

Minutes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Special Meeting
May 23, 2018

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sullivan called the May 23, 2018, public hearing of the Intercity Transit Authority to order at 5:30 p.m., at the administrative offices of Intercity Transit.

Members Present: Chair and City of Tumwater Councilmember Debbie Sullivan; Vice Chair and Citizen Representative Ryan Warner; City of Lacey Councilmember Carolyn Cox; City of Olympia Councilmember Clark Gilman; County Commissioner John Hutchings; Citizen Representative Karen Messmer; Citizen Representative Don Melnick; Labor Representative Art Delancy.

Members Excused: City of Yelm Councilmember Molly Carmody.

Staff Present: Ann Freeman-Manzanares; Paul Koleber; Rob LaFontaine; Jim Merrill; Carolyn Newsome; Eric Phillips; Rena Shawver; Nancy Trail; Ally McPherson; Nicky Upson; Steve Swan; and Brian Nagel.

Others Present:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was M/S/A by WARNER and MELNICK to approve the agenda as presented.

Chair Introductions: Chair Sullivan welcomed attendees for public comment and thanked them for taking the time to appear at the meeting. She introduced IT Planning Manager Rob LaFontaine and asked him to speak briefly to the proposed service change process.

Rob LaFontaine introduced himself and indicated the public outreach process for the proposed service changes launched early May and will continue through June 20. The proposed changes were developed utilizing a significant amount of ridership data as well as portions of the IT Road Trip outreach process. Most riders are aware that there are challenges with on-time performance due primarily to increasing traffic congestion. Recalibrating to achieve on-time performance is the primary goal the agency is trying to accomplish. The agency seeks to improve the speed and reliability of bus service. The proposal is intended to be a budget neutral proposal with no impact on the current budget.

La Fontaine provided a recap of the outreach process including the website launch, two open houses thus far with one in Yelm and the other in Olympia. Two more open

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houses are scheduled in Lacey on May 30 and in Tumwater on June 4. Staff has done eight passenger intercepts in teams of three at the LTC, OTC, SPSCC and Tumwater Square. The intercepts are face to face conversations with riders encouraging them to provide feedback and informing them of the different ways to do so. The agency has received approximately 70 comments and staff is learning quite a bit from the comments. It is important to recognize that the bus schedules are under development during this process and the comments are helping design the bus schedules.

LaFontaine indicated some of the comments regarding routes 68 and 13 have made it clear that we need to clarify the proposed changes. Under the proposal, route 13 would not change. Timed transfers between route 68 and route 13 at Tumwater Square will be available. Those who use route 68 to the Capitol Campus would still be able to use the route. The other element to address is regarding Express Service between Thurston and Pierce counties. The proposal suggests Express Service to the Tacoma Dome Station be discontinued. The comments could very well trigger a second review of the data and the possibility of an amendment going out to the public for additional feedback.

Karen Messmer - inquired if speakers had a time limit.

Debbie Sullivan - responded that comments should be limited to 5 minutes. She indicated that people would be called in the order they signed in to speak. If someone hadn't signed up they would still be allowed to speak.

John Hutchings - asked what the process would be going forward.

Rob LaFontaine - indicated staff will continue to review and consider customer comments, as well and reach out for more public engagement, as we move towards the June 20th deadline. Staff will continue to keep the Authority apprised throughout the public engagement process. Staff will work on final recommendations and present them to the ITA for consideration at their July 18 meeting. The proposal would take effect on September 23.

PUBLIC HEARING - September 2018 Proposed Bus Service Changes

Chair Sullivan opened the public hearing at 5:38 pm

Emily Rogers - indicated she has lived in the area for 12 years and has ridden IT since the first day she moved here and is a seasoned bus rider. Her comments are centered around route 68. Her entire working life she has gone to the capitol every day to do advocacy work with the state legislature. They chose their home based on its proximity to the Capitol Campus. Adding a transfer for a disabled person is not convenient. People are rushing on and off, and it takes her a few extra minutes to get off. She needs the bus to wait, and when it is raining and dark and terrible weather it is even harder.

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The transfer might mean she has to cross the street and that is hugely inconvenient and time consuming. This change might cause folks not to ride the bus. During the morning the 68 has a lot of state employees because of the huge building next to the capitol and the lack of parking. People may not be inclined to transfer buses if that is the decision that is made. She wants it on the record that transferring to the 13 makes it harder for people who do it every day during the legislative session.

Michael Rogers - stated there are two wheel chair spots on a bus. If forced to transfer from route 68 to route 13, if there is already two wheel chairs then someone is waiting. If there is someone there he would be in trouble. If his wife is trying to get to a hearing at the Capitol Campus then she misses the hearing that is her job and that is a big deal. He continued with some comments on the changes to Express Service. He works for the Mariner's on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and he isn't able to get to work without the bus. Now people will have to go to Lacey to go to Tacoma. People that take the bus understand a lot about asking for the 3 minute window all the time. He asks for it every Saturday as it is. This means that he barely makes it by a 3 minute window each time. Making a timed connection is difficult, and now that will be the same on route 13. He loves riding the bus and rides it a lot. He suggested adding to the OneBusAway app something that notifies disabled passengers if there is a mobility spot available on the next bus. He asked for the agency to please rethink the changes for September.

Dale Johnson -indicated he is a resident of St. Francis house on 12th Avenue, and he was speaking to the discontinued stop at their building. He hasn't owned a car for 10 years and has used the bus the entire time. He moved from downtown to St. Francis three years ago and frequently uses that stop. It has service from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm on weekdays. He makes a connection in Tumwater with route 12, and has no worries as long as it stops at Rural Road and Trospen Road. He is 83 and appreciates that very much. He hopes the agency will reconsider removing the St. Francis stop.

Julie Hustoft - stated that she'd been riding the bus for 30 years. Her biggest concern is the proposed changes to route 68 and 13 to get to work and home. One thing about route 68 that she likes is the fact it will be going to the mall. What she doesn't like is that she will now have to transfer at Tumwater Square, especially if the transfer window is an issue. Her biggest concern is that the transfer is easy from route 68 to route 13. She has kids and they will be going to college soon at SPSCC and transportation there will be an issue. She suggested additional signage and to have staff on hand to help students navigate any changes to eliminate any confusion. She added that she is very happy with the proposed changes to the 62.

Bud Larsen - indicated he lives at Affinity on Kaiser and 7th and that he had been trying to get bus service there for a few years. Affinity is a 55 and older community and there are 170 residents. Many are giving up their cars and would ride the bus if there was service. He complimented the agency on the potential changes to route 47 adding that

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extending it to that area will make a lot of people happy. He has posted the proposal and hopes the agency will receive more comments. He thanked staff and wished them good luck.

Jim Weist – stated that he has been a resident of Olympia for 44 years, and now resides at the Avalon Point Apartments on Black Lake Blvd. He is a volunteer driver with Intercity Transit's Village Vans program and a frequent bus rider. He thanked staff for doing such a great job with service. He is concerned about the changes to route 47 and elimination of stops on Black Lake Blvd. Having the bus make a left turn into the mall at Capital Place seems to be a risky venture. He understands staff is trying to minimize duplication from Harrison on Black Lake to Kenyon. He suggested having route 47 turn left off of Black Lake to 4th Avenue and then to Kenyon. This would also save some traffic lights as well. People at Avalon and Capitol Place who board on 9th Avenue and Decatur aren't catching the 47 to go the mall, but to get off at the businesses along Harrison and Division. The mall is not as important to many of the riders as getting over to Harrison.

Blake Geyen – indicated the proposed service changes will serve NE Lacey and Willamette Drive including the Hawks Prairie Park & Ride which is good because there is a lot of new development. He does not support eliminating bus service to Pierce County. It would prevent riders traveling between Pierce and Thurston County and thinks they should add express bus service to Lacey. He indicated it is very challenging to travel from Pierce County to the Hawks Prairie area. It adds one hour of travel time each direction. The Express buses in Tacoma should serve more stops instead of having only one stop because it will make it harder to catch the bus. It would also increase the travel time to Olympia.

Diane Gilchrist – stated she is a frequent bus rider on route 612 from the Hawks Prairie Park & Ride to the Capitol Campus. The change will be better because now there is one route in the morning and one in the evening and she has to go in a half hour early and stay a half hour late. Currently there aren't very many options going to Hawks Prairie. Now she'll get to sleep longer. She also rides route 605 from Capitol Campus to Woodland Square Loop. The proposed changes to the 62A will help her son because he currently doesn't have a viable way to work. Intercity Transit does a really good job and it's obvious a lot of thought has gone into this and customer service is very good.

Sue Pierce – indicated she was there as a 16 year Olympia Express passenger. Her job moved to Tacoma and she followed along on the bus. She has to give credit and sympathy to staff for how difficult this process is because they've done a wonderful job. Most of the Express route riders are flexible and adaptable. They will look outside the regular route to find a way. When the final decision and implementation come along the trip planner may need extra batteries. She is happy to see that there is still some Express service available. Some riders are skeptical about the changes. She pointed out

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that Sound Transit has link light rail that is free in Tacoma at 10th and Commerce. It might take folks a little getting used to. There are other Pierce Transit routes that are not free, but UW students have ID card and can ride. Other riders might have to think outside the box. Riders to Tacoma would love for the bus to stop each block but being reasonable and having a basic route people can count on matters most. Maybe staff will have some great ideas to battle the construction.

Lynn Larsen - stated that he has lived here since 1946 and has ridden the city buses a few times. There is a lot of development going on east of their home near Cabela's in the gateway area. He attended a City of Lacey meeting concerning the Marvin Road construction of the diverging diamond and has reviewed the City's comprehensive maps on residential development. There are a total of 750 apartments and 784 single family lots being built for a total of 1,534 new residents to the area. The growth is really dramatic and it might be worth considering service down to Carpenter Road on the 62.

Rick Walk - indicated he is the City of Lacey Director of Community Development and wanted to compliment staff on their outreach efforts for the potential service changes. It was a very robust effort. He advised that he had entered a letter into the record with the clerk. He appreciates the opportunity to share remarks on behalf of the City. There has been a lot of growth in the NE Lacey area in last 15-20 years. Over 3,000 units and 4.8M square feet of non-residential industrial building constructed. That has added 4,000 employees to the area. They are starting to see a lot of need for transit service. Walk indicated Lacey supports the proposed changes for route 62A. The route is really well laid out and it will service a lot of jobs along way, along with medical services. The other comment on behalf of the City is for continued service at the Martin Way Park & Ride. The City would also like staff to consider continued service to the Hawks Prairie Park & Ride. It is a great location and is heavily used by vanpoolers and others. Over 20,000 people commute north for work. The City and would like to request more consideration on that stop going forward. They would like to promote continued engagement with Pierce Transit to collaborate and help fund service to Pierce County. It is important for Pierce Transit to be at the table and continue dialogue on funding. Intercity Transit has picked up the ball and the City of Lacey appreciates everything they have done to continue service in that respect. He looks forward to the route changes and continuing to work with Intercity Transit and the board and staff for long term solutions as the area continues to grow. He thanked the Authority for their time and effort on this.

Walter Smit - stated that he is a student at UWT and a member of CAC. He indicated the potential changes seemed reasonable and felt staff was putting a sincere effort into the ideas. He added that he is currently taking Environmental Ethics and he questions what type of fuel is best to lower environmental impact going forward. Some people choose to ride the bus instead of driving their personal vehicles. Environmentally friendly fuel encourages ridership and people are more likely to ride the bus when their

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impact feels good. His secondary concern is the potential adverse impact of an electric vehicle on the environment involving the batteries. He advocates for a lower environmental impact.

Janice Hughes - indicated she has been riding bus for years and will be impacted by the potential changes to routes 12 and 68. She takes the bus to the Capitol Campus and doesn't want to go via downtown to get there. She took time to review the changes and suggests instead of having route 12 go up to Tumwater Square and then loop around to go back down and serve the folks going to SPSCC and then it doesn't cut off the current route 12 users who want to go that mile and half. Going all the way around the lake and back up would not be convenient. Tumwater Square to Capital Blvd would only be one bus and having everyone get off could overload some buses. This would eliminate a lot of the negative feedback. Adding the transfer will make her 12 -20 minute commute nearly 45 minutes.

Loren Robbins - thanked the Authority for the opportunity to come in and speak. She indicated she is with Pac Mtn. Workforce and they assist people finding jobs. Transportation is a big part of the issue and adding service to NE Lacey will make a huge difference. Nearly 25% of those on work release could be employed right now if there was transportation out to that area. This serves not only them but other customers who are limited by transportation. The new route will open a lot of opportunities. She asked staff to keep in mind that there will be different shifts for people so a large span of service and high level of frequency will help.

Chair Sullivan closed the public hearing at 6:29 p.m.

Chair Sullivan added the agency will continue taking comments and they can be submitted in writing via the website. A decision will be made at the Authority meeting on July 18. It is possible there could be some adjustments and things may look a little bit different than what they do at this meeting. The comments help the Authority make a better decision. These are difficult and complicated issues and funds are limited. These changes are considered revenue neutral. The agency wants to better meet the needs of our citizens in the best possible way. These discussions have been going for a year and half to make improvements to the system and get citizens where they need to go. Thank you so much for taking the time to help us make an informed decision. Your participation is highly valued.

ADJOURNMENT

It was M/S/A by WARNER and MELNICK to adjourn the public hearing at 6:33 p.m.

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ATTEST

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Debbie Sullivan, Chair



**Nancy Trail
Acting Clerk to the Authority**

Date Approved: June 6, 2018

Prepared by Nancy Trail, Recording Secretary/
Executive Assistant, Intercity Transit