

Minutes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
Held Remotely
June 16, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cox called the June 16, 2021, meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority to order at 5:30 p.m. This meeting was held remotely in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act guidelines in the Governor's Proclamation [20.28.14](#).

Members Present: Chair and City of Lacey Councilmember Carolyn Cox; Vice Chair and City of Olympia Councilmember Clark Gilman; City of Tumwater Councilmember Debbie Sullivan; Thurston County Commissioner Carolina Mejia; Citizen Representative Don Melnick; Citizen Representative Sue Pierce; Citizen Representative Justin Belk.

Members Absent: City of Yelm Councilmember Molly Carmody; Labor Representative David Sharwark.

Staff Present: Ann Freeman-Manzanares; Emily Bergkamp; Mike Burnham; Jason Agüero; Cameron Crass; Suzanne Coit; Jessica Gould; Duncan Green; Steve Krueger; Rob LaFontaine; Ally McPherson; Pat Messmer; Brian Nagel; Eric Phillips; Heather Stafford Smith; Steve Swan; Nicky Upson; Daniel Van Horn; Jonathon Yee.

Others Present: Legal Counsel, Jeff Myers.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was M/S/A by Commissioner Mejia and Councilmember Sullivan to adopt the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT - No public comment was received.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. 2020 Annual Report and 2021-2026 Transit Development Plan. Planning Manager, Rob LaFontaine, presented for public testimony the draft 2020 Annual Report and 2021-2026 TDP. During the public comment period between May 19, 2021, and June 16, 2021, five comments were received. Those comments were provided to the Authority prior to the meeting and entered into the official record.

Chair Cox opened the public hearing at 5:44.

Mr. Joe Kunzler was present to give comments. Mr. Kunzler asked that Intercity Transit prioritize restoring bus service from Olympia to Tacoma.

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With no one else from the public giving testimony, Chair Cox closed the public hearing at 5:47 p.m.

LaFontaine announced staff recently revisited resources and determined that IT will be able to offer a partial restoration of the Olympia Express service with a target date of Monday, July 19, 2021, and it will run seven days a week. It will be somewhat limited in the sense that buses will be hourly, roughly, from, 6 a.m. to about 9 p.m. The route will terminate at the 512 Park-and-Ride in Lakewood and will not serve downtown. Pierce Transit provides service from the 512 Park-and-Ride to downtown.

INTRODUCTIONS

Fixed- Route Manager, Cameron Crass, introduced the Operator Class of 21-02: *Craig Mugartegui; Mark Linthicum; Christ Morris; Sarah Ruffini; Eliesha Simmons; Caleb Gillaspie; James Chambers; Thomas Demi; Michael Bodnar; Emily Reynolds; Lawrence Sherman, Jr.*

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Bicycle Commuter Challenge (BCC) Update.** Duncan Green, BCC Specialist provided the results of the 2021 Bicycle Commuter Challenge (BCC). Green noted this was the BCC's 34th consecutive year. The BCC continued to adapt to changing circumstances due to the pandemic, and focused on the all-around benefits of bicycling, including the individual and community health benefits in addition to bicycling's immense advantages as a means of transportation. In person events were either adapted differently or canceled.

The Sponsor Coupon Program was restarted minus the local bike shop coupons which were always a favorite. However, local bike shops are in a tight spot with a spike in demand for bikes, bike repair and supply chain issues.

All types of bike rides counted in the BCC, and Green collaborated with the Walk N Roll staff to add events in April/May and focused outreach on social media advertising and an extensive mailing list.

The 2021 BCC events included:

- February - Winter BCC
 - A bright spot again was the 2021 Winter BCC, which broke previous records for the number of miles ridden, and maintained a high level of participation, in spite of snowy days and gloomy weather.
- April - Bike Art Challenge & Adapted Earth Day Market Ride

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- The spring biking season kicked off with the April Bike Art Challenge and the Adapted Earth Day Market Ride, which were both well received and appreciated.
- For Earth Day Market Ride, Green did an adapted version where he took some prizes down to the Farmer's Market and put out the word. He had some shopping totes from last year's BCC and water bottles to give away. The Farmer's Market gave away free plant starts to anybody who showed up on foot or on bike.
- May – BCC, Adapted Bike to Work Day and Youth Bike Challenge
 - In May, along with the Bicycle Commuter Challenge and Youth Bike Challenge, staff pulled off an impromptu adapted version of Bike to Work Day, organized within a week, in cooperation with two local bike shops. Overall participation in the 2021 Bicycle Commuter Challenge was down somewhat from 2020. The percentage of first-time riders was 28% this year.

2021 Bicycle Commuter Challenge & Youth Bike Challenge Statistics:

- 713 Riders
- 69,000 Miles
- 6,400 Days Ridden
- 70 Teams Reported Miles
- 198 First Time Riders
- 9.3 Average Days per Rider
- 97 Average Miles per Rider

The Sponsorship program was restarted and there were over 40 sponsors who supported the 2021 BCC with prizes, event support and discount coupons. Support for the BCC in our local business community is still robust and enthusiastic in spite of the many challenges facing local businesses. This year's Grand Prize was a bike vacation and a one-of-a-kind quilt, made by a long-time BCC participant.

- B. Bus Stop and Service Development Standards Presentation.** Associate Planner, Mike Burnham, presented the purpose, process and desired outcomes of the Planning Department's Bus Stop and Service Development standards which guide the design and placement of bus stops and their surrounding zones.

Overview of Bus Stop Standards:

Think of this as a reference guide for Intercity Transit and its five PTBA jurisdictions (Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, Yelm, Thurston County). The core purpose of the bus stop standards, which were last updated in 2016, is to guide the design and placement of bus stops and their surroundings zones. Surrounding zones are the sidewalks and planting strips, the bike lanes and the lanes of travel for vehicles adjacent to bus stops.

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The 30-page standards document includes everything from technical language to photo illustrations, and standard engineering drawings, that illustrate our desired measurements for everything from the bus shelters and landing pads to pedestrian buildouts and vehicle pullouts. It's being updated in two phases. Local codes and standards have already been reviewed that include standards from all the jurisdictions.

Staff also reviewed the updated state and federal guidance and integrated some of those best practices into the document. As the document is revised over the summer, staff plans to send it out to jurisdictional staff, so planners and public work staff can give their feedback. Staff will bring back a final version of the bus stop standards to the Authority in the fall for adoption.

The IT Road Trip conducted in 2016 indicated riders want better bus stops. Voters approved Proposition 1 to help make that happen. In 2018 the short-and long-range plan was adopted. That Plan identified about \$260,000 annually for passenger capital facilities. In 2020 the Zero-fare policy was adopted. That eliminated farebox's and enables all-door boarding so riders can get on and off the bus from front and rear doors. The upshot of all-door boarding is that it necessitates the need for larger landing pads at bus stops, essentially more concrete along the road edge so riders can get on and off of buses safely and efficiently.

Challenges:

A key challenge to enhancing bus stops is that IT operates a large and diverse transit system. IT serves about a thousand active bus stops along 20 routes within approximately a 100 square mile service area. Surrounding land use density and transportation infrastructure really matter greatly. For example, some stops lack sidewalk connection and nearby streetlights and are very rural in nature while other stops are urban in nature. They're sandwiched between driveways, power poles and street trees and other infrastructure within the public right-of-way. The takeaway is there is no one size fits all approach to bus stop design. Staff works with what they have and try to improve it.

Other challenges staff deals with exists on the regulatory front. The bus stop requirements put together in the bus stop guidelines are found in local development codes and transportation design standards. These vary widely in terms of depth, and specificity between jurisdictions. These jurisdictions permit processes for installing new bus stops and enhancing existing bus stops vary widely in terms of review time, complexity and cost.

Desired Outcomes:

IT wants safe and accessible bus stops and zones, and enhance the rider experience, and speedup transit service. IT also wants clear, concise, and

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consistent bus stop standards that effectively guide jurisdictional codes, permit processes and development projects, in hopes for more smooth and efficient coordination between jurisdictions, developers, and IT. Burnham showed slides of what two enhanced bus stops look like at Cooper Point Road and Capital Mall Drive and Fir at Bigelow.

Process and Content:

Staff drafted a change to the standards and began by reviewing transit related language currently in jurisdictions' codes and standards. Staff also reviewed and integrated the latest bus stop practices recommended by the state and federal governments. Resources referenced included updated standards, such as the American with Disabilities Act and the WSDOT design manual. A lot of the illustrations from the WSDOT design manual are in the appendix of the updated bus stop standards.

In terms of content, staff did a major re-organization of the document, and organized it by streetside and curbside characteristics. Streetside is everything outside the curb, curbside is everything inside of the curb.

Streetsides are roadway features such as traffic speeds, travel lanes, intersection designs which influence the look and location of the bus stops. Curbsides are off-street infrastructure such as landing pads, bus shelters, benches, sidewalks, streetlights - all of these affect access experience for bus riders.

In terms of space, we want our bus stops about one thousand feet apart, however, in downtown Olympia and surrounding neighborhoods stops are closer together. In rural areas such as Yelm the stops are farther apart and that's intentional because we factor in surrounding job and housing density and type in making that decision. We also look for connectivity of routes.

In terms of location of stops along the street, we generally want stops on the far side or after intersections, but sometimes they need to be on the near side or mid-block. The decision is based on things such as maximizing safety, optimizing operational efficiency, or minimizing impacts to adjacent properties, and finally, compatibility with those other right-of-way uses. In terms of design, we want buses to generally dwell in lane to pick up and drop off passengers. We don't want our buses deviating out of lane travel and trying to get back in, especially during peak commute hours. Sometimes bus pullouts are warranted. Burnham showed slides with examples of streetside characteristics.

Curbside Characteristics:

Staff interacts with developers and cities and the county, and how they identify spots for new bus stops, along new bus routes and the frontages of new development projects. There is a lot of construction happening throughout the

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region and every time a project comes in, we'll get it for that transit nexus. Is it near a bus line or on a bus line? Do they need a new stop? Does it have an existing stop, and how could we enhance it? Staff looks at those site plans very closely, and try to make a determination about what, if anything, needs to be done.

There are a range of amenities that may be installed and maintained at the bus stop, such as landing pads, and their dimensions, and the slope needed to ensure those stops are safe and accessible for riders. Looking back to ADA language for the slope of the sidewalk and the landing pad area and the dimensions of that area so riders with mobility devices can safely get on and off the bus.

What's Different - Key Changes:

Establishing Zero-fare in 2020, we enhanced bus stops to enable all-door boarding. This can take the form of larger pads about 24 feet for our 40-foot buses or dual pads. Working around some of those obstacles within the public right-of-way. For new bus stops, the standards request clear zones, so places that are free of trees on the approach of the bus stop clear zones make it so that we can access the bus stop, have visibility of the shelter, and passengers can safely access the bus.

Another key change of the updated standards deals with process. We have a more robust description of the process we use in the documents we provide to jurisdictions when seeking to enhance an existing stop or request bus stops at new development sites. So, less spending time and money on process, more spending on infrastructure.

Next Steps:

Over the summer months, staff is going to share this document in its draft form with local jurisdictional staff, solicit their input via survey, and edit the document, and will educate the public using outreach channels. They'll know what we're doing, why we're doing it, and how these changes could enhance the rider experience.

In the fall, staff will come back to the Authority to seek adoption of the updated standards. In the winter into 2022, staff will work with the jurisdictions to integrate these updated bus stop standards into their local codes and standards. In 2022 we'll enhance the document with a whole other section - surface development standards, that will cover things such as bus frequency, route connectivity, and span of service.

Burnham answered questions.

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Belk asked if the document addresses issues like when ADA curb ramp improvements might be triggered if we're in the vicinity of a corner?

Burnham said they don't talk about that triggering because those are standards that a city might already have in its codes. We do talk about having about a 50-foot clear zone on the approach to a stop. And we want the ADA standards for the pad dimensions about six feet wide minimum by eight feet deep maximum, and the slope has to be no more than 2%. That's a standard approach we've had and will continue to have for bus pads, but we really don't get into curb cuts or things outside of that.

Sullivan said she knows when street trees are installed and then removed again for whatever reason, it always creates a few calls to city hall. Is that something that Planning works with proactively so we're not adding and taking out trees? She said there were a bunch of trees removed from Capital Boulevard in front of the state buildings and she doesn't think that had anything to do with this, but it is also in the same area. Is that something that's part of the group?

Burnham said removing trees is always the option of last resort. When we enhanced bus stops we look to see if there are existing street trees around the stop, and we look for ways we can work around the street trees. It is helpful to have the jurisdictions work with us on their street plans so we can proactively plan to serve our community well rather than having to adjust plans after the fact. We want to drive home the point that with good planning trees and transit have an environmental benefit. Those trees create shade, cool the urban heat island, they're attractive, and they sequester carbon gases, and bus service gets people off the road and it has a climate benefit, too. We want to look at this holistically and say if we work together we can provide a bigger benefit to the community.

Melnick said IT went fare-free to enhance ridership, and he's wondering what Planning is thinking about in terms of enhancing ridership. He thinks bus stops, particularly shelters, have a lot to do with ridership enhancement. What is Planning thinking about in that context? And what could we do to work with cities to improve access?

Burnham said during the presentation he talked about land use, density and type, and that's really something they pay attention to when reviewing new projects. If a large subdivision is coming in such as the one outside the Lacey city limits, which is a five-hundred-unit development, it's a great opportunity to add a bus stop. If we can get at least some of those residents to hop on the bus and leave their car at home, that's great. Planning wants to look at the size and type of development if it's on or adjacent to a bus line, and look for ways to add a bus stop.

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Melnick said he thinks property developers should be asked to participate in the cost of getting access. But in other cases where the development is started and has been there for years, is there any way Planning can work with cities to see if they would be willing to add sidewalks or some way to provide access to that bus stop?

Burnham said yes. Existing bus stop standards request that if a new development is going in and there's a transit nexus, and we want to shelter, that the developer pay for the cost of the shelter, will install it and maintain it. That's already baked into Olympia's engineering street design standards. If a stop is on an undeveloped part of a road where there's not an existing sidewalk, new development is going in with frontage along that road we want to make sure that there's sidewalk there, where we can put a shelter. We want to work with the jurisdictions and the developers to try and make sure there's pedestrian connections to and from bus stops.

Melnick said regarding conducting a survey of the cities to see how they respond - he hopes Planning staff is going to meet with them, too. The opportunity to have a face-to-face with Planning staff is probably very valuable, and maybe have a survey to summarize what happened.

Gilman is impressed with this presentation and the work being done. He thinks it would really help IT keep bus stop improvements in front of both the Regional Planning Council and at each of the cities. Transit-oriented development is such a focus right now and the notion of transit corridors, and we want to assert ourselves that this is what a transit corridor looks like, this is our piece of a complete street model. If Planning presents just like Burnham told the story to the ITA, Gilman thinks that's going to go a long way to elevate the visibility of this need. Gilman said he and the other members of the Authority would be glad to assist, if it's helpful to have them along to help advocate for this as the topic is brought before the jurisdictions. He thinks it will help to make real all of this transit-oriented development hope.

Cox hopes that Planning can get this presentation on a future agenda at TRPC.

- C. Citizen Representative Reappointment-Recruitment.** Freeman-Manzanares presented whether to reappoint Citizen Representative Don Melnick to a third three-year term or conduct a recruitment for the position which expires December 31, 2021. Melnick is eligible for another three-year term and has expressed a desire to remain on the Authority. If reappointed, his third term begins January 1, 2022.

Melnick said he's been a public transit "geek" since 1974 and is an avid transit

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supporter and advocate and has been very involved in progressing forward. Melnick retired in 2005, and he and his wife moved to Panorama. Melnick served on the Lacey Planning Commission for two terms. He was then selected for the Intercity Transit CAC and after serving several years, volunteered to serve on the ITA. He appreciated the opportunity to play a strategic role in preparations for the public adoption of Proposition 1, and looks forward to helping deliver on those promises made to our community. He wholeheartedly supported the milestone decision to go fare-free, and supports the careful study of the transition to alternatively fueled vehicles. He's proud how IT responded to COVID-19 and other challenges. He would very much like to continue serving on the Authority.

Gilman supports a motion to reappoint Melnick. Gilman said besides his resume and the long involvement, he has highly valued Melnick's commitment to the work to interview CAC members, showing up to holiday events and recognition events for employees and applying his professional engineer expertise to questions about repainting the Amtrak Depot, etc. It's useful to have someone who understands IT is making large contracts. Gilman values sitting alongside Melnick and welcomes his continuing on for another term.

Cox said when she first joined the ITA, Melnick took her under his wing and explained many things, and she's enjoyed working with him. She has never seen anyone more committed to the work of the Authority, the future of IT and the smooth functioning of this Board.

Belk said from the perspective of being a former CAC member, he's observed Melnick's passion for Intercity Transit, and transit in general.

Mejia said she serves with Melnick on the Transportation Policy Board and appreciates his insight, and she is happy he is willing to serve another term on the ITA. His expertise is always appreciated.

It was M/S/A by Commissioner Mejia and Councilmember Sullivan to reappoint Citizen Representative Don Melnick to a third three-year term of the Intercity Transit Authority, effective January 1, 2022.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Thurston Regional Planning Council (June 4)** – Cox said TRPC heard from Kate Lister of Global Workforce Analytics who presented on The Business Case for Telework in Washington State. Lister has been working on the I-5/US 101 Practical Solutions: State Capitol Campus Transportation Demand Management – Mobile Work Project for TRPC and brings national expertise to the table. This

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was a timely update as agencies consider whether to bring workers back to the workplace or incorporate a work-from-home model.

The Council received a 2021 Mid-Year program update from Marc Daily.

Senior Planners, Allison Osterberg and Katrina Van Every, presented an update on the Martin Way Corridor Study, outlining goals and current conditions. TRPC is conducting the project on behalf of project partners, the Cities of Lacey and Olympia, Thurston County and Intercity Transit.

Transportation Policy Board (June 9) – Melnick said Marc Daly provided an update on what was happening with rural transit. TRPC used some of their surplus money to do a rider's guide in Spanish, and they are testing an outreach process to figure out if the people they are serving think they are doing the right thing.

North Thurston reported they just took delivery of three battery electric buses, and they're trying to figure out what to do with them, probably charge them in some way.

The TPB decided to have two Vice Chairs, and Councilmember Dani Madrone from the City of Olympia was elected Second Vice Chair.

The Board discussed whether to delete a City of Tumwater project from the RTIP per their request. They merged two different projects, saving money and time.

Veena Tabutt briefed the Board on the Regional Freight Strategy Application the TRPC is submitting for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program and wanted TPB input. Melnick said he cautioned that COVID may have accelerated reliance on online services such as Amazon and he wondered what effects that would have on transportation needs.

Staff presented an update on the Martin Way Corridor Study, a joint planning project between Thurston Regional Planning Council, Thurston County, City of Olympia, City of Lacey, and Intercity Transit. The study is examining options for multimodal safety and mobility, land use, and economic development on the portion of the corridor between Pacific Avenue and Marvin Road. A current conditions report identified key needs along the corridor, as well as priorities among residents, businesses, and other users.

The Board was briefed on TRPC planning for modeling the effects of increased telework through the year 2045 planning threshold and Melnick said he had questioned if it was also going to be possible to model the potential effects that

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increased use of “Uber-like” autonomous vehicles might have since they could reduce traffic congestion and parking demands. He noted that much is currently being written about this phenomenon. Marc Daily responded they were working with their modeling consultant to see if there was a way to simulate this.

GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT

- The June 13 Service Change went well.
- Upon the graduation of the newest class of Operators, it’s anticipated there will be enough staff to resume partial service for the Olympia-Tacoma route on July 19, 2021.
- Staff is in the process of planning for the September service change.
- The Transportation Security Administration removed the requirement that masks be worn outdoors at transit facilities, and Intercity Transit is conveying that to customers and staff.
- The construction of the Pattison Street Project Phase 3 is going well. It’s on time and within budget. Staff is working towards the completion of the design of Phase IV which includes the maintenance facility, the existing admin/ops building and parking areas. Staff will provide an update on the project to the Authority in July.
- Congratulations to Nicky Upson, Marketing, Communications and Outreach Coordinator, and Cameron Crass, Fixed-Route Manager who graduated from the Leadership Thurston County program on June 9, 2021. We look forward to continuing great work and involvement in the community.

AUTHORITY ISSUES

Pierce is concerned about the low number of Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members attending their monthly meeting and how the Board may be missing out on a lot of opinions and missing out on their participation to stay involved and excited about offering advice. She asked if staff or Board members should reach out to those members not attending and determine how to find out if they are experiencing any barriers to attending the meetings. Freeman-Manzanares responded that staff continues to reach out and encourage participation. COVID has impacted many in a variety of ways. Several members noted that changes in schedules, health and other things have occurred during the pandemic. Staff will continue efforts to encourage members to attend and share comments about items under discussion and issues that concern IT.

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Gilman said the City of Olympia recently purchased a big portion of land known as the “jungle” which is the parcel to the east of Intercity Transit between Martin Way and Pacific Avenue. The land was purchased with plans to make a future road connection to extend Ensign Road to run between Martin Way and Pacific Avenue. Purchasing the property gives the City ownership control and they may be able to assist Intercity Transit with issues currently connected with the property.

Gilman said the presentation about Bus Stop Standards shows IT is committed to staying the course and continuing to implement the long-range plan and Prop 1 vision. That’s been lost on people having a difficult time with reduced bus service. He said two community members reached out to him saying they thought it was harder to ride the bus, and Gilman tried to explain that was a temporary situation, and IT is working towards making things more convenient. He believes there’s room for more outreach to keep telling IT’s story about Proposition 1 and the agency is headed in that direction even though current circumstances don’t appear like they are right now.

Gilman said Juneteenth becomes a state holiday effective Saturday, June 19 and all jurisdictions are holding events.

Melnick agrees with Gilman’s assessment of the bus stop standards presentation. Proposition 1 passed because IT talked about what it’s doing and the struggles, and now the agency is in the middle of finding the way out of COVID. He thinks there is something the agency should be doing to share with the public the struggles IT’s been going through, to help them understand why things aren’t the way they used to be but we are working our way back.

Cox said the four finalists for the Police Chief position were introduced to the public and she’s happy to see diversity among the candidates. A candidate should be selected soon. Cox said the Commission on Equity begins work this month.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Authority, Chair Cox adjourned the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Carolyn Cox

Carolyn Cox, Chair

ATTEST

Patricia Messmer

Pat Messmer

Clerk to the Authority

Date Approved: July 21, 2021

Prepared by Pat Messmer, Clerk of the Board/
Executive Assistant, Intercity Transit