

Minutes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
October 15, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cox called the meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority to order on October 15, 2025, at 5:30 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; Thurston County Commissioner Carolina Mejia; Community Representative Wendy Goodwin; Labor Representative, Mark Neuville; Community Representative Justin Belk.

Members Excused: City of Yelm Councilmember Brian Hess; City of Tumwater Councilmember Kelly Von Holtz; and City of Olympia Councilmember Robert Vanderpool.

Staff Present: Emily Bergkamp; Pat Messmer; Katie Cunningham; Noelle Gordon; Nicole Jones; Jane Denicola; Nathan Davis; Thera Black; Matt Kenney; Brian Nagel; Jana Brown; Jonathon Yee; Ramon Beltran; Amanda Collins; Jessica Gould; Lynne Cunningham; David Chaffee; Ted Blankenship.

Others Present: Jakub Kocztorz, Legal Counsel; Jim Hanley and Margaret Janis, Community Advisory Committee; Matthew Branson from WSTIP; and Dale Learn from Gordon Thomas Honeywell.

RECOGNITION

A. WSTIP 2024 Safety Star Award. Matthew Branson, WSTIP Executive Director, presented Intercity Transit with the 2024 Safety Star Award in the large agency category. Branson emphasized the award, which is not an auto loss award, is a testament to the agency's consistent performance and dedication to safety, not just a single stellar year. Intercity Transit is described as the best performer in its size category, and this is their second time receiving the honor. The award includes a beautiful glass trophy and a \$5,000 prize to be used for employee recognition, acknowledging that the employees, with support from management, are the ones who make this safety record possible. IT used the financial prize to give each employee \$15 in "bonus bucks", which can be cashed out and added to their pay to be used as they wish. Branson praised IT's leadership and all employees—including drivers, mechanics, supervisors, and administrative staff—for making vehicle accident and avoidance an important part of the mission. The victory was exceptionally narrow, winning by a margin of only .0009 over the runner-up, Ben Franklin Transit. The other 2024 Safety Star winners mentioned were Clallam Transit System (medium agency) and Grant Transit Authority (small agency).

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STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

A. David Chaffee introduced Ted Blankenship, Technician.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was M/S/A by Goodwin and Pierce to approve the agenda as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

APPROVAL CONSENT AGENDA

It was M/S/A by Goodwin and Belk to approve the consent agenda as presented.

- A. Minutes** – September 3, 2025, ITA Meeting and September 17, 2025, ITA/CAC Joint Meeting.
- B. Payroll September: \$3,924,244.55**
 - Warrant Numbers: 43614-43615; 43714-43731 in the amount of \$23,837.30
 - ACH Payments: \$3,900,407.25
- C. Accounts Payable September: \$9,325,983.22**
 - Disbursed Warrants Numbers: 43510-43613 & 43616-43773; and voided warrant 43589 in the amount of \$9,314,055.35
 - ACH Payments: \$11,927.87
- D. Surplus Property Bus Shelter.** Donate a surplus bus shelter to the City of Bucoda. The estimated value of the surplus bus shelter is \$500. (*Noelle Gordon*)
- E. Surplus Property Vehicles.** Declare the Vanpool and Facilities vehicles listed in Exhibit A as surplus. Intercity Transit received replacements for these vehicles which have exceeded their useful life and are surplus to our needs. In accordance with Intercity Transit's process, once declared surplus the non-federally funded vehicles will be offered for direct purchase by other public agencies. The total value of the vehicles listed in Exhibit A is estimated at \$116,250. (*Noelle Gordon*)

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Federal Advocacy Report.** Federal Advocate, Dale Learn from Gordon Thomas Honeywell (GTH) provided an update on activities affecting public transportation in Washington D.C. and provided insight on what is going on in Congress, focusing on the federal shutdown, the status of transit funding, and the upcoming reauthorization of the surface transportation bill.

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Current Federal Environment and Shutdown - Learn said the country is currently in the 15th day of a federal government shutdown, which is highly disruptive to government functions and people's lives. While the FTA (Federal Transit Administration) is funded by gas/diesel taxes, meaning its employees are not furloughed, the shutdown does slow down grant processes and the awarding of funds. This delay occurs because consulting federal agencies, such as the EPA, Interior, and Labor, whose input is needed for grant analysis, are furloughed.

Transit Funding and Grants - Federal transit funding has been significantly boosted by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), or surface transportation bill, which led to an approximate 43% increase in authorization and, with supplemental appropriations, over a 90% total increase in funding over the last several years. For example, the Bus and Bus Facilities account has quadrupled since 2015. The organization has an aggressive grant strategy and a pending \$17.5 million request for a \$22 million project to purchase 16 diesel-hybrid replacement coaches, but the award decision is delayed due to the shutdown.

IT benefits from its status as an urbanized area, which improves its formula balance and competitiveness for discretionary funds. Furthermore, the earmark process has returned, which IT successfully utilized in 2023 for its Zero-Fare Stop Access Improvement Project. On alternative fuels, a large hurdle occurred when a nearly \$1 billion federal investment in the Pacific Northwest Hydrogen Association was announced for cancellation, though Learn anticipates the courts will ultimately reinstate the project.

Future Focus: Reauthorization in 2026 - The IIJA authorization is set to expire in 2026, making the reauthorization of the surface transportation bill the major focus for the coming year. The authorization committees (TNI in the House and Banking in the Senate) are evaluating current programs and formulating a new bill, which is traditionally a product of Congress. The GOP tends to favor formula funding, while Democrats prefer a balance with discretionary accounts. The local delegation is well-positioned to influence this process:

- **Representative Marilyn Strickland** is on the Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee.
- **Representative Rick Larsen** is the ranking Democratic member on T&I.
- **Senator Patty Murray** is the Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee.
- **Senator Maria Cantwell** is the ranking member on the Commerce Committee, which handles freight and safety issues related to the bill. President Trump's administration has outlined four basic concepts for the reauthorization: safety, accelerating project delivery/permitting reform, increasing opportunities through investment, and strengthening partnerships

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(implying seeking more funding partners). Staff will continue to advocate for the organization's interests during this critical reauthorization period.

Learn addressed several questions offering insights on federal policy, funding, and the political landscape. He responded to a question about the hydrogen project and zero-emissions plan and its future given the administration's actions, stating the President has selectively canceled projects from blue states, including the Pacific Northwest. Learn believes this cancellation, like others, will lose under legal scrutiny as it violates several elements of the U. S. Constitution and federal laws. He noted the consortium involved has indicated they will continue without the federal funding, and he anticipates seeing more private investment as litigation proceeds.

On the broader outlook for transportation funding, Learn offered an optimistic prediction, stating that a new surface transportation reauthorization will be generous and he does not anticipate a diminishment in transit funding. He characterized pure Department of Transportation (DOT) funding as very bipartisan and believes programs supporting transit, infrastructure, and access for the elderly and those with disabilities will not be affected by those in this administration. He added that even if full reauthorization takes time, a continuing resolution will maintain the current, very generous funding numbers.

A question was raised about the process for advocating for a large, multi-jurisdictional project, such as I-5 enhancements across the Nisqually region, which involves multiple agencies like the TRPC. Learn explained these projects are more competitive for federal funding, especially the earmark process. If multiple delegation members (like Representatives Strickland, Kilmer, and Cantwell) submit the same project, it creates a much stronger case and increases the priority for funding.

Finally, addressing the lawsuit Intercity Transit joined against the administration over grant requirements, Learn commented that while the administration will make certain political statements, like with the hydrogen hub, the courts have generally ruled against the executive branch in domestic affairs. He expressed confidence that very few of the politically-motivated restrictions on new funding will stick and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is unlikely to get political with routine items like the Bus and Bus Facilities account. However, he cautioned that large, statewide requests on politically charged issues, like the broadband funding mentioned, might still face political challenges.

B. Purchase of Operations Uniforms. Procurement and Project Management Coordinator, Noelle Gordon presented a contract for as-needed uniform items for Operations staff. Intercity Transit seeks to continue to purchase uniform items for Operations staff on an as-needed basis. These items include

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replacement garments for current staff and new items for new employees. Galls has been Intercity Transit's uniform provider for the past several years.

To ensure the uninterrupted and reliable provision of uniforms, staff seek approval to transition to the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services (DES) Master Contract 03424 for uniforms and accessories.

This new DES master contract was awarded to Galls following a competitive bid process, ensuring fair and reasonable contract pricing through the state's procurement process.

As a member of the Washington State Purchasing Cooperative, Intercity Transit is eligible to utilize this contract. Based on our positive history with Galls and the necessity of ensuring a continuous, reliable, and reasonably priced uniform supply, staff recommends using the DES Master Contract 03424.

It was M/S/A by Goodwin and Mejia to authorize the General Manager, pursuant to Washington State Contract 03424, to purchase as-needed uniform items from Galls, LLC (Galls) in an amount not-to-exceed \$225,000 per year, including sales tax.

C. 2026 Budget Presentation and Set a Public Hearing. CFO, Jana Brown presented an overview of the organization's current financial status and proposed the 2026 Draft Budget, requesting the board set a public hearing date.

Current Fiscal Status (Year-to-Date as of September 30) - The organization is in a strong financial position, having received 86.6% of its budgeted resources (\$333.6 million of \$385 million) while only expending 65% of the operating budget and 46% of the total capital budget. A large portion of resources came from interest income on capital reserves (\$6.2 million) and sales tax revenue. Operating expenditures were at approximately \$59 million against a \$90 million budget, reflecting a conservative and controlled spending environment. Capital expenditures are lower primarily because funds for large items like vehicle replacements are budgeted but often not spent until years after they are secured.

2026 Funding Resources - The 2026 budget is based on \$392 million in total funding resources, including a healthy fund balance carryover.

- Sales Tax Revenue is conservatively projected at \$88.3 million. This estimate reflects a challenging and volatile recent history, moving from an 11% increase in 2021 to a 1% increase in 2023, and a decrease in 2024. The 2026 projection is a conservative 3% increase over 2024 collected revenue, serving as a flat budget approach from an anticipated 2025 collection.
- Operating Grants total \$3.9 million, supporting key services like smart sensors, the walk-and-roll program, corridor express, I-5 service, and Dial-a-Lift/Vanpool support.

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- Capital Grants include a large \$13 million for the Patterson Maintenance Building, along with funds for bus/van replacements, bus stop improvements, and transit center upgrades. Staff remains optimistic that these grant funds will be secured, allowing projects to proceed or be scaled back if necessary.

2026 Expenditures and New Initiatives - The total proposed budget for 2026 is \$178.6 million, which is less than the previous year.

- Operating Expenditures are budgeted at approximately \$105 million.
- Capital Expenditures are budgeted at \$73.6 million.
- New Capital Projects include mechanical system improvements for the AD-OPS building, a roof replacement for the Amtrak Centennial station (paid through an inter-local agreement), and OTC restroom improvements. Regular life-cycle vehicle replacement is also budgeted for fixed-route, Dial-a-Lift, Vanpool, and non-revenue vehicles.
- Continuing Projects include the Patterson Maintenance Building Improvement, the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software, the Asset Management System, the Transit Operation Management System (TOMS), the BRT and Corridor capital program, bus stop improvements, and the hydrogen pilot project.
- Staffing additions include 9 new positions to support growing services and internal needs: an Operations Assistant, a Transit Instructor Supervisor and two Instructors, a Facility Technician, an Administrative Assistant for Vanpool, a Human Resource Analyst (to bring LNI review in-house), an Information Services Technician, and an Inventory Specialist.

It was M/S/A Goodwin and Pierce to set a public hearing for the 2026 Draft Budget on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

D. Selection of CAC Candidates for Interviews. Bergkamp provided a detailed summary of the process for selecting candidates for the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) interviews. Acknowledging the efforts of the ad-hoc committee, including staff members Amanda Collins and Nicole Jones.

Bergkamp said 38 applicants applied by the October 4 deadline. Given the large and diverse pool of applicants – many with specific interests in transit, equity, accessibility, and pedestrian/cyclist safety – the ad-hoc committee decided it would be difficult to interview all of them, so they worked to narrow the list down to 18 individuals to create a diverse and well-rounded group of applicants that would address current representation gaps.

The ad-hoc committee's shortlist of 18 candidates for interviews represents a mix of demographics, geographic locations (Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and broader

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Thurston County), age cohorts (from 20-30 up to 65+), gender identities, and personal experiences related to transit.

Bergkamp concluded by asking the ITA to direct staff to schedule interviews for the recommended shortlist of 18 candidates on November 7, 2025. The process also includes five standby candidates who can be called upon if any of the initial 18 drop out before the interviews, three of whom are youth candidates to meet the goal of having multiple youth representatives.

Pierce sought clarification on the selection numbers, especially since this is the first year with such a large applicant pool and a structured selection process. Pierce understands that 18 interviews will be conducted for the CAC three-year term applicants – these are the individuals detailed in Bergkamp’s summary. The five standby candidates will only be used if one of the initial 18 is unable to attend or chooses not to proceed with their scheduled interview. Pierce confirmed that all three youth applicants will be interviewed, regardless of whether they were part of the initial 18 main candidates or the standby group. This clarification ensures the committee is prepared to move forward with the interview scheduling on the approved date.

It was M/S/A by Belk and Mejia to direct staff to schedule interviews on November 7, 2025, based on the recommendations of the ad-hoc committee.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston Regional Planning Council (Oct. 3) Cox presented the TRPC update. She said several key items were presented beginning with a major presentation by IT staff Bergkamp, Nick Demeris and Rob LaFontaine on the major service changes scheduled to launch in May 2026 – a presentation that garnered significant attention and interest. Additionally, a report was given on rural transit, which TRPC manages. The report focused on service enhancements made possible by a new federal grant, highlighted by personal success stories of people whose lives were improved by having access to rural transit for jobs and classes. The newly added Saturday service has been highly successful, leading to immediate public demand for Sunday service.

The Council reviewed a list of legislative priorities to be coordinated with Thurston County cities, which included the Nisqually Bridge project, Yelm roundabouts, federal matching funds for fish projects, federal transportation funding, and a request to maintain funding for current projects.

Finally, a significant update was provided on the search for a new Executive Director. Fifteen candidates were narrowed down to five semi-finalists, with interviews scheduled for October 17. A community reception will be held on

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November 6 for the public to meet the finalists, and the TRPC is planning to extend their meeting on November 7 to vote on the final candidate.

B. Transportation Policy Board (Oct. 8). Belk said the Board received two key presentations from IT staff: a transit system update from Nick Demerice and an update on the Smart Corridors project from Peter Stackpole, both of which were well received. The agenda also included a continuing effort to recruit a business representative. The Board acted on the 2025 Title VI Plan and Resolution, which is the non-discrimination component of the Civil Rights Act. The discussion focused heavily on how the agency meets federal non-discrimination requirements, particularly through public outreach and accommodating diverse needs, including the translation thresholds for reaching people who speak languages other than English. The TPB recommended TRPC approve the Title VI Plan once it is finalized. Finally, Veronica Jarvis provided an update on the legislative priorities, which had already been approved by the TRPC but was highlighted to show they are now easily accessible on the website.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

- Bergkamp gave a brief update on former ITA member Don Melnick, who applied to be on the CAC. Bergkamp said to capitalize on his vast experience, particularly his knowledge bridging the CAC and ITA, the ad-hoc committee will create an emeritus role for Don so he can assist with being an ambassador for the committee.
- IT's Grant Program Manager, Jessica Gould, applied for the WSDOT Active Transportation grant. The grant request is for \$147,657 for the purchase of 9 e-bikes (3 cargo bikes, 5 commuter bikes and 1 adaptive trike), supportive equipment, and a part-time program coordinator who would manage all aspects of the e-bike lending library. The design of the project and number of bikes was determined by the IT employee survey (over 100 responses!) which showed tremendous interest and support for this project. Kerri Wilson brought the opportunity and the vision to apply for an e-bike lending library for IT employees. With help from the following individuals, we put together a very strong application:
 - Kerri – vision and a fully formed Project Implementation Plan
 - Thera – editing for word limits, content enhancement, and letter of support drafts
 - Drew – updated map of service area
 - Heather and Ally – employee survey assistance
 - Peter and the Cut Commute Committee – Letter of support and encouragement
 - Mark Neuville – Letter of support from ATU
 - Jana – liaison with WSTIP on insurance questions

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- In celebration of October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), the DEI committee hosted a special presentation by Steve Ferreira, founder of *Beyond Disabilities*, on Monday, October 6th. Ferreira is a dynamic and inspiring motivational speaker who has shared his story over 1,000 times across the U.S. and internationally. Born with cerebral palsy, Steve brings a powerful message about overcoming limitations, embracing differences, and living life beyond disability. His presentations offer a fresh perspective on inclusion, accessibility, and the value of diverse experiences in the workplace.

In addition to his speaking career, Ferreira is an accomplished athlete, a TEDx presenter, and a certified ADA consultant. His organization, *Beyond Disabilities*, advocates for people with disabilities and encourages communities to recognize that disability is simply a different way of living – not a limitation. To learn more about Steve, visit his website Beyond Disabilities | Motivational Speaker | United States.

- Customer Service Manager Jane Denicola and the Customer Service Team celebrated Customer Service Week October 6-10 with the theme of Mission: Possible. The work group enjoyed a group lunch out and held an Open House for all IT employees with refreshments, games and fun, and enjoyed a breakfast made by Denicola, Supervisors Russ Gilsdorf and Renee Fonseca. Thank you, Customer Service, for all the great support you provide our agency and the folks who count on us, our customers.

AUTHORITY ISSUES

Goodwin and Belk are excited about creating an "ambassador" role for former ITA member Don Melnick so he can continue his involvement with the agency. They strongly support the ambassador concept, seeing it as a timely and fitting way to utilize Melnick's experience, especially given the current CAC application process. Furthermore, they noted former ITA member Clark Gilman had previously suggested a similar "emeritus position" for Melnick which reinforces the value of Goodwin's suggestion.

Belk is excited about the endorsement of e-bikes as a transportation option. Belk shared that while he doesn't own an e-bike, he frequently uses them as a great fallback when public transit doesn't fully meet his travel needs in a different city. Belk mentioned positive, "transformative" personal experiences using e-bikes in locations like the National Mall in D.C. and around Seattle, finding them to be a very efficient way to get around. Belk said e-bikes are a great tool whose use and popularity will only continue to grow.

ADJOURNMENT

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With no further business to come before the Authority, Chair Cox adjourned the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Carolyn Cox

Carolyn Cox, Chair

ATTEST

Patricia Messmer

Pat Messmer
Clerk of the Board

Date Approved: November 19, 2025

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

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EXHIBIT A
SURPLUS VEHICLES - OCTOBER 2025

VANPOOL VANS						
ITEM	VEHICLE #	YEAR	MAKE/MODEL	# SEATS	MILEAGE	EST. VALUE
1	2335	2013	Ford Econoline 12 passenger	12	110,236	\$10,000.00
2	2344	2013	Ford Econoline 12 passenger	12	124,654	\$8,750.00
3	2349	2013	Ford Econoline 12 passenger	12	116,349	\$10,000.00
4	2351	2013	Ford Econoline 12 passenger	12	116,753	\$10,000.00
5	2355	2013	Ford Econoline 12 passenger	12	111,634	\$10,000.00
6	2430	2014	Chevrolet Express 12 passenger	12	133,926	\$8,750.00
7	2437	2014	Chevrolet Express 12 passenger	12	122,518	\$10,000.00
8	2444	2014	Chevrolet Express 12 passenger	12	145,469	\$8,750.00
9	2513	2015	Chevrolet Express 12 passenger	12	146,873	\$8,750.00
10	2514	2015	Chevrolet Express 12 passenger	12	110,208	\$10,000.00
SUBTOTAL						\$95,000.00
FACILITIES VEHICLE						
ITEM	VEHICLE #	YEAR	MAKE/MODEL	# SEATS	MILEAGE	EST. VALUE
1	1293	2006	Ford F250	6	167,215	\$8,750.00
2	1295	2008	Ford F450	6	135,863	\$12,500.00
SUBTOTAL						\$21,250.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED SURPLUS VEHICLE VALUE						\$116,250.00