

Minutes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
August 16, 2017

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sullivan called the August 16, 2017, meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority to order at 5:31 p.m., at the administrative offices of Intercity Transit.

Members Present: Chair and City of Tumwater Councilmember Debbie Sullivan; Vice Chair and Citizen Representative Karen Messmer; City of Lacey Councilmember Virgil Clarkson; Citizen Representative Ryan Warner; Citizen Representative Don Melnick; and Labor Representative Art Delancy.

Members Excused: City of Olympia Councilmember Clark Gilman; City of Yelm Councilmember Molly Carmody; Thurston County Commissioner Bud Blake.

Staff Present: Ann Freeman-Manzanares; Emily Bergkamp; Tonya Bergum; Dennis Bloom; Jessica Brandt; Diana Claus-Sharwark; Curt Daniel; Paul Koleber; Steve Krueger; Jim Merrill; Pat Messmer; Carolyn Newsome; Jeff Peterson; Eric Phillips; Rob Rinehart; Scott Schoengarth.

Others Present: Citizen Advisory Committee Member, Tim Horton.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was M/S/A by Citizen Representative Melnick and Councilmember Clarkson to approve the agenda as presented.

INTRODUCTIONS - None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mitchell Chong, Lacey, WA - Chong is a member of Intercity Transit's Citizen Advisory Committee. Chong thanked Intercity Transit for relocating the bus stop pole of a solar bus shelter back away from the curb and away from the grass. This allows riders in mobility devices to position in front of the shelter in order to push the signal button without being too close to the curb.

Chong also thanked the City of Lacey for making a temporary sidewalk and crosswalk within a construction zone on Willamette that allows pedestrians and people in mobile devices to get through.

Chong also suggested the jurisdictions hire a community-type representative to survey construction zones that may not allow certain access to those with mobility issues.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

It was M/S/A by Vice Chair/Citizen Representative Messmer and Councilmember Clarkson to approve the consent agenda as presented.

- A. Canceled December 20, 2017, Authority Meeting.**
- B. Cloud Back-Up Solution:** Authorized the General Manager to enter into a one-year contract, with extension options to five years, with Handy Networks, LLC to provide a cloud based systems back-up solution for disaster recovery in the not-to-exceed amount of \$1,000 per month.

PUBLIC HEARING

- A. Draft Annual Report & Transit Development Plan.** Dennis Bloom noted several pages were updated and typographical corrections were made since the release of the draft TDP. A piece was added to page 11, Section 5 under Mobility regarding growth and population changes; there was an adjustment to the boundary map because the City of Tumwater annexed that area along the river; and under Section 9, the financial plan was updated to reflect the strategic plan from last year.

Bloom said as a result of the public process staff received two public comments which were distributed to the Authority. Although they didn't specifically address the questions in the Transit Development Plan, they are comments the Authority would be interested in.

Chair Sullivan opened the public hearing at 5:45 p.m.

Audrey Skaugseth, Lacey, WA. Skaugseth is a volunteer at the Amtrak Station. She said she noted in the TDP that some money was allotted for 2016 projects, and asked if a project isn't completed are those budgeted/dedicated funds reserved for when they do tap on the projects?

Freeman-Manzanares replied yes, funds will be rolled over if a project is not completed in the proposed budgeted year.

Tom Fender, 509 Glass Avenue SE, Tumwater, WA. Mr. Fender said due to the overall depression in transit use nationwide, he asks the Authority, during their annual planning session, to focus on creativity. Take innovative approaches to help the system grow and meet the needs of the community. He indicated the

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challenge in navigating the transit systems within the state of Washington. He gave the example of taking a trip to Portland via Greyhound, and then connecting with Uber at the Greyhound station. He said transit systems need to change the public's thought process in terms of what can be done. If the public doesn't get educated on how to make use of transit and systems keep cutting back on express service, it's reducing the opportunity to have an impact on I-5 and the current traffic situation. He encourages the Authority to continue to think about this from a passenger perspective, and educate people on how to use the system. Create some approach to improving people's abilities to use the system - because if they don't know how they won't use it.

Fender addressed a lack of a bus shelter at the 512 Park-and-Ride. He said that station in Lakewood can be very cold in inclement weather.

Fender said the downtown transit station is a thing of the past. To reduce trip times, figure out better places to bring the routes together so people can get where they want to go without going down to the OTC and back out. The Lacey transit station requires too many traffic lights to get in/out, and hampers any express bus to navigate.

Fender asked the Authority to look for a new source of revenue to pay for transit. The approach to the Legislature has to be a new one and not an expansion of taxation politics.

Chair Sullivan closed the public hearing at 5:58 p.m.

COMMITTEE REPORTS - None

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Update on Federal Advocacy Activities.** Intercity Transit's Federal Advocate, Dale Learn, from Gordon Thomas Honeywell Governmental Affairs, provided an update on the main federal issues and activities affecting public transportation in Washington D. C.

Learn indicated there are always challenges with a new Administration and a new Congress. The past few months he's seen the day-to-day routine of the federal government begin to function more normally again. Nominations are a big part of the initial push for the administration. There's a new Secretary of Transportation (Chao); however, no FTA Administrator as of yet. Big issues have been discussed with some action - Health Care, Tax Reform, Foreign Policy, Budgets and a lot of talk on infrastructure.

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Learn works closely with the trade associations APTA and the Bus Coalition, now 140 members in 36 states – 13 in Washington.

The number one issue continues to be transit funding. The FAST Act through 2020 – numbers have held for Section 5339, but the Capital Investment Program (New and Small Starts) is being targeted by the new Administration.

- Congress rejected some of the requests to cut CIP and again have honored FAST Act funding levels for Section 5339 - \$720M (\$283.6M competitive) for FY17 and \$747M (\$301.5M competitive) for FY18.
- Formula funding remains FY17 for ITC at \$3.2M for Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula and \$764,152 for Small Transit Intensive Cities.
- TIGER at \$500M for FY17, \$550M in Senate THUD for FY18. As in the previous Administration the USDOT opposes and the House is lukewarm. There is strong Senate supports and it should remain in the final budget for FY18.

There is a new infrastructure package. Administration said there are more P3s and streamlining and signed an order on this yesterday. Congressional committees are starting to ask for ideas. Many congressional leaders already provided ideas, including Cantwell, and all have included generous FTA funding proposals. USDOT identified a \$90 billion bus capital backlog nationally.

Looking to the future, there is the budget process, healthcare (maybe), raising the debt ceiling, tax reform, start work on infrastructure, etc. In transit, we've won some battles – Mass Transit Account remains and no real controversy with Section 5339 funds, other than the low levels of funding as compared to past budgets.. FAST Act is chugging along but a new authorization will start to be discussed at the end of 2018 and into 2019, and an infrastructure package as previously mentioned is still very much "live." We will continue to work with the trade associations, committees, and delegation to push transit and IT's priorities.

We will continue to aggressively advocate for our needs in D. C., with the trade associations. Those include issues that impact us nationally, regionally and locally. The most important thing Intercity Transit can do is tell their story and ask for help.

B. Hazard Mitigation Plan. Jessica Brandt, Environmental and Sustainability Coordinator, presented for approval Resolution 06-2017, accepting Intercity Transit's portion of the Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region.

In an effort to manage risk, contain costs and promote sustainable communities, the federal government outlined new hazard mitigation planning requirements for states, tribes, and local governments in the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The act establishes the requirement for local government to adopt a federally approved

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hazard mitigation plan to be eligible to receive federal mitigation assistance program grants. Local hazard mitigation plans must be updated and resubmitted to FEMA for approval every five years. This updated plan complies with all of the federal hazard mitigation planning requirements.

A component of the plan is Intercity Transit's Mitigation Initiative to implement self-identified priorities. Intercity Transit identified seven. Priorities do not need dedicated funding to be listed in the plan. Having a plan will provide opportunities to apply for grant funding in the future to fund these priorities.

It was M/S/A by Citizen Representatives Warner and Melnick to approve Resolution 06-2017, which accepts and approves Intercity Transit's designated portion of the "Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region."

C. Travel Training and Bus Buddy Program Updates. Dial-A-Lift Manager, Emily Bergkamp kicked-off an overview of the Dial-A-Lift (DAL), Travel Training and Bus Buddy programs.

Bergkamp said an estimated 10,000 people per day turn 65 years old and one third has a disability, and majority of seniors outlive their ability to drive by about seven to ten years. Those who can no longer drive will seek alternate methods of getting around. However, many times, seniors are not familiar with the various options available; specifically public transportation and in particular Dial-A-Lift service.

Dial-A-Lift (DAL) is a costly service to provide but it's an essential life-line service for the community. The intention of the ADA was to bring accessibility to fixed route service and offer DAL paratransit as an option for seniors who have a difficult time utilizing fixed route.

Intercity Transit includes programs like Travel Training to encourage people to think of fixed route as the first accessible option rather than DAL. Many seniors are not familiar with the accessibility features available on fixed route - all buses have wheelchair ramps and kneel for ease of boarding; the buses have on-bus voice and text announcements for each stop. The Planning Department staff has made a commitment to ongoing bus stop accessibility improvements. Passenger service and safety certified operators provide quality customer service for all.

2016 Dial-A-Lift Eligibility Statistics:

- Total Clients - 3,123
- Eligibility Decision - 980
- Functional Assessments - 31
- Re-certifications - 445

2016 Dial-A-Lift by Numbers

- Trips - 166,213 - a 3% increase on the year
- 95% customer satisfaction rating

Bergkamp introduced Travel Trainer, Diana Claus-Sharwark who provided an update and overview of the Travel Training Program. Claus-Sharwark also works closely with applicants for DAL when they go through a functional assessment which provides the ADA Coordinator necessary information to determine DAL eligibility.

Travel Training teaches independent bus travel. Claus-Sharwark explained the role of the Travel Trainer is to "train" individuals and groups how to use the bus system. She explained how the functional assessments work. She works to help the ADA Coordinator decide client eligibility for DAL once an application is submitted. She sets up appointments with the clients and visits the person's home and asks a series of standard questions. This allows her to gauge their ability. The second part of the assessment involves taking the client by bus to the Olympia Transit Center whereby they ride the bus together and they take a route that has been taken from ADA guidelines (includes gravel, inclines, etc.). This provides an idea of the client's physical ability to get around. From her notes, Claus-Sharwark completes a report based on facts. This report is then used to determine if the client needs DAL or can ride fixed route.

Claus-Sharwark has been involved with a lot of public outreach, working with Employee Transportation Coordinators, conducting rolling classrooms, where she demonstrates how easy it is to commute using the bus system. She also hosted a 45-minute public presentation (Bus Riding 101) for employees of state agencies in the area.

Travel Trainer, Curt Daniel, shared one of his many travel training success stories about Mr. "R" who is a 60-year old DAL client with vision and cognitive impairment. Mr. R wanted more independence and didn't like waiting for DAL. Daniel rode with Mr. R on fixed route to downtown Olympia and Yelm, and Mr. R quickly caught on how to ride the bus himself. After travel training, Mr. R was matched up with a Bus Buddy for further training and Mr. R is now able to ride transit all the way to Seattle.

Bergkamp said that even through the Travel Trainers provide all of the training possible, many individuals still require or desire the comfort of having someone with them while traveling, and that's where a Bus Buddy is helpful. She noted the Bus Buddies provide great assistance to clients for those long out-of-county trips, like to Seattle.

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Bergkamp said the Bus Buddy Program started in 2013, and began out of an unmet need, and Intercity Transit has been in partnership with Catholic Community Services. Bergkamp introduced Scott Schoengarth who provided an overview of the Bus Buddy Program. Schoengarth said he actually works for Catholic Community Services, but spends a good portion of his time at Intercity Transit. Intercity Transit provides office space and marketing support to help promote the program. Schoengarth works closely with the Travel Trainers. He and Daniel have made over forty presentations within the community, sharing information about all the different programs at Intercity Transit. They receive many calls from agencies like BHR asking for assistance.

The Bus Buddy Program currently has seven bus buddy volunteers - 6 fulltime volunteers and 1 administrator. He said in the past two months they averaged 145 hours of bus buddy assistance.

Schoengarth introduced Bus Buddy volunteer Margaret Hill who shared her experience and why she volunteers.

Schoengarth also introduced a current client of the Bus Buddy Program, Jonathan Yost and Bus Buddy Cathy Lanier, who escorted Jonathan to this evening's meeting. Both shared their experience with the program.

Bergkamp wrapped up the presentation with an update on the Dial-A-Lift program and answered questions.

Warner asked how many clients were served by the Bus Buddy Program last biennium. Bergkamp said 23 unduplicated clients for the year. But 2017 will be quite different.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Freeman-Manzanares passed out the draft agenda for the Authority Annual Planning Session, being held Friday, August 18, 2017. She said the focus is on current service and defining in the short term how to move forward.

Clarkson asked the Authority and staff to be prepared to define words or phrases so that all are on the same page. Freeman-Manzanares said they would definitely do that. Thomas Wittmann will be present as the subject-matter expert, and Jason Robertson will be the facilitator.

Approximately 1,200 surveys for the IT Road Trip have been returned. Staff continues to do one-on-one surveys.

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Intercity Transit submitted a grant application for the State Trip Reduction Pilot program asking for the full amount available of \$250,000. Both Intercity Transit and Pierce Transit committed to \$12,500. Intercity Transit is partnering with Pierce and Twin Transit and business associations in the three counties to create a business-to-business peer connection with employers and employees focusing on vanpool.

Staff is working on the bus and bus facilities grant 5339 Competitive Program that is due August 25. The federal dollars are tight, but Intercity Transit has a compelling story.

The Citizen Advisory Committee recruitment is fast approaching. Staff is asking for three volunteers from the Authority to serve on the Joint ITA/CAC interview and recommendation committee. The timeline is:

- Release Application - August 28
- Applications Due - September 26
- Final List of Applicants Submitted to Authority - October 4
- Interviews - October 18
- Appoint New Members - November 1

The OTC design and construction project is moving ahead at full speed since the contract was approved for project management services. The budget for the project remains the same as when the design process was started. It's clear that we can buy less now than we could three years ago, so staff is looking at cost-savings measures.

Staff is setting the perimeters for the final design costs with the A&E team and getting ready to advertise for a General Contractor/Construction Manager.

Freeman-Manzanares indicated the estimated cost to get LEED certified is between \$100,000 and \$200,000. She stated that from a staff perspective, staff is comfortable not getting the certification in order to put the \$100,000/\$200,000 into a fully functional facility that best serves customers and the taxpayers. According to the A&E team, they are focused on creating efficient and sustainable designs. In the initial design process when a green roof was suggested at a minimum additional cost of \$60,000, the Authority directed staff to focus on utilizing those funds on passenger amenities. Messmer said she is concerned that without certification, there wouldn't be a sustainable building, but is agreeable as long as the agency holds to sustainable values.

The Authority supported the decision not to apply for LEED but to focus on building a facility that focuses on sustainable values.

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Intercity Transit won the Washington State Public Transportation Grand Champion award at the State Rodeo for the third straight year. The Maintenance Team finished in first place and Operations took first place in the 35' Coach category.

AUTHORITY ISSUES

Warner asked about the Poetry Project. Freeman-Manzanares said Rena Shawver, Intercity Transit's Marketing Manager is working with Stephanie Johnson to work with the Olympia Poet to come up with words of inspiration to use on the buses and bus shelters.

Melnick asked if staff could mention the public involvement process somewhere within the Transit Development Plan.

Melnick said the second annual Drive Less / Go More Symposium will be held at Panorama on September 20.

Messmer thanked the Transit Appreciation Day team for putting on an excellent event.

Messmer said the Thurston Regional Planning Council is turning 50 years old and they are creating a time capsule. She said each member of TRPC is allowed to bring one item to put into the capsule. She asked the Authority to let her know if they have any ideas - the deadline is September 15.

ADJOURNMENT

It was M/S/A by Councilmember Clarkson and Citizen Representative Warner to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY



Debbie Sullivan, Chair

ATTEST



Pat Messmer

Clerk to the Authority

Date Approved: September 20, 2017.

Prepared by Pat Messmer, Recording Secretary/
Executive Assistant, Intercity Transit

