

Notes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
PLANNING SESSION
August 18, 2017

Members Present: Chair and City of Tumwater Councilmember Debbie Sullivan; Vice Chair and Citizen Representative Karen Messmer; Thurston County Commissioner Bud Blake; City of Lacey Councilmember Virgil Clarkson; City of Olympia Councilmember Clark Gilman; City of Yelm Councilmember Molly Carmody; Citizen Representative Don Melnick; Citizen Representative Ryan Warner; and Labor Representative Art Delancy.

Staff Present: Ann Freeman-Manzanares; Dennis Bloom; Jim Merrill; Eric Phillips; Heather Stafford-Smith; Emily Bergkamp; Paul Koleber; Carolyn Newsome; Rena Shawver; and Pat Messmer, Recording Secretary.

Others Present: Facilitator Jason Robertson; Thomas Wittmann, of Nelson Nygaard; Citizen Advisory Committee member Walter Smit.

Chair Sullivan called the Planning Session to order at 8:30 a.m. and introduced the Facilitator, Jason Robertson.

Robertson said the goal for the session was to learn about and discuss system performance, trade-offs and priorities; set the stage for policy making at a later date; and identify additional information needed.

INTRODUCTIONS/ICE BREAKER - Everyone provided a self-introduction. This included one top priority they would like to say about Intercity Transit ten years from now.

City of Lacey Councilmember Virgil Clarkson: Would like to see Intercity Transit provide public transportation for the entire county.

City of Yelm Councilmember Molly Carmody: To see Intercity Transit truly be a fully Thurston County-wide system including the south portion of the county and all of the smaller cities people are commuting from; and integrating with Pierce County.

Citizen Representative Don Melnick: Would like to preserve the current service mentality.

City of Olympia Councilmember Clark Gilman: Would like to have the person on the street say, "Intercity Transit clears the roadblocks to mobility for everybody who lives here."

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 2 of 21

Citizen Representative Ryan Warner: Would like to say Intercity Transit is a service that has expanded and changed with the dynamics of the community, and truly is a multi-modal experience.

Labor Representative Art Delancy: Would like to see service for the entire PTBA including the smaller communities in the south portion of the county (Tenino, Bucoda, Rochester).

City of Tumwater Councilmember Debbie Sullivan: Would like to embrace new technologies as they emerge and prove themselves integrating those types of things to our benefit and the benefit of our customers.

Citizen Representative Karen Messmer: Would like people to be thinking and saying that Intercity Transit is a part of the community and that it serves in so many different ways to help people move around.

Thurston County Commissioner Bud Blake: Would like to see changes in how public transportation is perceived. That it addresses social issues and meets the overall needs and demands of all sectors of our community. That we use technology wisely and to appeal to customers and we find a business model that is sustainable.

Clerk of the Board Pat Messmer: Would like to see service extended to the south county cities (Tenino, Bucoda, Rochester).

Planning Manager Dennis Bloom: Would like to see HOV lanes coming down from Pierce County.

Administrative Services Director Heather Stafford-Smith: Would like to see transit replace cars as a primary source of transportation.

Dial-A-Lift Manager Emily Bergkamp: Would like to see Intercity Transit offer a really responsive type of service, especially for those eligible for dial-a-lift.

Vanpool Manager Carolyn Newsome: Would like Intercity Transit to be 3rd largest vanpool program in Washington state; and would like to see HOV lanes.

General Manager Ann Freeman-Manzanares: Today, as well as ten years from now, would like Intercity Transit to be innovative, responsive to our community, and good stewards of public funds.

Development Director Eric Phillips: Would like to be talking about the transition in the regional plan framework being the transportation solution provider, and be recognized as the leader in solving problems moving forward.

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 3 of 21

Marketing/Communications Manager Rena Shawver: Would like to be able to walk into a room and hear people say that Intercity Transit is top of line for commuter choice and for all income levels. Also that we are using digital means to communicate with the public; and digital options for ticketing and connecting people to vanpool and other means of multi-modal transportation to get them around, especially on I-5.

Maintenance Manager Paul Koleber: He would like to see Intercity Transit retain its great culture, and preserve that as the driving force.

Operations/Maintenance Director Jim Merrill: Would like to see Intercity Transit manage the amount of change taking place over the next ten years, and meet all of its goals at the same time preserving the culture, and keep up with new technology like self-driving vehicles.

Robertson did a quick preview of the three policy questions that were selected because they were identified as potential deficiencies in system performance and rose to the top of the topics mentioned via public input.

1. Do you want to maintain a policy based system or move toward a performance based system?
2. What is your level of support for continuing to provide commuter services outside of our PTBA?
3. Is increasing service speed worth the trade-offs?

Chair Sullivan said this is a great opportunity for the Board to move forward to make those tough decisions and have some of those conversations now.

Vice Chair Messmer said she would like the Board to challenge themselves to think about some of the questions and be curious about how things might be different and how the Board gets to that ten-year image everyone described.

Robertson introduced Thomas Wittmann from Nelson Nygaard. Wittmann provided a review of the terms being used and introduced some background data to help with the discussion of trade-offs and values.

Transit Service 101

Wittmann referred to a PowerPoint presentation and said he wants the Boards' feedback regarding the discussion of new technology and techniques. He said some of the things discussed today are already being applied by other transit agencies and is it / could it be applicable to Intercity Transit.

Transportation as a means.... Transportation (and transit) is not an end. It's a context of several different things. Transit/transportation in and of itself cannot stand on its own. It requires land use support, policy decisions that the transportation provides whether road or a transit agency cannot control in and of itself. The Board can look at "doing" for transit but there are things beyond its control.

Wittmann said when there are discussions in terms of "how do we see and where do we want to see Intercity Transit in the future" you have to take into account that it's not just what Intercity Transit can do, but it's what the supporting policies are set up to do that achieve that regional goal of mobility.

Walter Smit arrived.

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD / RESPONSE BY THE FACILITORS

Messmer: One of the things that comes to mind, particularly in less dense areas, is there needs to be a market in place for service providers (i.e. Uber). I'm not sure that these areas fulfill all of their needs to be in business or not. Where's the breakpoint between somebody willing and able to do this and make a living at it.

Robertson: Uber is here. What you need is a critical mass of people. There isn't a density of people going to a specific place. Examples like Tenino. There are people who use it once in a while, but if enough people use it once in a while, it's extra income for the drivers. Not necessarily a fulltime job at this point. The current density that we have today is a subsidy to get that coverage if we move to a more demand driven policy.

Warner: Regarding Uber, there are 9 cars on the road within Olympia right now. His biggest concern is with the cons. These are significant cons and each one has some very significant federal requirements attached. He wants to focus on what our quality of service is as well as those federal requirements like drug and alcohol testing, the provision of ADA services and social equity that we are mandated as an agency to do. And as a Board, we're mandated they are happening. Part of what makes Intercity Transit great is we have fabulously trained drivers. He would struggle to see an Uber driver be able to do that.

Sullivan: Is the demand in a lot of these areas going to be there when people are teleworking from their home? It's keeping an eye on those non-physical transportation modes of how we also meet those needs.

Robertson: As the Board debates this topic, what does the Board think about integrating and giving time to work through these policy issues.

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 5 of 21

Messmer: This brings up the question whether Intercity Transit operates it, owns it, oversees it and takes responsibility for compliance; or whether the evolution of these things provides people with other options, but it is not something Intercity Transit owns. An example is the Capital Aeroporter Shuttle – we don't have anything to do with them. There are medical transportation providers as well that we don't have any connection with. They are all significantly more expensive.

Delancy: If service is already there, why do we need to integrate with services like Uber? Intercity Transit is already held to a higher standard as opposed to the average Uber driver.

Robertson: One way to think about it is and this goes back to when we first started the road trip conversation and a point several Board members have made, "I'd like Intercity Transit to be top of mind when you're planning your trip." And what we want to do is improve mobility – that's our mission so the question becomes how do we do that? If we could get the public to use Intercity Transit for the core part of their travel plan they save a lot of money, but they need to get to places Intercity Transit can't afford to take them and need to learn how to integrate from Intercity Transit.

Carmody: Worries about the liability standpoint unless we have an iron-clad contract with every single one of the Uber drivers or Uber as a whole. What happens when the Uber driver gets into an accident and then the passenger sues Intercity Transit because we subsidized with Uber? This is a liability issue we have to consider and who do we make a contract with – Lyft, Uber or the individual drivers?

Melnick: We've seen examples where other transit agencies have managed to find a way to work with some of these organizations. They have the same challenges arguably with the federal government and liability and they found a way to get around those. It would be good to know how they came to that decision.

Wittmann: There are multiple agencies that have worked through, or are in the process of working through, these liability issues and how to deal with other issues as well. The lessons learned in how to figure this out are going to be there as multiple agencies try to figure how/what to do and finding the right balance. IT needs to ask the question, "is this right for our agency in the first place." None of the cons are insurmountable, but they are big challenges. You can't just say you're going to do this next month. It would take at least a year to work through any one of these, and you could say this isn't worth it.

Warner: Some of the cons need to be answered from a federal government and FTA level.

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 6 of 21

Wittmann: The FTA already knows about the complications and how to deal with the drug/alcohol issue. ADA responsiveness needs an accessible vehicle in order to provide equivalent travel times. That's been addressed to a large extent. The data issue and bus fares are not federal issues. The equity – there are multiple ways that various cities have figured out how to create credit cards, how to use telephones instead of a smartphone. All of these can be solved and from a federal perspective the guidance is there to say here's what you need to do in order to address this – 95% of the cons have already been addressed.

Robertson: Provided Lacey/Hawks Prairie as example in how to use other service in conjunction with Intercity Transit. IT goes as far as the park-and-ride in NE Lacey, then an Uber driver picks four people up at once every Tuesday at 8:30 a.m. and they share the fare the rest of the way in. That way IT doesn't have to pay for a route that has really low ridership. Or maybe it is a vanpool. We could set up a route there if enough people are going at the same time. What to do at this point is introduce this as an idea to other people and run some pilot projects.

Wittmann: The idea of using app based services to provide better transportation/mobility to customers is not just something the private sector has been working on but it is also something that multiple agencies have tried to implement. There are multi places where an agency has said we will rent or buy the technology off the shelf that will allow us to use app based services to schedule and to show our vehicles and our operators in terms of how we pick people up and we can use some accessible vehicle to do that so we don't have some of the challenges of how to pick up certain customers.

Much of the same advantages a partnership with the private sector would have would be a part of this business model. It's more responsive, allows for coverage and it allows for control. Two other agencies looked at doing this and both shut down their pilot projects because the cost per passenger was so much higher than what they were providing beforehand. Providing this service requires investments and has a higher operating cost, but you have control.

Messmer: There's another question about what is the reduction in emissions or what is the more sustainable greener approach. Two taxi rides back and forth to a location creates more emissions than a single occupancy vehicle going into town and back home. It requires two rounds trips to pick someone up and take them to their destination and pick them up again. It creates more congestion. At what point is there an increased cost or subsidy and external costs.

Carmody: We need to think about cost and we're already on a tight budget and already don't know where the money is coming from on a year-to-year basis. Spending more to give single occupancy rides at a zero-dollar savings or an expense doesn't make sense.

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 7 of 21

Melnick: We have to know how the public feels about this. Is our survey asking how much people are willing to pay or how they feel about sustainability?

Sullivan: Doesn't think anyone on the Board is interested in being an early adopter of any unproven technology. We need to manage the costs to the taxpayers and risk. A good example is the shared bikes program in Seattle. There are likely options to look at with several different modes of transportation.

Wittmann: Brought up Bus Rapid Transit is a way to take some existing high ridership corridors and make them better. It's a package of improvements that includes a separate brand, specialized vehicles, stations; technology gets you through intersections more effectively. To make the travel times more reliable have dedicated right-of-way - ways to move the vehicle faster. Another key piece is you pay the fare before you get on the vehicle so all doors can open for people getting on/off. It assists with economic development; attracts new riders 30-40% increase within the year; upfront capital cost associated with this - feds have program to help; to move vehicles faster need a dedicated right-of-way.

Robertson: He can see rapid transit working in Seattle because you can't park anywhere; and Eugene, Oregon has the large university with a lot of students who don't have a car. So how can Olympia make it work?

Messmer: There is a conversation about corridors in the regional transportation plan of this community in the urban area going from someplace out Martin Way into Olympia and south of Tumwater. The regional concept of imaging having this type of corridor is there, but she's frustrated whether land use wise we're moving forward with any of that. Need to help public think of transit as our version of the "train" they want.

Clarkson: Six years ago TRPC ran a comprehensive study on that "L" shaped area (Martin Way down through State and Capitol Way into Tumwater). The primary problem was it was built on the fact that people be willing to walk a quarter mile to get to the bus stop, and the people were not willing to do that.

Carmody: This boils down to local governments, and Intercity Transit lobbying at the state and county level. City councils need to be involved to make this happen.

Clarkson: Stop promising the youth a car when then reach driving age - let them make their own decision on how to get around. And we have an aging society that is hesitant to give up their cars. We need a system that offers options to get where one needs to go with increased speed.

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 8 of 21

Messmer: We are seeing shifts in what people want in terms of a walkable community. Perhaps subsidize “granny” carts to address the ½ mile issue.

Messmer: Need to ask TRPC and other jurisdictions about the small steps to bring a higher quality service transportation to corridors in urban areas.

Carmody: Local councils should relax the parking lot requirements, and not require specified parking for new buildings. It’s really expensive for property owners and it might push people to take transit.

Wittmann: Another way to improve mobility and get more people to use our services is “fare free.” This is not without controversy. Fare free allows a system to provide faster transportation services. It takes away the barrier of having to pay and looks at transit service as a community service allowing the public to ride as much as they want. Chapel Hill, North Carolina did this 10 years ago; Salem, Oregon did this about a decade ago and Missoula, Montana did it three years ago. They use their local resources. Ridership increased. Fare is a huge piece in how to change people’s behavior. It’s the least expensive, most cost-effective way to increase ridership if you have capacity on the vehicles. Some have experienced a 40% increase in ridership without needing to put additional service out. Speed in service improved. There’s an administrative cost savings. About 3% of the cost of getting your fares is spent on processing, counting and paperwork. Operators have less conflict. Find other public/private partnerships for funding. Note that the fares for paratransit services would also be eliminated. There can be an issue of problem riders.

Warner: Mason Transit is the only transit agency that is fare free. The state legislature has been pushing back on transit agencies that become fare free. They withhold funding until the agency becomes a shared fare agency.

Messmer: Fare free brings up questions about what is important and not necessarily whether we go all the way to completely fare free. We’re charging people money but it costs us to charge them. It costs speed on the routes. People want faster routes and more convenience. What inhibits people from riding a bus is whether they have exact fare, when and how to give it, etc. What about fare free Fridays? It might make people try the bus.

Bergkamp: Some transit agencies decided that anyone eligible for ADA paratransit gets a free fixed route bus pass. That would create more people with disabilities riding the bus and but it might also slow down service.

Break.

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 9 of 21

Robertson reviewed the IT Road Trip data and trends in community responses to the survey and the processes taken.

Wittmann walked through Design Your Own System and provided a snapshot of the online survey. Over 600 responses received to date. The key take-aways include:

- Add new services to areas not currently served
- Increase service and improve frequency during off peak times
- Improve passenger experience (shelters, safety)

Wittmann reviewed responses to the following questions:

1. "What current services/features would you like Intercity Transit to continue or enhance?" Responses included night service, expand service, service to Seattle, service to Evergreen and Yelm.
2. "What else can Intercity Transit do to help get people where they are going?" Responses included more service in Lacey, service to more areas, later evening services, and bike access on the buses.
3. "What's your #1 priority or big idea for the future of our public transportation system?" Responses included rail service, service to Seattle and Tacoma, the need for dedicated bus lanes.

Robertson and Wittmann continued with discussion about whether to maintain a policy based system or move toward a performance based system; and referred to the PowerPoint presentation showing specific data.

Regarding cost per rider by service type – Wittmann said there is some discrepancy in terms of how much investment Intercity Transit is putting into a service type and what they're getting out of it. From a policy perspective, look where investments are being made now, where are you getting ridership now, where might you get ridership in the future, is the investment mix you're making now the appropriate one? IT has a policy-based system and should you continue with that?

Messmer: The concept of express service going north makes her wonder whether IT allocating resources to give people what they might envision as a little more express within the PTBA along certain routes. Are there areas where people want to get to/from within the PTBA more quickly? What about people who want more speed and convenience within the service areas. Are we doing enough for them? How about a BRT approach? What kind of changes can be made to improve that kind of service? Does it fit into the performance side?

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 10 of 21

Carmody: Likes the idea of local express. Tucson has local express with limited stops inside the city, and it really works.

Warner: Doesn't think IT can be focused just on performance. IT has a responsibility to the community to provide lifeline services even though they do not meet performance standards. The question for this Board is when should we be looking at quick, efficient services that allow people to effectively use the service and when do we need to be providing policy services.

Messmer: It would help to know information about that area. If there is an area IT is not serving, are there large numbers of people who don't have cars, are low income, have limitations about their ability to move themselves, what kind of service could IT provide to them. We need to understand and explain those numbers.

Carmody: Another policy driven decision would be adding wifi to all of the buses. That has nothing to do with performance but it makes it easier for people to check their email, etc. Something IT needs to consider in order to increase ridership.

Robertson: Does any Board member disagree with Warner's statement about having a responsibility to be a policy Board?

Melnick: That is one of the questions he was getting at to see what the customers think. We have to make a final decision, but it would help him to know what they expect of IT.

Messmer: The Board needs to be able to understand and explain those numbers about concepts such as being good stewards of tax dollars. That ties into performance.

Gilman: We're a public entity serving a public interest. Is this conversation about which model we use? Gilman wants to learn more about why transit authorities are created. IT is a public entity and was once a private bus company. That helps him think about the balance about the federal requirements for the funding we receive and there are decisions to be made as an organization that serve some set of public interest and that's something he'd like more clarity about.

Messmer: In terms of the regional transportation planning that goes on at the community level there's a certain amount of expectation that one of the things we perform is to move people and reduce congestion and there's an expectation that we will assist with that so people who decide that people who drive their cars have more room. How do we explain the difference between policy and performance?

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 11 of 21

Robertson: You're doing that now with the IT Road Trip. IT is part social service agency, part economic driver and economic development partner because it gets people to work.

Sullivan: As a policy do you want to go totally green or provide more service? There is some education involved. The idea of having electric buses for instance is attractive but the reality is they are expensive and the technology is not there yet. If we did that we would have to provide less service. In terms of service provided, if we focus on densely populated areas and move people quickly, it will better serve those people and encourage others to ride because it's a better value/time proposition. That leaves people on the fringes with little or no services. Should we be setting higher performance measures to provide the most effective bus service on the road. Tough decisions.

Robertson summed up this question:

1. What is a policy making role – good stewards of tax dollars, balancing investments and weighing the trade-offs.
2. Find more money – make good decisions.

If the Board decides they don't want to trade policy service for performance, but the budget is still fixed or even getting smaller based on cost rising because of congestion, then as a policy Board you may say we need to raise additional dollars, or ask our partners to invest in some element of our system they value. The Board needs to figure out how to do that if you want to meet service expectations of the broader community.

Robertson continued with the next question: "What is your level of support for continuing to provide commuter services outside of the PTBA?"

Wittmann asked how big is IT's travel market outside of the existing PTBA? There is a movement of people traveling inside/outside of the PTBA. There is travel demands into and out of Thurston County so that using 2014 numbers there was 94,000 daily work trips in Thurston County and of those a little over half came from within Thurston County. There are a significant number of people who work in Thurston County coming from Pierce and King Counties. An additional 60,000 commuters will be traveling out of Thurston County for work by 2025 and of those 85% are going to Pierce/King County.

Warner: Something that has challenged this Board is the fact that a regional service has not been shared as a regional responsibility and IT keeps picking that service up. He would like a policy issue to make sure that the cost of those services is being shared equally between Pierce and Thurston Counties.

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 12 of 21

Newsome: She would like us to recognize that vanpool is a commuter service and mobility out of, and into the county is not just about the bus.

Carmody: In defense of vanpool versus bus – Carmody has used vanpool and it's very intimate, and you may not like the people you're stuck riding with. A bus is more anonymous and may appeal more to some people. In addition, a vanpool has one start time and one end time. With the bus one can catch multiple trips depending on your need to start earlier or end later and that is attractive.

Warner: The challenge with vanpool is it is generally Monday through Friday going to a specific destination. Whereas you can take the commuter bus to the Tacoma Mall on Saturday or Sunday and have more recreational flexibility.

Robertson: If homes prices are pushing people here from Seattle, what about Thurston County people moving to Elma or Shelton? Is Grays Harbor Transit picking them up and bringing them to work here?

Messmer: How responsible is Intercity Transit as a public agency to provide subsidized service for people being chased around by housing prices? If they can afford to buy an expensive house, they may be able to provide funding for transportation. We've created the expectation of providing regional type of service.

Carmody: Until Pierce/King Counties start helping and pitch in to create a Puget Sound-wide solution, Intercity Transit can't be responsible. Let's have quality service within Thurston County. Thurston County needs to make the decision that it's not going allow all these outliers to keep expanding outside of urban growth areas. If you build it, help pay for it.

Gilman: Jubilee is an example of people who need transportation services. We can try to do good land use planning but people will still build where they want and live where they want, and what do we do for the person who wants to age in the rural areas.

Warner: There needs to be an understanding that just because you build it doesn't mean Intercity Transit will come.

Clarkson: Intercity Transit needs to be at the table when new construction projects are approved.

Robertson: Intercity Transit apparently wasn't at the table when Jubilee was permitted outside of the area served by transit. Likely 99.9% of the people who moved there had no clue about permitting or planning or the provision of services, they were just looking for a place to live. Do we have a social service role to help people get where they need to go. Not necessarily to Seattle, but locally to the doctor, etc. Can IT revisit providing

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 13 of 21

DAL services to those outside of the PTBA and/or seniors? Is there a solution IT can come to that is affordable and still be good stewards of tax dollars?

Perhaps create a policy for areas outside of the service area that don't have enough ridership to command service; we're willing to find creative solutions.

Find creative ways to cost share. Don't want to deny service, but can't afford to subsidize better service with the tax payers' money when serving few. That means someone needs to come to the table to help fund our service into those areas.

Do we want to back away from service to Pierce County? At some point, there needs to be a conversation with Pierce County to bring them into the conversation again.

Does this Board believe that vanpool is our commuter service or employer-related commuting outside of the county? We would rather focus our attention there since our resources are stagnant. That we would rather focus on a more robust Thurston County bus system than spend money on exporting commuters by bus to other places?

Does IT provide service to the county and stop going north? I understand the Board is not ready to make this decision. But it's important to discuss it out loud.

Carmody: Final thoughts as she needs to leave the planning session. She thinks pulling away from Pierce is a good idea; requiring private sector investment if they want to build outside the urban growth boundary is probably a good idea; get away from using fareboxes as it costs more than it's worth to buy the farebox system and process money in addition to slowing down service and causing confusion and barriers for people that want to ride; if IT can increase ridership by having no fares is fantastic; and would like to branch out service Thurston County-wide.

Carmody left the meeting.

Warner: Regarding having a conversation with Pierce Transit -- he wants IT to be prepared for what happens if they say they are not willing to be involved. Is IT willing to deny service when the community is asking for it? Looking back at the community responses, what are we saying when we talk about pulling away from service to Seattle and Pierce County.

Sullivan: Why can't Intercity Transit Board and Pierce Board have a conversation? We have never sat down in the same room together and have this conversation. We need to sit at the same table, face-to-face and talk about this issue together and come to a mutual agreement.

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 14 of 21

Freeman-Manzanares shared that it was her understanding that the board chair and GM did pay a visit to the Pierce Transit Board asking them to reconsidering pulling their resources from the intercountry services. Pierce decided the service didn't meet their performance requirements and they cut all funding.

The Board agreed they should meet with Pierce to discuss.

Break for lunch.

Robertson opened with the last question: "Is increased speed worth the trade-offs?"

Wittmann said Intercity Transit's overall travel times within the region and bus travel times are increasing. The causes are primarily related to congestion as more people move into the area and it's taking longer to get from point A to B.

Potential Solutions to Improve Travel Times:

- Increase stop spacing to reduce number of stops
- Pros: Improved travel times; better reliability; faster service for customers
- Con: Requires longer walking distances for certain people to access service. Certain people can't walk far distances in order to access service.

Warner: In terms of the cons is there a fear this would cause additional paratransit costs because the client can't get to a bus stop?

Wittmann said what he "hears" is that it increases paratransit costs. What he "believes" is there is no direct relationship between the two.

Freeman-Manzanares asked Wittmann to share what the King County Commission experienced as a result of their decision.

Wittmann said King County set up closely spaced bus stops and the reason was pre-ADA to provide access so that people can almost stay on their block and have service to/from. What was the impact on ADA service - stopping every 200 feet was painful for regular riders. They identified which stops would go away, and there was a public process. Not every stop went away, but a significant series of them did. There was meaningful reduction in travel time as a result.

Bus priority treatments at intersections

- Queue jumps; bus lanes; transit signal priority
- Pros: Improved travel times; better reliability; faster service for customers
- Cons: Impacts on other vehicular traffic / costs

Minimize deviations off of arterials

- Less service on neighborhood streets; rationalization of all buses going into a transit center
- Pros: Improved travel times; better reliability; faster service for most customers
- Cons: Longer walks for some customers; difficult roadway crossings; transfer may be impacted.

Faster Boarding

- All door Boarding
- Off-Board fare payment
- Greater emphasis on cashless Boarding (passes)
- Pros: Improved travel times; better reliability; faster service for all customers
- Cons: Operating retraining; fare enforcement; cost of off-Board installations

Robertson said everyone would like a faster system, and what approaches is the Board interested in pursuing.

Gilman wants to know what the relative gain is – how much of the increased trip times are in traffic. Boarding is what IT has the most control over, but he’s not sure it’s the most impact that has the most room to grow or make improvements.

Wittmann said travel time increased overall and the amount of ridership decreased. If the number of boardings had gone down, it should have had a positive impact on travel time but you’re not seeing that. The logical conclusion is that congestion is causing the increase in travel times. This has been confirmed with the Operators.

Messmer is curious where the trouble spots are - where is there congestion. What kind of solutions might there be in those areas. Is there an intersection where a lane can become dedicated so that it relieves some of the congestion, and maybe that’s during a certain time of day?

Wittmann said the idea to take a travel lane and turn it into a transit lane is frequently a political non-starter. Parking lanes are fair game because that’s not a decrease in capacity for everyone else. It’s a different set of issues that has its own set of political priorities that are different for every jurisdiction.

Sullivan said this is a conversation jurisdictions must have up front, and Intercity Transit needs more interaction with the jurisdictions.

Robertson brought up “fare free” or prepaid fares.

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 16 of 21

Messmer said the current system IT is operating with has Evergreen and the other colleges buying fares in advance as does the state of Washington, i.e. the Star Pass. This is already a set population that is willing to pay and the state is using it as a commute trip reduction. She likes the concept of making it easier to get on the bus, whether it's fare free or something like a flash pass. She wants to know what would be the cost and what would be the benefit?

Wittmann said Intercity Transit can control faster Boarding and stop spacing.

Discussion revolved around sacrificing quality of service with quicker Boarding. Warner asked does IT want to be efficient at the cost of not allowing the rider to sit before moving. What standard does IT want to set?

Gilman said his initial thought on this question was about compromise between IT's customer service which has been highly rated. And that there is a "not urban feel" to having someone say hello and let you sit down. That's the value he thought was getting pushed against by trying to increase the efficiency of Boarding. Is that a value to preserve?

Messmer said it's worth talking about because it is high value and people feel cared for when they feel secure on the bus. It's also worthwhile to understand that has a cost.

Robertson asked the Board, "What are you not willing to sacrifice for faster service?" Responses included: Funding; safety; negative FTA audit which means no funding.

Messmer: She would like learn more about what she calls the spectrum of don't change what we're doing now, keep the same fare system, don't do much and on the other end of the spectrum is fare free. Along that line what could IT do to make it faster more efficient, easier for riders to get on the bus. How many things can IT do to make boarding faster? How can IT better handle riders who slow down the boarding process? How many things can IT do to make boarding faster and at how much of a cost?

What about tokens? What about something halfway in between tokens and the ORCA system, how about developing something like the Transit Go app? Where you can purchase a day pass on your phone. How much would the development of an app like that cost for the Thurston County area; and who would use it? Currently, Grays Harbor Transit is testing something similar.

Wittmann passed out an exercise for the Board to complete called the Community Prioritization Exercise. It included five different categories and used a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest ranked) ranking the relative priority of each.

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 17 of 21

The Priorities Descriptions Categories:

- Address operational issues
- Expand commuter service
- Expand local bus service
- Initiate emerging mobility service
- Other

The Board shared their results with the rest of the group. (The results are attached).

Robertson ended with a wrap-up review of some discussion points and final thoughts.

System Type

- The Board noted responsibility, and the Board members who are elected officials want to make sure the system is serving their constituents fairly. That means picking the right places to form a policy based on data but also be good stewards of tax dollars, balancing investments.

Commuter Services

- Need partners to bear more of cost
 - Push on Pierce to resume their share of the responsibility.
 - Are there other partners?
- Grow vanpool
 - Find ways to make this an even more attractive alternative.
 - Bus is more anonymous and offers more options so that works better for others.
 - Vanpool doesn't run outside of the work commute.
- What is our responsibility for subsidizing commuters?
 - Should we consider subsidizing private services? Is that our role or finding more economical ways to deliver services
- What about Jubilee and other areas outside our current service area or outside of our PTBA?
 - No promise to serve
 - IT needs to be at permit table. IT needs to be at that table far before permitting happens.
 - Outside areas can help pay
 - What about seniors?
 - Work with existing partners
 - Use trip planning/ Bus Buddy
- Tighten policy on external areas (in county) service – offer service via
 - a) Vote for expansion (long term)
 - b) Creative, cost-share solutions (near term)

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 18 of 21

- Needs more discussion: Joint Pierce-Thurston Board meeting

Final Thoughts and Board Take Aways:

- Board Continuity (succession plan) - Sullivan said she would like the Board to figure out how to continue the continuity because there will be new Board members in the future who were not part of today's conversation. How does the Board have the continuity going forward without having to reinvent this process? Often times, it's difficult getting new members up to speed on what and how Intercity Transit serves.
- Expand discussion to regional level – Melnick is a proponent of the regional conversation and he thinks a lot of what was discussed today is going to do better if there is a dialog with the cities and the county and some of the regions.
- Clarify public values/preferences/priorities – Gilman wants to understand the public interest of having a transit Board. The public interest IT serves includes the social services piece, economic development, environmental considerations. What are the reasons that we exist with public resources?
- One of several key elements to decision making – Public opinion is only one input IT has in terms of determining public interest. It's the same reason congress people don't keep voting based on polls of their district.
- Understand role in community and increase awareness of why Intercity Transit does what it does.
- How do we get more people access to our services? How do we make it more attractive for choice riders.? How can we offer and give more people access to our existing services? How can we work with the jurisdictions and those who actually build the infrastructure beyond our actual stops and transfer stations; how to provide more ADA ramps and safe pedestrian crossings, sidewalks and connected pathways.
- Intercity Transit remain flexible on policy

Freeman-Manzanares asked Gilman to clarify his comment about public interest in having a transit authority. Gilman said the mission statement is part of the equation, along with the requirements that comes along with some of Intercity Transit's forms of funding, but there's a reason IT is a governmental body rather than a Board for a non-profit. He said as the Board looks at these evolving technologies and transportation options, IT has to look at what was it that made people decide that fixed route buses initially were part of the public interest and shouldn't just be a privately run company.

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 19 of 21

Wittmann suggested that the basis for the decision historically was that private businesses couldn't make a profit and people needed transportation for a wide variety of reasons. That even now, private companies aren't making a profit unless they are charging more than many people can pay.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

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

ADDITIONAL FACILITATOR'S NOTES

What Purpose is Transit Serving?

- Mobility for people who need it. There should be accessibility for all.
- Reduce congestion. Congestion impacts our quality of life.
- How do we best use taxpayers dollars? Provide a little bit of service to all but none of the service is very good. That would be used only by those that don't have any other choice. Or provide efficient services in a smaller, more dense area that would serve choice and non-choice riders really well.
- Promote economic opportunities.
- Would like to see full buses because environmentally that is a good thing. We see full buses in areas where there is a lot of congestion but smaller ridership in the other areas.
- Many transit agencies across the country deals with tension over "what is our goal."

Transit Service Design

- Resolving tensions between competing goals
- Length of trip = poor experience = loss of ridership
- What is the role of transit in growth management
- What purpose does it serve to subsidize Uber drivers? Is this a good idea pending population growth?
- How do subsidies work?
- Significant cons to private service partnership: Driver quality is one big issue.
- What about zip cars?
- Do we own/operate or just connect?
- Liability issues are significant
- Look at best practices from pilot projects
- Policy questions: Where to subsidize mobility?

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 20 of 21

- Policy Factor: Emissions/sustainability
- Driving factor: Can we afford it? How do customers view it?
- Bus rapid transit on “L corridor”?
- BRT is our “train”
- Barrier: People won’t walk ½ mile to station
- IT must coordinate with local government on land use – need supportive councils that understand transit, pedestrian and cycling.
- Have to move away from government expectation, show how alternative options are better
- Expand thinking on “what” we subsidize to attract riders.
- Vehicle free zones as education tool
- New urban density may help w/BRT
- Staff now to get land use
- Relax parking requirements
- State not supportive of fare-free
- Can fare-free help w/speed?
- Fare-free = easy-to-use
- Tie into land use goals?
 - Orca model / really expensive, out of date but fits within regional model
- Local fixed route
- Community shuttle or circulator
- Commuter Express
- On-Demand

Types of Service

- Do we need local express?
- Do so many routes need to go through the Olympia Transit Center?
- What/where is policy-making role?
 - Good stewards of tax dollars
 - Policy service that serves many but serves them poorly or performance based service that serves a smaller geographic area, consisting of the highest residential and business density, and providing more speed and frequency.
 - Balance investment
 - Weigh trade-offs
 - Find money

Speed

- Review potential for reducing stops or key routes
- What “lever” makes biggest difference?
 - Targeted solutions for most congested areas (i.e. bus-only lane for impacted hours)

Intercity Transit Authority Planning Session

August 18, 2017

Page 21 of 21

- But only replace parking/not travel lane(s)
- Increase jurisdiction coordination on traffic control
- Proof of payment system
 - Start w/feasibility study?
 - Or, other ways to speed on-Boarding i.e. “change seat”
- Traffic light prioritization pilot project
 - Expand if results good
- Less interested in sacrificing service quality for time gain (small town feel...wait for riders to sit)
- Do not sacrifice funding or safety
- Transit go app

Community Input

- Bike capacity on buses.
- Seattle is expensive and driving people south
- We're going to grow. Get prepared now in terms of land use and transit service.
- There are going to be more commuters
- Need dedicated bus lanes on I-5 Seattle to Olympia
- Can market Olympia as good alternative investment
- Tell people what we heard