

Minutes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
February 5, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gilman called the February 5, 2025, meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority to order at 5:35 p.m. This was a hybrid meeting held at the Pattison Street facility.

Members Present: Chair and City of Lacey Councilmember Carolyn Cox; Vice Chair and Community Representative Sue Pierce; City of Olympia Councilmember Clark Gilman; Thurston County Commissioner Carolina Mejia; City of Tumwater Councilmember Kelly Von Holtz; City of Yelm Councilmember Brian Hess; Community Representative Justin Belk; Labor Representative, Mark Neuville; Community Representative Wendy Goodwin; City of Olympia Councilmember Robert Vanderpool.

Staff Present: Emily Bergkamp; Pat Messmer; Amanda Collins; Brian Nagel; Daniel Van Horn; Dena Withrow; Heather Stafford; Jana Brown; Jason Aguero; Jessica Gould; Jonathon Yee; Katie Cunningham; Matt Kenney; Peter Stackpole; Ramon Beltran; Rob LaFontaine.

Others Present: Jeff Myers, Legal Counsel; Shawn Sandquist, Community Advisory Committee.

WELCOME NEW ITA BOARD MEMBER

Chair Gilman introduced the newly appointed Board member Councilmember Robert Vanderpool from the City of Olympia.

STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

- A. David Chaffee introduced Justin Beaber, Vehicle Cleaner and Greg Kessel, Service Worker.
- B. Kerri Wilson introduced Sarah Feyers and Hana Rothner, WNR Program Reps.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was M/S/A by Cox and Mejia to approve the agenda as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1765 and the general public gave public comments regarding wages and benefits being considered in Intercity Transit's current contract negotiations with ATU Local 1765. ATU is the labor union representing Operators, Customer Service Representatives and Dial-A-Lift Dispatch Specialists.

NEW BUSINESS

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

February 5, 2025

Page 2 of 8

A. **September '25 Service Change Equity Analysis/Set a Public Hearing.** Planning Deputy Director, Rob LaFontaine, provided a quick recap for the benefit of new Board members of his presentation from last month.

LaFontaine said the proposal we are initiating in our public process is system redesign and it's important to hit on some of the critical influences behind this. Students and families, better connectivity between area high schools, community college and other locations, and the influence of state employees and visitors with improved connectivity to the capital campus and then the influence to improve the system for everyone on the bus, faster travel times, and better service along the high frequency corridor. As we go through this public process, those themes will continue to come up.

LaFontaine shared a slide that shows the areas of new service that are contained within the network system redesign proposal. We're still counting 78 new bus stops, consistent with the theme of more buses going to more places. Census data shows alignment between the areas we're looking to add service and population density. Other key elements of this proposal are the high frequency corridor, running every 15 minutes between West Olympia and East Lacey with a variety of connections along the corridor, to include the Olympia and Lacey Transit Centers. That high frequency corridor consistent with the long-range plan Proposition 1 element for bus rapid transit has been published with our long-range plan. LaFontaine said the frequent service at the Martin Way/Harrison corridor isn't the only one that would enjoy the benefit of high frequent service, Capital Way / Capital Blvd. would continue to receive frequent service as it does today, with route 13 and College Street elevating to four buses an hour. There are other smaller segments as part of this proposal that will result in buses coming more often than they are today.

LaFontaine reviewed some of the constraints such as the operability of public roadways and intersections that we get to operate within, laws and regulations that affect the ways we allocate service, how accessibility influences our design and our delivery, and then operating revenue, both local sales tax as well as state and federal funding. All of these work together to be the framework we have to design service within.

We are going through a multistep process for outreach and engagement, embarking on our public comment portion, releasing our service change summary document with its accompanying equity analysis. This includes lining up a variety of open houses, stakeholder engagement and public hearings. We recently secured presentations with the Tumwater, Lacey and Olympia City Councils and the Tumwater School Board. Other outreach includes engagement with current riders, including CAC members and Bus Buddy volunteers, policy makers, students, and a variety of community organizations. Once we are through our public process, we'll come back to the ITA and the CAC in an advisory capacity to look for an adoption of this work. During this process we measure any adverse impact or benefit and

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

February 5, 2025

Page 3 of 8

determine whether that benefit or impact has any disparity in terms individuals who are members of historically marginalized populations. That is the formal document subject to a public hearing and public comment.

LaFontaine said assuming we can journey through those steps, staff are hoping to begin the implementation process for this major change in the late spring carried out through the summer.

A public hearing is one of the mechanisms to begin the process, and LaFontaine brings before the ITA tonight a request to schedule a public hearing at 5:30 p.m. at the March 19 ITA meeting.

Goodwin referenced the public hearing and engagement in regard to Thurston Regional Planning Council's walking audit. She's concerned about how we're reaching out to students, especially high school students. If we didn't have anybody in that age group involved in TRPC's walking audits, she's not sure how we're communicating this with the schools or anyone who's going to participate in using buses. If we can get some of the high schools and middle schools involved and find out what they need, that would be helpful because they're running across the streets to get to destinations. She said there wasn't a lot of diversity on those audits. There wasn't a true representation of people living on the Martin Way Corridor.

LaFontaine said a key focus is students and families. Nick Demerice in Marketing has several methods to reach this population. Bergkamp said IT has a great connection through the Walk N Roll program as well.

Vanderpool asked if the plan for high frequency and BRT's includes having bus lanes. Is this going to be an ask of the cities to start doing that because it's been something that he's been hoping we do eventually. LaFontaine said right now, our vision for frequent service on the corridor is not dependent on dedicated lanes. We've been somewhat passive on that as transit planners, and if there's an interest in the community to talk about dedicated lanes, that's a big conversation. Our vision for BRT is formally short of the Federal Transit Administration's definition of bus rapid transit, largely because of their dedicated lane requirement. You must be able to demonstrate 50% or more of travel lane being dedicated and right now, we're not imagining that any time soon.

It was M/S/A by Pierce and Vanderpool to authorize a public hearing on the 'September 2025 Major Service Change Summary and Draft Equity Analysis' for Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

B. Annual Authority Reorg - ITA Elections & Committee Assignments. Chair Gilman led the Authority through the process to elect a new Chair and Vice Chair.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

February 5, 2025

Page 4 of 8

Gilman opened the floor to nominations for Chair. **Commissioner Mejia nominated Carolyn Cox.** Hearing no further nominations, nominations for Chair were closed.

A unanimous vote was cast to elect Councilmember Carolyn Cox as Chair.

Chair Cox opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chair. **Commissioner Mejia nominated Sue Pierce.** Hearing no further nominations, nominations for Vice Chair were closed.

A unanimous vote was cast to elect Community Representative Sue Pierce as Vice Chair.

Chair Cox lead the Authority in the discussion of new committee assignments and with Authority consensus the following Board members were appointed as follows:

- **Councilmember Robert Vanderpool** as the primary representative for Intercity Transit on the *Thurston Regional Planning Council* and **Councilmember Kelly Von Holtz** will serve as alternate.
- **Community Representative Justin Belk** as the primary representative for Intercity Transit on the *Transportation Policy Board* and **Thurston County Commissioner Mejia** will serve as alternate.
- **Community Representative Sue Pierce** will serve as representative on Intercity Transit's *Pension Committee*.

RECOGNITION

A. **Proclamation and Recognition for Councilmember Clark Gilman.** Chair Cox read a Proclamation of Appreciation to Gilman. Gilman served on the Authority from January 2016 through February 2025. Cox recessed the meeting for 20 minutes to allow refreshments to be served.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. **Transportation Policy Board (Jan. 8).** Belk said the TPB made a monumental change in meeting time to 8:30 a.m. rather than 7:30 a.m. In addition to the meeting schedule, members are advocating for more in-person attendance on a quarterly basis. Members reappointed Emeritus Representative Pete Kemet for one more year. The TPB discussed the 2025 election of officer process and TRPC staff reviewed how they would go through the election process next week. They received two presentations, one from TRPC staff regarding how to integrate equity into the regional transportation plan, and a report from TRPC staff about the current status on the emergency detour routes, current conditions report and that is taking another look at when there's a large disruption on I-5, whether it's a train derailment or

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

February 5, 2025

Page 5 of 8

something less, a lot of that traffic spills onto the local network and they're looking at ways to mitigate that, preserving emergency access for first responders and also providing safety for the traveling public while that disruption is happening.

Neuville suggested TRPC and TPB speak with Intercity Transit drivers regarding emergency routing when I-5 is closed. They have a unique experience with controlled intersections and roundabouts, resulting in a traffic standstill.

B. Community Advisory Committee (Jan. 27). Shawn Sandquist said the CAC received a year-end review from Village Vans, questions were asked and answered. They discussed the new route plans for September 2025 resulting in a lot of specific referral questions and answers provided by Bergkamp and the two representatives filling in for Rob LaFontaine. CAC discussed consumer issues, which resulted in a complement and a Dial-a-Lift concern, which was also addressed.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Service Impact Supervisor David Dudek, Operations Supervisor Bill Miller, and Advanced Technology and Training Coordinator Bryce Reinhardt are hard at work planning the South Sound Regional Roadeo which Intercity Transit will host July 12 & 13 at the Old Tumwater Brewery in Deschutes Valley. Save the date to come and cheer on our Operators and Maintenance teams or consider volunteering.

Last week it was announced that all federal agencies were required to temporarily freeze the disbursement of federal financial assistance effective January 28 at 5 p.m. ET. This pause also required federal agencies to review all financial assistance programs to ensure they were consistent with policies established by a series of Executive Orders. However, before taking effect, a U.S. District Judge blocked its implementation. The following day, the new administration cancelled the freeze altogether.

This freeze would have impacted all payments or reimbursements from the Federal Transportation Administration, which Intercity Transit relies on to fund many projects. The total amount of federal funding in jeopardy for our agency was just over \$11 million. While there is still uncertainty in the days to come about how current executive orders will impact federal transit funding, it also serves as a stark reminder that whether it's a state initiative seeking to repeal a funding source or an executive order directive suspending it, we can't take state or federal funding for granted.

Last week, our state advocates David Foster and Joanna Grist facilitated meetings with 22nd Legislative District Representative Beth Doglio. We discussed Intercity Transit's projects prioritized by WSDOT for funding consideration in the 2025-2027 biennium including:

- Battery Electric Coach Replacement Project
- Corridor Express Introducing New Limited-Stop Service from West Olympia to East Lacey

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

February 5, 2025

Page 6 of 8

- Lacey Express Introducing I-5 Service from Lacey Transit Center to Sounder Station via Hawks Prairie and JBLM,
- Crosby Loop at SPSCC Improvements

We also discussed possible funding of Intercity Transit's new route 14, which is taking the place of previous DASH service, by serving the Capitol Campus region and downtown Olympia with service to the Farmer's Market. Intercity Transit is respectfully requesting 50% of estimated operating costs over the coming biennium (\$1,225,000).

Deputy Director of Human Resources Alana Neal coordinated a Conversation Cafe for staff to attend commemorating Transit Equity Day on February 4. The event was co-presented by Dr. Nekya Young, Civil Rights and Environmental Justice Manager at the Washington Department of Transportation in the Public Transportation Division and Steven Meyeroff, FTA Compliance Administrator for WSDOT's Public Transportation Division. Transit Equity Day is observed annually on February 4 to commemorate the life and legacy of Rosa Parks on her birthday. Transit Equity Day also supports the efforts of many people working to support public transit in their communities. The actions and legacy of Rosa Parks are intrinsically tied to the concept of transit equity. Conversation Cafés are conversations among diverse people about their feelings, thoughts and actions. The simple structure of Conversation Cafés – and their spirit of respect, curiosity and warm welcome – help participants shift from superficial discussions to meaningful conversations about complex topics facing our communities. Conversation Cafés promote spontaneity and inclusivity that can lead to new insights and greater understanding. The Transit Equity Day Conversation Cafe discussion was centered on exploring Discrimination in Public Transit: From the Montgomery Bus Boycott to the Present Day.

The APTA Legislative Conference takes place May 18-20, 2025, in Washington, D.C. ITA members interested in attending should contact Clerk of the Board Pat Messmer as we normally have two ITA members attend with a small number of staff for in-person visits with our federal legislators.

AUTHORITY ISSUES

Neuville thanked Bergkamp for helping to coordinate the buses for the memorial procession to honor Shawn Yim, Coach Operator at King County Metro.

Pierce thanked staff for improving the message boards on the buses. They are well-worded and more visible with different colors.

Mejia participated in the TRPC Route 14 scavenger hunt along with her aide, Taylor Rome. Mejia said it was exciting to have this service to the capital campus back, plus the economic vitality of visiting all of the small businesses that the event provided.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

February 5, 2025

Page 7 of 8

Goodwin also participated in the scavenger hunt and said it was nice talking to the business owners and seeing how much they appreciate having scavenger hunt participants come in and talk to them and having a bus stop right in front of their business so accessible for all community members. She thinks Route 14 is a great addition to the downtown area and it does add vibrancy and makes you feel welcome. She also completed the point-in-time surveys at the Union Gospel Mission. She suggested to event organizers to keep in mind volunteers who use the bus and the need to get started at 5:30 a.m. There was a lot of good information that came from the community members. She also did a point-in-time survey at the Salvation Army and the bus was busy. She appreciates everybody who drives the bus, getting people where they need to go. She also signed up for the Martin Way Corridor survey and observed there was limited representation from high school students. It would be nice to have faces that represent that segment of our community to make it feel more cohesive and not feel like we're making assumptions for them.

Vanderpool is pondering the IT onboarding process and all of the information he's receiving. He's been taking notes and processing the public comments surrounding the ATU negotiations and he's had conversations with bus drivers and a lot of things stuck out to him through that and he's hoping IT can reach an agreement.

Cox hopes IT has been notified of the pending 10-day construction project taking place in Lacey starting February 10, at College and Lacey Blvd., 14th and College and Lacey Blvd. and Ruddell. The work will be done at night, but it may have an impact on our service. Cox said the Lacey City Council held a two-day retreat and the Council agreed to move forward with the metropolitan park district ballot issue, and they authorized the attorney and City Manager to pull together the ballot information and get it on the August primary ballot.

Von Holtz attended a lunch-and-learn in Tumwater at the ASHHO Cultural Center on February 4 and two representatives from Intercity Transit Village Vans attended. She said it was nice to see IT in the community and it was a great opportunity for people in Thurston County who want to be involved, and they were brainstorming with how they could help, and it was a fun crossroads for her.

Belk bid farewell to Gilman and is thankful for the time he had serving as Vice Chair by his side and on the ITA in general. It's clear to Belk that Intercity Transit has benefited so much from Gilman providing both heart and conscience and helping frame the context of what IT does and why it's important, and he appreciates all the work Gilman has done for the greater Olympia area.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

February 5, 2025

Page 8 of 8

INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Carolyn Cox

Carolyn Cox, Chair

ATTEST

Patricia Messmer

Pat Messmer
Clerk to the Authority

Date Approved: March 19, 2025

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