

**MINUTES
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JOINT MEETING
Held Remotely
September 15, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cox called the September 15, 2021, Joint Meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority (ITA) and Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to order at 5:30 p.m. This meeting was held remotely in accordance with Governor Inslee's Proclamation 20-28.15 Safe Start/Roadmap to Recovery.

ITA 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; City of Yelm Councilmember Molly Carmody; Thurston County Commissioner Carolina Mejia; Citizen Representative Don Melnick; Citizen Representative Sue Pierce; Citizen Representative Justin Belk.

ITA Members Absent: Labor Representative David Sharwark.

CAC Members Present: David Bonauto; Nikki Crist; Ursula Euler; Isha Gabriel; John Gear; Jihan Grettenberger; Marie Lewis; Joan O'Connell; Marilyn Scott; Walter Smit,

CAC Members Absent: Gene Angel; Billie Clark; Denise Clark; Jonah Cummings; Ty Flint; Jini Namboothiri; Scott Paris; Carissa Putt; Allison Spector.

Staff Present: Ann Freeman-Manzanares; Jason Aguero; Emily Bergkamp; Mike Burnham; Suzanne Coit; Jessica Gould; Zach Heinemeyer; Steve Krueger; Ally McPherson; Pat Messmer; Brian Nagel; Jeff Peterson; Eric Phillips; Rob Rinehart; Steve Swan; Nancy Trail; Nicky Upson; Daniel Van Horn; Cindy Waterhouse; Jonathon Yee.

Others Present: Jeff Myers, Legal Counsel; Dale Learn, Gordon Thomas Honeywell.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

INTRODUCTIONS

The Authority and CAC members provided self-introductions.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comments were received.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Update on Federal Advocacy Activity. Federal Advocate, Dale Learn from Gordon Thomas Honeywell provided an update on activities affecting public transportation in Washington D. C. and provided insight on what is going on in Congress with the new Administration's intertwining with efforts on the part of Intercity Transit both last year and discuss what

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potentially could go forward. Learn said he works with Freeman-Manzanares, Jessica Gould, Eric Phillips and others on federal issues related to transit. He engages the delegation, which remains a very powerful Federal delegation. There is a new member, Marilyn Stricklin, who sits on the House Transportation Infrastructure Committee.

The new Administration is more pro-transit than the last Administration, and there is new FTA Administrator who is also pro-public transportation. Learn said he works in D. C. with prominent national trade associations like APTA, the Bus Coalition and others. Federal issues move when there's a national push, and he brings the local perspective to bear with those groups.

Learn said generally speaking, the pandemic and its impact on health and business still dominates Washington D.C. and the pandemic hit transit particularly hard. Nationally, ridership dropped 79% from 2019 to 2020. Some ridership has come back nationally, but the figure nationally is about 65%. However, Congress, over the last couple of years has acted to help transit.

There is a new Congress and Democratic majorities, albeit they're slimmer margins, but they also seem to be more pro-transit. There are differences in how the House and Senate deal with transit based on whole states versus districts. Congress has really stepped up during the pandemic for transit. The Cares Act, which was signed in March of 2020 provided the Authority with almost \$10.5 million. The American Rescue Plan, which was signed in March 2021 provided close to \$26 million.

For grants and appropriations there is continued increase in the bus accounts and we continue to be very successful with grants. During this fiscal year, we received another \$11+ million for the Pattison Facility upgrades. Funding that was stripped from MAP 21, which was three reauthorizations ago. The last reauthorization - the one we're currently in, is under an extension, did bring some of that back, but at a much lower level. That took a lot of work from us and involving ourselves with our national trade associations. Learn said it's important to note it's very hard to increase authorized levels of funding in any area, but we were able to do that, and working hard with those groups. Those increases have also continued this year in the House and Senate bills, for fiscal year 2022. We should see the final version of the transportation appropriations bill by the end of 2021. We continue to look at and see grant funding in a lot of other areas, such as alternative fuels, transit-oriented development, and workforce.

With the Biden Administration, we've learned climate impacts and servicing underserved areas seem to be big priorities, and it's an elevated criterion, and we can probably assume that will remain at least as long as this Administration is an office.

There is a new reauthorization - The Fast Act - is under a current one-year extension and in its sixth year. It has to be re-authorized or extended by the end of this month. There is a new five-year bill in the works, and it's wrapped up in the larger infrastructure, debates at the federal level, the White House Senate and House have produced bills to reauthorize the Fast Act, all have large increases for transit, and new programs that promote public transportation.

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Currently, the Senate bipartisan infrastructure framework or the bipartisan infrastructure bill, passed the Senate recently, with 69 votes, which is amazing because we don't get 69 votes in the U. S. Senate these days. The House promised an up and down vote by September 27. The bill is approximately a 55% increase in bus accounts from the authorized Fast Act. However, it's not as large as the doubling asked for by the White House that was in the original House bill which passed in July - programs like alternative fuels, low emission programs, small starts accounts, which is IT's account funding most bus rapid transit systems also have similar increases. There is the Human Infrastructure bill that's being debated and is a larger \$3.5 trillion bill, largely on social programs. But it moves on what's called the reconciliation mechanism. That is moving on the House side and there's an additional \$10 billion in the transit title that was passed out of the Transportation Infrastructure Committee.

The House and Senate approach transit differently. The House is far more generous, more districts, especially very large, populated areas, there are a lot of districts that don't use a lot of transit. As for the Senate, smaller States would have outsized power in the Senate, and a lot of states don't have a lot of transit. Typically, smaller bills reflect the reauthorization, those that have come out of the House and Senate with the House being far more generous than the Senate. However, it's good that we're not debating like we have in the past, whether to keep a transit title in and of itself. The critics, generally from the very rural areas don't believe we should spend gas tax money on transit have realized they're not going to win that battle just because of sheer numbers.

Earmarks returned. There was a 10-year hiatus. It was very political. This year the members asked for a pretty quick turnaround, we all knew it would probably come back, and every year people debated whether it would. It did this year and, and there's a pretty quick turnaround. Freeman-Manzanares and her staff were able to request funding for a few projects and that process is still ongoing. Preliminarily, the committees have favored highway, bridge side, partially due to the amount of federal funding that a lot of members feel that came to transit agencies because of COVID but that's still remaining. Still an issue that will be debated through the reauthorization process, and the year end, fiscal year, 2022 process. We'll learn and improve ourselves, but we're fighting to have more of a traditional split this year and next.

IT staff have included preliminary toe dipping into alternative fuels infrastructure and vehicles and bus rapid transit. Learn thinks it will be successful but wanted to recognize that it takes a lot of work to achieve those funding goals. There are other capital projects and compliance issues with Buy America that we are working through. Learn said he seeks help from the delegation and works with folks on the Administration on those issues.

Learn said it's always a pleasure working with Intercity Transit and looks forward to a continued great working relationship. Learn answered questions.

Melnick asked Learn to explain reconciliation - what it is and how does it work. Learn said typically when looking for federal funding and federal budget should go through a budget process, both House and Senate, which is generally based on the President's budget request, and then you go to appropriations, appropriations allocated portion of that overall budget number. Then they deal with the details. The Senate and House have a mechanism called

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Reconciliation which is essentially policy committees like the TNI Committee, the Banking Committee for transit get to appropriate funding as long as 50% or in the case of the Democrats that's a tie by the Vice President of the Senate agree to provide funding through the policy committees called reconciliation, so sort of thwarting the filibuster potential. What happened was the President requested reconciliation be used for what's called Human Infrastructure Bill, with a lot of social programs, a large \$3.5 trillion price tag. That passed both the House and Senate, with an agreement that those policy committees that have jurisdiction over the parts of it would then provide in their jurisdiction funding in certain pots. You can't produce new programs - it has to be existing programs. The House will probably pass. There's a slim majority in the House for the Democrats but majority rules in the House and they'll probably pass whatever sort of reconciliation package they want. Senate with a 50/50 split and a couple of moderates and one of them in particular saying he won't support what the President wants, we're probably going to have to negotiate a smaller package.

Bonauto asked Learn how he coordinates with other transit systems and their lobbying for activities. There are times to coordinate with other transit systems and associations to achieve our overall goals and then there are specific asks for funding for Intercity Transit. Learn said D. C. is a big place and there are a lot of issues that both the Administration and the Congress deal with in whatever area you can consider their trade associations associated with it and we work closely with D. C. meetings for things like the Bus Coalition and APTA and others. Not only the national issues, but also regional issues. There are other transit agencies in the region that work a lot in D. C. and they know those individuals. The Bus Coalition has been a very effective way to build those bus numbers back. Oftentimes, we have a little bit of a different voice, and we try to present that. Learn said that he coordinates with Freeman-Manzanares about how to do that, and when it's relevant to engage. Learn said when Authority members visit D. C., he tries to present relevant information that affects the nation but talks about it in the case of how it affects Thurston County and Intercity Transit and the region and present that to them directly. Learn said they have local staff and members, and legislative staff come out during breaks, and members come to the Authority and talk to people about what their issues are and gives you a chance to talk to them directly.

Belk said Learn obviously deals with a lot of the legislative side trying to impact policy as it's being written. But what about the executive side of things and the FTA and other big bureaucratic bodies that play into the implementation of the law as it gets passed. He asked if Learn ever lobbies in that direction or is it all towards the Capitol Hill? Learn said his contract includes all things federal, and he does work directly with the FTA when there is a relevant issue or to simply get to know new people like the Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs at USDOT. Learn said that has really paid off. We have arranged meetings for Authority members and Freeman-Manzanares to speak directly to FTA DC representatives regarding specific grant applications. We have been successful in those endeavors.

B. 2022 Draft Budget. Finance Manager, Suzanne Coit, presented the draft 2022 budget.

- The proposed Operating budget for 2022 is \$77.9 million, which includes \$12.4 million of rollover projects and \$1.6 million of new projects.

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- The proposed Capital budget for 2022 is \$103.9 million, which includes \$38.1 million in new projects and \$65.8 million of rollover projects.
- The total proposed 2022 expenditure budget including staff recommended new projects/positions is \$181.8 million.

The major elements of IT's 2022 budget are:

- Sales tax revenue is projected to increase 3%.
- Assumes pre-COVID level service for Dial-A-Lift.
- Assumes pre-COVID level service for Fixed Route by Sept 2022.
- Purchase of 10 replacement coaches, which are partly grant funded.
- Purchase of 28 replacement DAL vans, which are partly grant funded.
- Purchase of 12 replacement vanpool vans, which are partly grant funded.
- Hybrid bus mid-life rebuild.
- Purchase of 2 replacement and 1 expansion staff vehicles.
- Continue construction to renovate and expand the Pattison Street facility.
- Continue replacement of the computer aided dispatch/automated vehicle locator/radio system.
- Pursue grant funded BRT and Corridor Program
- Pursue grant funded Martin Way P&R direct ramp access project
- Add 18 new positions:
5 vehicle cleaners, vehicle maintenance technician, 2 maintenance supervisors, facilities technician, facilities technician supervisor, DAL dispatcher, operations trainer, 2 receptionists, director of strategic programs, accounting specialist, IS technician, and senior training coordinator.

Coit reviewed the Cash Basis Summary and noted the beginning cash balance estimate total revenues are projected at \$95 million, and the operating sales tax is almost \$75 million. The total operating expenditure is near \$78 million with total capital of about \$104 million, less operating reserve of 25% leaves an ending unreserved cash balance of \$34,089,134.

Freeman-Manzanares reviewed the 2022 budget expenditures. She noted the majority of the projects in the 2022 budget are rollovers from the budget that was approved in 2021. She went on to review new projects for 2022 and then answered questions.

Sullivan asked if there is funding through the federal government for things like the plexiglass barriers and PPE supplies for COVID? Freeman-Manzanares said IT did receive COVID funding for Operations and is receiving grant funding for those activities.

Freeman-Manzanares said if the Authority feels comfortable with what has been presented thus far, a public hearing will be conducted on November 3, allowing the public an opportunity to comment on the 2022 budget, and staff will come before the Authority either November 17 or December 1 for final approval. The Authority agreed to move forward requesting a public hearing.

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- C. **Website Enhancement Update.** Nicky Upson from Marketing & Communications, and Rob Rinehart from Information Services provided an update on the website enhancement project.

The Intercity Transit website is the primary communications tool for the agency. As technology changes, customers' expectations of site features continually increase. In addition, roughly 70% of our customers use a mobile device to access the website, which requires customization to display content satisfactorily on a range of mobile devices. Improving the website's accessibility and functionality to match current technology is vital to serving customers.

In November of 2016, Intercity Transit entered into a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Consolidated Technology Services (CTS), an agency of the State of Washington (known as WaTech) to provide technical and usability assistance in upgrading the website and platform to include web hosting and support services. In June of 2018, Intercity Transit renewed the web hosting SLA with CTS through June 30, 2023. This agreement included an option to have CTS provide additional as-needed web development services at their standard hourly rate. In an ongoing effort to achieve a more customer-focused, modern, engaging, user-friendly website, Intercity Transit and CTS began working on enhancing the existing website in October 2020.

Over the last year, Intercity Transit and CTS have been designing and implementing enhancements to the website based on user input and feedback. This project is nearing completion, with an anticipated launch date of September 27, 2021. The total amount spent on this project is \$73,441.25.

Upson said the goal is to make the website more efficient for customers by making things easier to find and reducing the number of clicks it takes to get there, while also developing efficiencies for the agency. Before developing an action plan, staff needed a baseline, and consulted with Anthro-Tech to help with this process. As part of this process, they conducted stakeholder interviews with all 12 workgroups within the agency. They also conducted a customer survey to determine pain points, high priority improvements, and things that would be nice to have. From this process, they learned that the biggest user group is bus riders followed by vanpool users, Dial-A-Lift passengers, and job applicants.

Upson shared stats about the website:

- We have about 800 pages, about 350 documents.
- Over the last three years, roughly 850,000 page views per year, which translates to about 2,400 page views per day.
- Users found the labels and navigation confusing.
- Users want schedules to be front and center, and have dynamic maps.
- Users want improvements to the trip planner, as well as the ability to see real-time information about bus departures and arrivals.
- Internal audiences value the website and want to invest in making it better. They stressed the importance of having current content. They want the website to be more mobile-friendly and build internal efficiencies for the agency.

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Upson said after accumulating all of this information, they developed an action plan. Over the last year, they focused efforts on making high priority improvements and designing the site with the user in mind. Next steps will focus on building in more efficiencies for both the customer and the agency, and continue to enhance the user experience, and seamlessly integrate new and existing technologies into the website.

Upson said during implementation, they worked closely with WATech and earlier with Anthro-Tech. There has been improved navigation and labeling, they added the trip planner and top tasks to the homepage and improved the employment section. In redesigning the site, they enlisted the help of three distinct sets of users in the process. Upson referred to a slide showing the outcome at the first two stages of the user input. The final stage of our user-centered design process was user testing. Participants were recruited to represent a diverse group of individuals. They completed up to eight tasks in in-depth interviews that track their movements throughout the site and documented their feedback. The tasks were designed to validate changes made based on research and understand the ease or difficulty of completing common user tasks. Tasks were completed in random order. In their initial design work, they got some things right, but also needed to spend some more time improving other aspects of the site, listening and reiterating are at the heart of user-centered design. Upson said customer and stakeholder feedback was valuable in setting the direction for the updates.

Upson introduced Rob Rinehart, who worked tirelessly throughout this update process to make this all possible. **Rinehart provided a demonstration tour of the new proposed website and answered questions.**

Mejia appreciates that staff is upgrading the website and technology and making it more user-friendly. She asked how does this translate to a mobile device or tablet?

Rinehart referred back to the homepage and simulated a mobile phone display to demonstrate what that would look like.

Mejia asked what is the timeline for getting feedback and making the final changes?

Rinehart said they did receive a lot of feedback on this site already from our users and internal stakeholders, and then they did the usability testing to validate the findings and made some corrections. He said next year, if the budget is approved, staff will do another round of user testing and improvements.

Upson added they are planning on launching the new website on September 27. She said before they start the next phase, they're hoping to gather input from internal stakeholders to get their input on what's working and what needs improvement. Throughout the process we will be doing additional gathering of input from our customers, and doing more user-testing, which is really critical to whatever we do.

Melnick asked if staff is comparing what they're doing with what other similar organizations are doing? They may be solving the same problems at some point, and perhaps the consultant could compare those findings with how others are solving the same issues.

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Upson said yes, in the very initial stages of doing this, Anthro-Tech conducted a peer review of 12 different sites, and we looked at what works for them, what doesn't work for them, and compared how our site compares to those. Especially in those areas that are done really well. Throughout the entire process, she and Rinehart have been researching other sites, and looking at examples, and taking those in and a lot of what you see in the new site is reflective of all of that.

Gear referred to the homepage and suggested making the Route Finder Trip Planner more bold because it is harder to see compared to other things on the page. Perhaps a border? Gear mostly uses an iPad which looks more like the website.

Grettenberger loves the proposed website - it's clean and much more user-friendly, especially having the highlighted buttons is huge for people who are not very tech savvy. She referred to the changing banner that oftentimes has new updated information such as the CAC recruitment. This type of information won't be prominently visible for those using a mobile device.

Rinehart said they thought about that, and they had to choose what's most important. What happens on mobile devices when it goes small, is those additional items actually move down to another section. It's still showing the same information, but it gets moved around.

Belk likes the new trip planner and route finder feature. He referred to website design and bandwidth. He asked about people who don't have good access to high bandwidth internet. Is there a different version in the event the website is particularly taxing?

Rinehart said one could strip out all the graphics and strip out all the colors, and it's just almost like a black and white piece of paper. That is something that could be built-in, but so far, they haven't gotten any feedback that the website is slow. So, that's one big part of user-driven design. But if they did encounter this issue, they could build something like that into the site. It could be a button or something they click, and then go to the low fidelity mode.

Upson said if they get customer feedback about the website taking a long time to load, etc., they will take that into consideration and work on it.

Sullivan asked if there will be a list of the Authority members. Rinehart said there is a section dedicated to the Authority including a photo of each member.

Smit said for the route time stops it's hard to see a white diamond on a bright green background, compared to a white circle. For accessibility and readability Smit suggests a blue diamond or the circles be blue or some other change between those two, besides just diamonds and circles for the time stop part of that route page. Anyone with a visual impairment may have difficulty reading that section of information.

D. Engineering Services TSP & Thurston Smart Corridors Implementation. Jeff Peterson, Procurement Coordinator, presented a contract for engineering and consulting services to assist in the implementation of Transit Signal Priority and Thurston Smart Corridors initiatives.

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Intercity Transit issued a request for qualifications to establish a contract with a qualified multidisciplinary firm with a major emphasis in traffic engineering to support implementation of the regional Smart Corridor program, including implementation of Transit Signal Prioritization (TSP). The consultant selection team consisted of technical staff representing Intercity Transit, City of Olympia, City of Lacey, City of Tumwater, and TRPC.

The related request for qualifications (RFQ) was issued June 21, 2021, a pre-proposal conference was held on July 9th and proposals were due July 16th. Intercity Transit received five responsive proposals by the due date. The results of the Phase One evaluation process determined that all responses advance to the Phase Two interview process.

Upon conclusion of the interview process, the project team concluded Iteris Inc had the most appropriate project personnel and greatest understanding of the objectives sought. Iteris has provided similar consulting services for transit agencies throughout the United States and the sub-consultant firm has substantial local experience.

The evaluation team is confident that Iteris will be successful at fulfilling our consultant needs. Iteris has been determined to be both responsive and responsible and therefore the evaluation team and Intercity Transit staff recommends awarding the project and executing a contract with Iteris Inc.

Intercity Transit is the lead agency and is providing all matching funds for the three separate grant awards related to this project. Following contract approval, staff anticipate an initial Task Order request for approval, and a project update to be presented to the ITA, later this fall.

It was M/S/A by Councilmember Sullivan and Commissioner Mejia to authorize the General Manager to execute a consultant services contract with Iteris Inc. to perform engineering and support services for the implementation of transit signal priority and similar strategies consistent with the regional smart corridors project.

- E. Resolution 02-2021 Adopt Five-Year Vanpool Fare Demo Project.** Cindy Waterhouse, Vanpool Manager, presented Resolution 02-2021 implementing a five-year, flat rate vanpool fare structure demonstration project.

Intercity Transit's vanpool program serves commuters who have at least one end of their trip in Thurston County. The program, which started in 1982 with 2 vans, currently has 133 active vanpool groups due to the pandemic, down from 183 pre-covid.

The current fare structure has more than 2,000 price points based on numerous variables which does not allow staff to easily inform potential customers or employers on the cost of vanpooling. The proposed flat rate vanpool fare structure will simplify fares so staff can clearly communicate and advertise the cost, reduce administrative costs, and attract essential and industrial workers who typically earn lower incomes.

As our community recovers from the pandemic, the flat rate vanpool fare structure provides a simplified solution to better support employees and employers. Increasing ridership and access is beneficial for the community and is anticipated to help rebuild the program.

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Public comment was solicited and heard on August 18, 2021. All the comments were in favor of the five-year, flat rate vanpool fare structure. A resolution is now before the Authority for consideration.

It was M/S/A by Citizen Representative Melnick and Councilmember Carmody to adopt Resolution 02-2021 that establishes a five-year flat rate vanpool fare structure demonstration project.

- F. Vanpool Software Program.** Jeff Peterson, Procurement Coordinator, presented the purchase of a vanpool management software program to track customer information, vanpool groups, payments, routes, employers, subsidies, ride matching, and required state and federal data reporting.

Intercity Transit's vanpool program is implementing a flat rate fare five-year demonstration project. Anticipating the Vanpool program updates, staff were able to secure grant funding that provides us the opportunity to replace our homegrown software management system with one that can better support our program. The new software system will enhance oversight, reporting, efficiency, and improve the vanpool user customer experience.

Several software solutions, including internally developed and commercially available options were considered. Staff recommends the solution provided by SHI called TripSpark (also known as RidePro) offered by Trapeze to meet our needs. Staff recommends utilizing the Department of Enterprise Services cooperative contract (NASPO) to purchase the software services solution.

The project team sought pricing from neighboring transit agencies, Pierce Transit and Ben Franklin Transit, and determined what has been proposed to Intercity is fair and reasonable. The project team supports the recommendation to proceed with the solution presented by SHI utilizing the DES cooperative agreement.

Intercity Transit was fortunate to have been awarded a Washington State Department of Transportation Regional Mobility Grant (RMG) earlier this summer that will fund the initial purchase and installation of this new vanpool program software management system. The RMG was awarded effective July 1, 2021.

It was M/S/A by Councilmember Sullivan and Citizen Representative Pierce to authorize the General Manager to execute a purchase order to SHI International Corp. in an amount not to exceed \$289,102.38, excluding tax, for implementation and one year of maintenance, reporting, and hosting.

- G. CAC-ITA Check In.** Cox said this is the time each year when the ITA and CAC come together to acknowledge appreciation for one another and work on building relationships. She cannot say enough about how much she appreciates the service the CAC members do as volunteers, and how the CAC plays an invaluable role as advisors to the Authority. Cox also acknowledged the three former CAC members (Melnick, Pierce, Belk) who now serve as Authority members.

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Melnick can't say enough good things about the CAC. As a former member of the CAC, he had no idea how important and valuable the information that the CAC goes through would be to him as an Authority member. Melnick said the CAC has the opportunity to express ideas and work with staff until they are satisfied and comfortable with an approach. He appreciates that.

Pierce, also a former CAC member, appreciates the CAC for "hanging in there tonight" remotely, and getting through the last year with remote meetings. Everyone can remain safe and we still can receive good input. The CAC's voices are important, and the Authority does read the CAC meeting minutes and she's always amazed at how diverse the group is with their various opinions, along with the comments and ideas that come up during discussion of agenda items. Pierce said often times this information gives her a new perspective on how to look at the topics. Pierce said the CAC is truly appreciated and to keep up the good work.

Sullivan appreciates the diversity of the individuals on the CAC and how that provides a holistic look at things that otherwise the Authority wouldn't be able to see. Sullivan considers the CAC the "eyes and ears" of IT, being out there in the community, which is beneficial to the Authority. The CAC can engage in a more casual conversation with the community, and she appreciates all the members being out there, and all the different ways they integrate into the community. The CAC are amazing ambassadors for Intercity Transit.

Belk said being a former member of the CAC helps him appreciate the kind of conversations he's had, and he's happy to see the CAC is meeting again even if it's in a virtual setting. He appreciates everyone who stuck through it, and their resiliency through this pandemic. It's more important than ever because he hasn't been riding the bus as often as he used to due to circumstances, and IT has a really big lift ahead of us trying to get people back to transit when it's safe and they are comfortable. He said let's get ridership back up. He agrees the CAC are ambassadors, and they have a big diversity of experiences, and IT needs the CAC more than ever to help build back ridership and get back on track with where we would have been if COVID hadn't happened. He can't say enough about the importance of the CAC's input.

Gilman said the CAC is definitely one of the things he's most proud of at Intercity Transit. Just having this body and their participation makes IT a stronger agency and makes the Authority do better work.

Euler said she does feel the CAC voices are heard and that's the biggest praise the Authority could give.

O'Connell said she's been on the CAC for nine years and with so many different people coming and going there is a constant awareness of the benefit of the CAC. Not all transit systems across America have a CAC, and the CAC has always been very respected by the Authority. It's impressive that former members of the CAC applied and have been accepted as an Authority member, and that speaks for itself. O'Connell thanked the Authority for the consistent value they place on the CAC.

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Carmody said there's a chance that she may not be on the Yelm City Council for very long for reasons that have nothing to do with her term and she wanted Intercity Transit to know they are quite possibly the most amazing group of people she ever had the honor to work with, both on the Authority and with the CAC, and with the staff of Intercity Transit. She said the IT staff and Authority are "beautiful people" and she is honored to have had the opportunity to work with them.

Trail said it was nice to see everyone and thanked the CAC for "hanging in there" during the pandemic. She realizes there is a learning curve for many that do not use remote meetings typically in their day. She appreciates the CAC for being here tonight and that they continue to contribute to and attend the CAC meetings each month.

Scott said she's enjoyed her time on the CAC. She also enjoys her interactions with the Operators and other staff members. She thanked everyone for being so friendly and being like a family.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Thurston Regional Planning Council (Sept. 3):

- In the interest of time, Cox referred everyone to the TRPC After Meeting Summary provided in the agenda packet.

Transportation Policy Board (Sept. 8):

- Melnick said Marc Daily reported all funding obligation targets were allocated, after developing a comprehensive approach.
- The Board recommended the Regional Planning Council adopt the Regional Transportation Improvement Program. IT's Martin Way Park and Ride direct access request was moved from not being regionally significant to being regionally significant.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

- Freeman-Manzanares acknowledged an event that took place on September 4, 2021, resulting in a shooting at the Olympia Transit Center. Fortunately, no staff or passengers were directly involved or injured. No one should ever have to deal with individuals placing others in danger as they attempt to use public transportation. Staff responded well to this frightening event taking care of themselves and our passengers. We offered staff our Employee Assistance Program, which provides counseling services for anyone struggling with the event. There may be another event in town this weekend, and we are hoping that is not the case. However, Operations are preparing and sharing best practices just in case.
- The Pattison Project is going well, and the contractor is focusing on making sure the building is watertight as winter approaches. Freeman-Manzanares said the forecast predicts about 2" of rain this weekend.
- Staff is recruiting for the Community Advisory Committee and applications are due October 8, 2021. Please reach out to those you think might have an interest.

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- Staff is accepting applications for the Surplus Van Grant Program for non-profit organizations and agencies. Applications are due Wednesday, October 13, 2021. The program is in its 18th year and thus far the Authority has awarded 68 vehicles to meet the transportation needs of local organizations. Most recently: *Behavioral Health Resources, Catholic Community Services, Innovations Human Trafficking Collaboration, Interfaith Works, Sacred Heart, SafePlace, and Thurston County Food Bank.*

Application packets are available online at the [Intercity Transit website](#), by calling 360.786.8800, or by emailing vans@intercitytransit.com. For more information about the Surplus Van Grant program, contact Cindy Fisher Waterhouse, Vanpool Program Manager at 360.705.5829 or Riley White, Commuter Services Assistant at 360.705.5847.

- Freeman-Manzanares recognized that Authority members had previously mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the Zero-Fare Demonstration Program, and she asked about their desire to extend the demonstration project beyond COVID. With direction from the Authority, staff and legal counsel would move forward to amend the original resolution to reflect this.
- **The Authority supported Freeman-Manzanares' suggestion to amend the resolution.**

AUTHORITY/CAC ISSUES

Sullivan asked Gilman about the major road construction taking place on 4th and Franklin and how is that disrupting the flow of transportation and bus service?

Gilman said at the last ITA meeting, staff reported on the coordination between IT and the City of Olympia Engineering staff. There was work done to minimize the time impacts, but there is a major impact for cars going through downtown Olympia. A couple of blocks of 4th Avenue right at Franklin will be closed for approximately three months. It's going to be great for street parties, but not so great for moving back and forth at commute times. Gilman said all of those shops and businesses are going to remain open and detours are assigned. It would be best to take other streets to get eastbound through downtown.

Gilman said the City of Olympia is focused on the events where two different political groups brought weapons and engaged in a brawl downtown. The city is calling on both groups to not repeat that behavior, and the city is making additional preparations with law enforcement to respond accordingly. Gilman had a conversation with Freeman-Manzanares about the contingency plans IT is making with staff at the Olympia Transit Center and the Operators, and the city is doing the very best they can. He said it's super disappointing and frustrating to have people trying to solve political differences by shooting and hitting each other with sticks. The city is focused on giving this situation their best attention.

Gilman said he continues to be amazed at how IT is moving forward with the bold and unafraid motto to accomplish their mission, while adapting to COVID and getting the work of Intercity Transit done.

ADJOURNMENT

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With no further business to come before the Authority, Chair Cox adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY



Carolyn Cox, Chair

ATTEST



Pat Messmer
Clerk to the Authority

Date Approved: October 6, 2021

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