows distances in miles (0 to 1 mile).



This hypothetical untangling includes a renumber of the routes. For example, the current Route 6 is renumbered as the Route 2 in these maps. Odd numbers are used for north-south routes, and even numbers for east-west routes. With a consolidation with Community Transit, it's likely that the new route numbers will follow the agency's convention of using the 200 series to denote local routes.