

Minutes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
May 15, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sullivan called the May 15, 2019, meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority to order at 5:30 p.m., at the administrative offices of Intercity Transit.

Members Present: Chair and City of Tumwater Councilmember Debbie Sullivan; Vice Chair and Citizen Representative Ryan Warner; City of Lacey Councilmember Carolyn Cox; Thurston County Commissioner Tye Menser; City of Yelm Councilmember Molly Carmody; City of Olympia Councilmember Clark Gilman; Citizen Representative Karen Messmer; Citizen Representative Don Melnick.

Members Excused: Labor Representative David Claus-Sharwark.

Staff Present: Ann Freeman-Manzanares; Bree Anderson; Emily Bergkamp; Cindy Fisher; Jessica Gould; Steve Krueger; Pat Messmer; Eric Phillips; Rena Shawver; Zach Heinemeyer; Nicky Upson.

Others Present: Community Advisory Committee Member, Jan Burt.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was M/S/A by Citizen Representative Melnick and Vice Chair and Citizen Representative Warner approve the agenda as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None.

PUBLIC HEARING - 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program.

Grants Administrator, Jessica Gould, presented for public comment the 2020-2023 Transit Improvement Program (TIP). Gould noted she received two comments via email. The first comment requested more details on potential projects, the public comment process and the ITA meeting times. The second public comment was referred to the Planning Department because it consisted of suggestions to Route 47 and did not apply to the TIP.

Chair Sullivan opened the public hearing at 5:36 p.m.

With no one from the public present to comment, Chair Sullivan closed the public hearing at 5:37 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

A. VILLAGE VANS 2018 UPDATE. Cindy Fisher, Village Vans Supervisor, introduced Zach Heinemeyer, Village Vans Assistant. Fisher proceeded to provide an update on the Village Vans Program. Fisher explained Village Vans is a workforce development program that provides free employment-related transportation to those living in poverty or are low income so they can become financially independent. Village Vans provides job shadowing opportunities, assistance with cover letter and resume writing, and provides assistance in applying for jobs. Fisher shared several success stories about those who completed the Village Vans Program and found jobs, many who are now employed by Intercity Transit.

Fisher explained the New Market Skills Center is a high school located in Tumwater, and Village Vans provides transportation to their students, primarily to Gravity Learning Center so students can get their GED. This year, five students also received their Certified Nursing Assistant certificate. Village Vans drove them to nursing homes in the area so they could do their clinical studies.

Statistics for 2018:

- 239 Passengers traveled with Village Vans
- 3,560 Trips provided
 - 2231 work support rides
 - 589 daycare stops
 - 73 rides to interviews
 - 647 trips to school or training
 - 17 medical or rehab visits
 - 3 errands such as grocery store
- 32,720 Miles

2018 Volunteers (Working for a Living):

- 21 Village Vans Volunteer Drivers
- 3479 volunteer hours
- 18 Employment Hires
- 6 Hires with Intercity Transit
- 10 Employment Hires in transportation
- 4 Hired into Multiple Positions

Fisher quoted, "If you're judging behavior, you cannot connect." Village Vans has a "no judgement policy." Judging others would keep them from helping others to be successful.

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In order to gain a better understanding about people living in poverty, Fisher attended the two-day course at the Poverty Institute of Portland with Dr. Donna Beegle. All of the Village Vans passengers are living in poverty, as well as most of the volunteers. Fisher noted that transportation is a huge barrier for many, especially those living in poverty.

Fisher explained Governor Inslee's Poverty Reduction Work Group, RCW 74.08A.280 has a goal to reduce poverty by 50% by 2025, and establish Local Planning Areas (LPAs). The Thurston Local Planning Area's goal is to connect, coordinate, communicate, and plan activities and projects together with community organizations so those living in poverty can succeed. Fisher is a member and co-chair of the 2019 LPA representing Intercity Transit.

Fisher said the LPA conducts an annual Resource Fair, and the intent is for those people who are not part of the monthly meetings (staff who are working with people living in poverty) to be able to attend a resource fair where all have joined together to insure they have the information they need to best serve their clients.

Fisher held a LPA meeting at Intercity Transit, centered around a Transportation Panel and attending were Travel Training, Rural Transportation, DAL, Bus Buddies, Customer Service, City Gates, Village Vans, and Fixed Route. Each person on the panel talked about the services they provide, with a question/answer session.

Village Vans is funded by the Innovative Workforce Development Ladders of Opportunity Grant.

- FTA Workforce Development grant 2017 - 2019
- 50/50 Cooperative Agreement \$400,000
- 2 quarters remaining
- Actively seeking new funding opportunities through IT's Grants Administrator

Village Van's has formal partners (DSHS/DVR, Pac Mountain, SPSCC) who reached out to 5,154 clients in 2018 discussing Village Vans services to potential riders and volunteers.

A. 2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN POLICY POSITIONS. Freeman-Manzanares continued the review of the Strategic Plan Policy Positions to determine if the Authority wishes to make any changes.

1. Should Intercity Transit pursue additional park-and-ride facilities?

2019: While additional park-and-ride locations would prove beneficial to the PTBA, as well as the region as a whole, this plan urges caution in dedicating capital funds for additional park-and-ride facilities at this time.

2020: Partner with WSDOT if an opportunity becomes available. Pursue joint use agreements as necessary to secure park-and-ride space to support ridesharing, express bus and local transit services. Continue to evaluate emerging needs to support transit service.

No changes.

- 2. How do Village Vans, Community Vans, the Surplus Van Grant and Discounted Bus Pass programs fit into Intercity Transit's future plans? Are there other programs of this type that should be considered?**

2019: These four programs should be continued in future years. The grant funds previously utilized for Village Vans had been eliminated. In addition to these programs, the Authority expressed a desire for staff to work with schools on pass programs and promotions.

2020: Continue support for Village Vans, Surplus Van Grant, Community Van, and Discounted Bus Pass program. Focus on evaluation and options for innovative service zones. Continue to seek replacement grant funding for Village Vans Program.

No changes, except to highlight the need to continue to seek additional funding.

- 3. Are our services – Dial-A-Lift, Travel Training, and Accessible Fixed-Route Buses adequate to serve persons with disabilities?**

2019: Continue to focus on supporting the Travel Training program and the Bus Buddies program.

2020: Continue to pursue technology to improve productivity and service. Continue the effort to make all bus stops accessible and to provide shelters and other amenities at stops serving persons with disabilities.

Messmer said the sentence, "continue to pursue technology to improve productivity and service" is too general. She'd like to see a potential remix of the vehicles used, and are there new ways to revamp the types of vehicles used.

Freeman-Manzanares said the contract with Nelson Nygaard includes looking at a variety of service related activities, including the Dial-A-Lift program. Staff is focused on the growth of the DAL program.

- 4. Is the current fare policy appropriate?**

2019: Staff recommended we retain our policy to review fares every three years. The Authority has agreed it is prudent at this time to continue with our current fare structure.

2020: Actively following up on community direction to "Change the Way Fares Are Paid."

No changes.

- 5. Should Intercity Transit's planning for the next six years be financially constrained?**

2019: The outcome of the November 2018 ballot will focus the future planning and implementation efforts for Intercity Transit.

2020: As we implement services consistent with the long range plan, continue to closely monitor revenue collections and capital programs.

Delete this question from the Strategic Plan.

- 6. What role should Intercity Transit play in local transportation projects- Commute Trip Reduction, Youth Education Programs and the Bicycle Commuter Challenge?**

2019: Continue to support existing programming.

2020: Work with the Thurston Regional Planning Council, the State of Washington and the affected local jurisdictions to improve the Commute Trip Reduction Program. Pursue relationships with private employers to educate about the benefits of commute alternatives and better serve their needs and the needs of their employees. Continue to market alternative transportation to youth and in schools, as well as in the larger community. Continue to coordinate the Bicycle Commuter Challenge. ~~Market high frequency corridor service.~~

Messmer suggests splitting out "high frequency corridor service."

Melnick would like to see more about engaging seniors in public transit, like a senior education program.

Gilman would like to reach private employers and smaller agencies who don't have a CTR Coordinator.

- 7. Should Intercity Transit's current marketing approach and level of effort be continued?**

2019: Focus on strategic community outreach, engagement, messaging and use of available channels to develop our market. Expand the web site to better serve our various constituents and to continue to be a relevant business and communications tool for the agency. Intercity Transit should continue to pursue outreach communications through social media platforms.

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2020: Market services. Focus on customer information technology to enhance the customer experience. Explore wayfinding. Promote IT as an employer of choice.

No changes.

8. What steps should Intercity Transit take to reduce emissions and the negative environmental impacts of our operations?

2019: Continue to focus on sustainability agency-wide and evaluate alternatively fueled vehicles, products and equipment.

2020: Modernize equipment, facilities and boost ridership. Evaluate and commit to moving forward with carbon emission reductions at the earliest practical time.

9. What should be Intercity Transit's policy and actions related to expansion of the PTBA?

2019: Maintain the current policy which is not to expand the PTBA.

2020: Maintain the current policy which is not to expand the PTBA.

No changes.

10. Should Intercity Transit seek alternative funding sources involving stakeholders in an extended dialogue to determine if a mutually acceptable strategy can be derived?

2019: Bring together community stakeholders (schools, private business, non-profits, state and local governments) in having a greater role in providing alternative funding for transit services rather than rely on federal funding.

Delete this question from the Strategic Plan.

B. STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND END POLICIES. Freeman-Manzanares

Goal 1: Assess the transportation needs of our community throughout the Public Transportation Benefit Area.

End Policy: Intercity Transit Authority, staff, and the public will have access to clear and comprehensive information related to the transportation needs of our Public Transportation Benefit Area.

No changes.

Goal 2: Provide outstanding customer service.

End Policy: Customers and the community will report a high level of satisfaction.

No changes.

Goal 3: Maintain a safe and secure operating system.

End Policy: Focus on the continual improvement for the safety and security of all customers, employees and facilities.

No changes.

Goal 4: Provide responsive transportation options within financial limitations.

End Policy: Customers and staff will have access to programs and services that benefit and promote community sustainability focused on serving the mobility needs and demands of our community.

No changes.

Goal 5: Integrate sustainability into all agency decisions and operations to lower social and environmental impact to enhance our community.

End Policy: Resources will be used efficiently with minimal negative impact on the environment and the community.

Alter the End Policy to read: "Resources will be used efficiently to minimize the negative impact on the environment and the community."

Goal 6: Encourage use of our services.

End Policy: Educate and encourage community members to explore, appreciate and utilize the benefits of our services and programs.

No changes.

Goal 7: Build partnerships to address and jointly find solutions to the mobility needs and demands in our community.

End Policy: Work with governmental, private, for profit and not-for-profit community partners to understand our joint responsibility to insure great mobility options and opportunities in our community.

No changes.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston Regional Planning Council. Messmer said the TRPC met May 3. Members adopted the Public Participation Plan; Todd Stancil, Emergency Management Council Chair and Paul Brewster, Senior Planner briefed the Council on the Integrated Emergency Management Course and provided next steps. It would be helpful for the Authority and staff to hear how Intercity Transit is expected to perform in the event of emergencies like snow events and earthquakes.

Warner said he would like to hear specifically what Intercity Transit's role would be in the event of a major emergency in both response and recovery. He wants to know the partnerships the agency is building with the local senior centers and hospitals. Freeman-Manzanares said the agency doesn't have a partnership with these types of organizations because the agency operates at the direction of the County Emergency Management. Intercity Transit is the transportation provider in emergency situations which means we coordinate with the school districts also.

Messmer continued that TRPC received an overview of the Regional Transportation Plan's goals and policies. This was part of a series of topics relating to the Regional Transportation Plan 2020 update. Council did not ask for any changes to the plan's existing goals and policies.

The Council received an overview of the Sustainable Thurston and TRPC's Work Program. It was an overview of the progress toward implementing the actions in the Plan with TRPC as lead or co-lead. Council engaged in a discussion of next steps. Based on staff recommendation, Council leaned toward continuing to focus on achieving priority goals and targets, especially in areas where there are opportunities to leverage key actions to achieve progress on meeting more than one goal or target. The Climate Action Plan is one of the items on the list.

B. Transportation Policy Board. Melnick said the TPB met May 8. Chair Ryder appointed members Graeme Sackrison, Tye Menser and Renee Radcliff Sinclair to serve on the Business Representative Subcommittee; the annual Retreat will be held on June 12 at the Lacey Community Center; members received a presentation on the Regional Climate Mitigation Plan and the Regional Transportation Plan and a 2019 Legislative Session Update.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Freeman-Manzanares reported on the Class Pass Pilot Program. Before the Class Pass pilot, 32 classes paid to ride an Intercity Transit bus for field trip transportation a year. With the free Class Pass we have surpassed that number in four months.

- 47 Class Pass requests were received between January - April 2019;

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- 41 Class Passes were issued;
- 1,193 students and chaperones rode an Intercity Transit bus to a field trip;
- 110 students learned about public transportation through a classroom presentation given by Intercity Transit staff;
- 16 schools requested a Class Pass and 1 non-profit organization;
- Requests came from Tumwater, North Thurston, and Olympia;
- Requests were made for a large variety of field trip destinations, although the most common were LOTT, GRuB, Fertile Ground, Food Bank, and State Capitol;
- Schools and organizations most commonly learned about the Class Pass directly from Intercity Transit staff, word of mouth from other teachers and school staff, and Class Pass flyers.

APTA Roadeo participants leave tomorrow for Louisville, Kentucky. Practice is scheduled for Saturday, May 18; competition is Sunday, May 19; and awards banquet is Monday, May 20.

AUTHORITY ISSUES

Menser took a tour of the new facility at the Olympia Transit Center.

Cox said Lynda Zeman was appointed as a new City of Lacey Councilmember.

Cox said the county and urban cities are having discussions about establishing a homeless mitigation site at Martin Way and Carpenter. She'd like Intercity Transit to begin thinking about how the route on Martin Way might be affected and also how the agency might help support that operation from a transportation perspective, i.e. free passes, and how Village Vans might play a role, etc.

Carmody said she will run for the Yelm City Council again. In the event she doesn't get re-elected, she appreciates the opportunity to sit on the Intercity Transit Board. She appreciates how the agency works so hard to improve the community, and how well staff and the Board works together.

Messmer appreciated the tour of the new facility at the Olympia Transit Center and was impressed with the amount of space, and how the construction has taken place around a fully operational transit center.

Gilman said the mitigation site around the Olympia Transit Center has been cleared, and focus groups are forming in the next two weeks as part of a long-term plan and hopes Intercity Transit staff will attend. There have been three forums - one for downtown businesses and one at each of the high schools in Olympia, and 150 people showed up and had community conversations.

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Gilman thanked staff for the outreach efforts during the IT Road Trip. He is impressed with the amount of public input received.

Gilman referred to the secondary options program at Black Hills School and their challenges of having irregular schedules and getting to New Market and using fixed route services, and he was wondering if any progress has been made working with Tumwater schools.


Warner toured the new facility at the Olympia Transit Center and is amazed at the amount of space, and he's hopeful about what the agency can do with that site and how it will change the work staff does down there.

Sullivan attended the Tumwater Citizen's Community Summit (in connection with the Tumwater School Board) on May 1, 2019. She said the topic of transportation was brought up a lot, and strategies that focus on poverty and the schools and how to address those services. Transportation remained an important factor.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Authority, Chair Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 8 p.m.

INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY



Debbie Sullivan, Chair

ATTEST



Pat Messmer
Clerk to the Authority

Date Approved: June 5, 2019.

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