

Minutes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
November 20, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sullivan called the November 20, 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; City of Olympia Councilmember Clark Gilman; Thurston County Commissioner Tye Menser; Citizen Representative Don Melnick; Citizen Representative Karen Messmer; and Labor Representative Lisa Allison.

Members Excused: City of Yelm Councilmember Molly Carmody; Labor Representative David Claus-Sharwark.

Staff Present: Ann Freeman-Manzanares; Jessica Gould; Steve Krueger; Rob LaFontaine; Brian Nagel; Ally McPherson; Pat Messmer; Eric Phillips; Heather Stafford-Smith; Nancy Trail; Nicky Upson; Jonathon Yee; Michael Burnham.

Others Present: Legal Counsel, Jeff Myers.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Walker Stephens - Olympia: The Olympia Library is closing at the end of November through end of January for renovations, and this will affect a vulnerable subsection of the homeless community including the elderly and disabled who rely on support services from the library. He would like to see Routes 64, 66 and 13 be fare free starting November 29.

Nicole Thode - Olympia: She is the Manager of the Tumwater Library and she would like fare free to begin November 29 through January 31 between downtown Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater. The Olympia Library is closing for renovations. Libraries also act as warming centers during the winter, and she is concerned the most vulnerable won't be able to get rides to the other libraries.

Heath Reynolds - Olympia: He'd like to see a covered bus shelter at shelter #0594.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PROPOSED FARE CHANGE

Freeman-Manzanares said the Authority is taking comment on a five-year zero fare demonstration project. The zero fare system would eliminate fare collection on buses and Dial-A-Lift. Consistent with Section 5.4 of the Authority Bylaws, a public hearing is required for a change in any transit fares. As of 4 p.m. today 14 voice messages and 111 written comments were received. The majority of comments are in favor of pursuing the demonstration project. There were several comments from individuals requesting additional information regarding the project or expressing concerns with the proposal. The Authority is scheduled to vote on this issue on December 4, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. here at Intercity Transit. If passed, the demonstration project would go into effect on January 1, 2020.

Chair Sullivan opened the public hearing at 5:41 p.m.

Larry Watkinson - Olympia: He is a strong advocate of Thurston County's public transportation system. He said free bus service would create environmental equity and justice for all incomes, abilities and persons. Transit is a public supported service, like the library and schools and it is the right thing to do for our community. He applauds the ITA for moving forward with this free fare proposal.

Barbara Johnson - Olympia: She rides the bus and loves it. It's a wonderful experience. But no one has any money - either the elderly poor, the working poor, or the young couples. She is concerned about zero fare because she fears it will create a dangerous situation on the bus like the buses in Seattle (Operators being attacked). She said the ones doing this are those not paying. She said IT should have told the tax payers they were planning on going to zero fare. She opposes the zero fare.

Sandy Toso - Olympia: She does not agree with the zero fare proposal and thinks it's wrong. She's concerned about the homeless people riding the bus. She fears it will create a problem for other people riding the bus.

Georgia Wolf - Olympia: She is a DAL client. She has concerns about zero fare and that it will attract a lot of homeless people. She's concerned about her own personal safety. And she feels riding for free would be like an entitlement.

Tedd Kelleher - Olympia: He strongly supports zero fare and applauds IT for everything he's seen going on like the 15-minute dedicated lane makes him proud to live in Olympia. He agrees with all the reasons for zero fare. He's concerned about carbon emissions, but the 15-minute frequency is important to make the system usable for people like teens. When you get more people riding the bus, you get them out of cars and that reduces the carbon footprint.

Cole Abernathy - Olympia. He said he is in solidarity with Walker Stephens regarding providing free rides while the library is being renovated. He said he's been an IT bus rider since a child and he appreciates everyone in the organization and he agrees with the zero fare service.

Kendall Hernandez - He's a college student and supports free public transit. She agrees that it's the right thing to do and it will help the environment. Makes economic sense and would speed up the time it takes to ride the bus. She wants to know why people are scared and why they think people who can't afford to pay bus fare are any more dangerous than anyone else.

Hilary Seydell - Olympia: She is a mom of three and a member of the Olympia School Board. She is speaking on her own behalf and not on behalf of the school district. As a state employee, she enjoys the benefit of access to IT's world-class transit system. Her family uses transit for all aspects of their life. Her children have grown up riding transit and could all tell you which routes take them home by the age of three.

The practice of riding the bus in youth has many other benefits. Young people who know how to navigate their community and get where they want to go are able more fully participate in the life of a community. As a school board member, she frequently hears a desire from organizations to more deeply engage youth in the work of our community. Providing them safe and efficient transportation is a great way show our youth that we want them to join us in the work of governance and decision making.

Full access to transit also empowers our youth to develop the independent life skills needed in adulthood. During the recent strategic planning process for the Olympia School District she frequently heard from parents and adult caregivers real concerns about whether their students were building the real-world skills they would need to live independently. Navigating transit builds those skills.

As our school systems balance the growing needs of our students with limited or restricted investments from the state, expanded access to transit for our students can help us become more financially and environmentally efficient by utilizing transit to move secondary students.

As the cost of living and housing in particular rises, it is critical for us as a community to look for ways to leverage the resources at hand to make our community livable for diverse types of families. It is also important for us to act swiftly to address the impacts of climate change. This pilot is an important step

in doing both.

She thanks IT for their vision in proposing this pilot, and looks forward to seeing how this initiative will transform our community.

Richard Harper - Olympia – He’s an IT Operator and does not approve of zero fare. He’s been driving for 17 years. He’s seen many changes for the positive. However he’s concerned, as are fellow drivers, because there are fare issues now but they can be worked around. If someone doesn’t have their fare he lets them ride anyway. He doesn’t deny anyone a ride. But there are people abusing the system and more people are sleeping, camping and riding around doing nothing on the buses. Using it basically as a campsite. He fears this is going to escalate w/free fare system. There is a group of people who don’t ride the buses now because they don’t have money. They are going to start riding the bus. Not to get to the store or work, etc. They will ride because they have nothing else to do. And that’s a problem that is increasing. The Operators will have to deal with this, and then people become belligerent. This is a dangerous issue and several drivers have said they are scared for what this change could cause. His issue with zero fare is that it will cause security and safety issues on the buses.

Sue Pierce – Lacey: – She is a long time bus rider and a member of the Community Advisory Committee. She said the zero fare demonstration project is a great idea and worth a try. She has never been afraid to ride the bus and isn’t afraid of the future. She knows staff researched this with other cities who have done this. There are a number of positive things about it. It should increase ridership because people won’t have to worry about the correct fare. It will speed up getting on/off the bus which will speed up service. She understands the concerns about security and rules, but IT has a good set of rules and a support system to support this demonstration. Applying the rules with consistency will help this. Giving it a five-year test is a good amount of time to test the demonstration project.

Bernie Meyer – Olympia: He gave up driving in 2007 because of climate, energy resource and waste. He uses the bus daily, and he looks forward to zero fare, especially for those with low income or no income. This is going in the right direction. This is a small step to deal with The Crisis.

Carl Bond – Olympia: He’s in favor of zero fare. Population will grow, ridership will grow and this will expedite the getting on/off buses.

Rebecca Foust – Tumwater: She supports zero fare but she’s concerned about potentially yo-yoing back and forth between zero fare and charging people for rides. She said we’re all part of this community and human beings and deserve to have a chance at life. We do need a code of conduct that can be enforced and keep everyone safe. Everyone needs transportation regardless of their situation.

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Orion Canning - Olympia: Has lived in Olympia ten years and doesn't own a car. Uses the bus or bikes. He cares about economic justice and the climate change, and wants as many people riding the bus as possible. He's for zero fare as it might decrease congestion and move us towards less pollution. The poor and homeless are part of your constituency and having access to transportation is foundational because whatever service is being provided helps people get out of poverty. That affects people of color, elderly, homeless and the disabled, the people who need the services the most.

Robert Gorrill - He supports zero fare. He said he along with others over the last few weeks have gone out over the different bus lines and spoke with bus riders about zero fare and the vast majority are supportive or interested. He said out of about 200 people, about 3% opposed or were skeptical. Zero fare is the most effective, immediate method to heighten mobility for low income and homeless people. Best way to mitigate the social and logical consequences of driving. Reduces traffic congestion, car accidents, road repairs. More riders can actually lead to more safety on buses. And can reduce stress and anxiety and conflicts related to fare collection. He rides the bus for fun, to read and to keep warm, and he doesn't think there is anything wrong with that.

Anna Schlecht - Olympia: She grew up on the bus and believes it's a critical part of community and society. Not having the bus curtails her ability to live her life the way she wants. She rides the 62 and 66 and these are wonderful routes, she loves the drivers and the people. She never had issues or problems. She knows that some of her fellow riders come from a house, apartment or a homeless shelter or camp. Public transportation is how you get to jobs, education, groceries, medical services. It's the connection that brings all together. She's a public servant and her career with the City of Olympia has been in housing, homeless shelters, services and moving into finding ways of supporting people who are living in the woods and camps. Housing and transportation go together. She strongly supports the zero fare project. She said all people deserve public transportation, and deserve to be part of any winning of the community and IT is making that possible. She started a construction business on the bus. Everyone was very supportive and it was a launching point for me.

Pat Holm - Olympia: Supports zero fare. Applauds IT for making this happen. She's been wanting this for many years. She's the transportation coordinator at the Department of Ecology, where they try to get people out of their cars which is hard to do. She is hoping that his project allows more people to take the bus because they don't need the correct fare.

Kropotkin Goldman - Olympia: Zero fare is a win-win. It's good for the environment, good for people generally and the most impoverished, and that doesn't take away from being good for the entire community. Other people gaining access to the bus doesn't take away that bus access for others. For those people concerned with problems of violence as a whole, the biggest cause for overall violence is people not having access to the necessities of life.

Baklhin Berkman - Olympia: He's a student who rides the 41 and 48 every day and he uses the bus for school and fun. He can assure the buses are safe both when crowded and not. He has not witnessed anything dangerous on the buses. He is strongly in favor of fare free buses.

Reed Ingalls - Olympia: He is a daily bus rider and when he was a student he enjoyed have a free bus pass from Evergreen and he's excited to hear about zero fare. He likes being able to get on with no worry about fares. The buses are community space where he makes friends and has conversations with people and he values that. He hopes zero fare expands to other cities. And he'd like to see having to pay for fares as weird as having to pay to use the library or go to school. And make other things accessible as well like food, housing, health care and the general necessities to survive.

Belinda Bess - Olympia: She's been riding transit for eight years and supports zero fare. The bus provides a real sense of community and solidarity and it's a great reflection on the community.

Noah Martin - Olympia: He supports zero fare. He rides every day and works and lives in Olympia. Not having to deal with making change and dealing with fare issues, like the amount of time buses get held up because people do not have the right change. IT has great bus drivers and it's one of the most efficient systems he's been on. Riding transit is positive for everyone and we should encourage it because it reduces CO2, road wear, and congestion. He noted the bus driver opposed to this because they are worried about allowing more people on who might fall asleep - it's a fair point to make that bus drivers are not shelter counselors and they are not trained in that. But he was homeless for six months and was one of those riders who got a free ride because he didn't have enough money to get to his job. Nickels and dimes can be the difference for somebody being able to struggle their way out of poverty. There are great bus drivers who understand that. Don't let issues of housing, inequality get in the way of reducing other barriers to people getting out of these dire situations.

Caroline Keane - Olympia: She said she has worked two jobs and had to turn to coworkers for bus money. Or has had to ask the driver to allow her to ride for free. She said it a demeaning, degrading situation to say you don't have money. This demonstration project will make such a difference in so many people's lives. Without transportation, there's no way to get to a job. She understands that people may have safety concerns but she hasn't seen that manifest itself and people are riding for free now. And she understands the challenge of people not having someplace to go. Those fears and challenges shouldn't keep us from trying this and trying to improve people's lives. She supports zero fare.

Radhika Krishna - She is a student at the Evergreen State College and she is disabled and a person of color. She said not everyone feels safe riding the bus. There are days

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when she intentionally doesn't ride because she felt unsafe. It's not because of the homeless population. It's most often people who do pay fares and it's the bus drivers. She wanted to acknowledge the privilege of those who do feel safe on the bus because that's not the case for everyone. However, she does support the zero fare, and a lot of her disabled friends who graduated this year currently can't pay the fares and they end up walking to doctor appointments and it would be great to see this service.

Kedisha Hissan - Olympia: She was a student at Oregon State University and has lived in Olympia for eight years. She is in full support of zero fare. The bus is a place that builds equity. It has a complete diverse array of people sitting together and we make friends and support each other. This is also a larger conversation about equity. By going fare free, we're taking a step in saying human life is worthy and we all have the right to safety, resources and accessibility.

Charlia Messinger - Olympia: Lived in Olympia nine years and did have the free Evergreen bus pass and it was a life saver. Easy access to transportation saves lives. Also survivors of domestic violence for them to have access that isn't controlled by someone else to transportation will remove a barrier. In her job, she gives out bus passes to folks who need to get to appointments, to a safe place, see their family. I am in favor of zero fare.

Annie Flynn - She said another group struggling are the elderly. Driving a car becomes more and more difficult and really it's safer for everyone else to not have us driving. More available transit is a powerful force. Making the fares free is powerful because everyone should be able to get where they need to go.

Scott Yoos - Olympia: (Required an interpreter, however, Anna Schlecht read aloud his written comments). He supports zero fare. He represents the throngs of alter-abled citizens who are concerned about this dystopian future which our blessed planet is tragically muddling towards under the sorry guidance of our short sighted species. This zero fare proposal is something that would make me feel truly proud of our community. It's potentially a huge game changer.

Chair Sullivan closed the public hearing on the Fare Change at 6:45 p.m. She then called for a ten minute recess. Chair Sullivan reconvened the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

2020-2025 Draft Strategic Plan

Freeman-Manzanares said the strategic plan is IT's primary policy document and includes 19 policy positions one of which is zero fare. The strategic plan is the basis of the budget. Two written public comments were received for the strategic plan, one in support of zero fare and the other in support of zero fare and bus rapid transit.

Chair Sullivan opened the public hearing at 6:56 p.m.

Sue Pierce – Lacey: She is in support of all the work that has been done on the strategic plan. She knows staff and the Authority took a lot of time during the year to work on this and compare it with the mission and vision statements, the general policies of Intercity Transit, and the long range plan. She appreciates that it's written clearly and easy to read. It explains IT's history and goes through all things critical to running IT and making it a successful transit system. She is in support of the draft plan.

Chair Sullivan closed the public hearing at 6:57 p.m.

2020 Draft Budget

Finance Manager, Suzanne Coit, indicated one written public comment was received on the draft budget.

Chair Sullivan opened the public hearing at 6:58 p.m.

Sue Pierce – Lacey: She is in support of the draft budget and she understands that potentially tough times are coming and the Authority has a rough road ahead while making adjustments. She understands the work that went into preparing the budget.

Chair Sullivan closed the hearing at 6:59 p.m.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

It was M/S/A by Vice Chair/Citizen Representative Warner and Commissioner Menser to approve the consent agenda as presented.

A. Surplus Property. Declared the items listed on Exhibit A as surplus with a total value estimated at \$70,669. (*Katie Cunningham*)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Transportation Policy Board. Melnick said TPB met November 13. The Board received an excellent presentation by Freeman-Manzanares on Intercity Transit's Strategic Plan Update. They also received an I-5 update on the work WSDOT and TRPC are doing to identify issues, challenges and potential solutions on I-5 in the Thurston Region. This included model results, technical input, and outreach and draft recommendations. Melnick said this will go until 2030 and he thought there should be some way to model autonomous vehicles.

There was a presentation on the 2020 Call of Projects by Paul Brewster to discuss regional priorities, funding set aside and potential new project selection criteria. They will be doing the majority of work at the December meeting. Menser added they went

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through all of the possible strategies that would have the biggest impact. The number one was land use and that was defined as continuing to develop our urban corridors and not allowing sprawl into urban areas. That was number one by a factor of two. It was more than twice as impactful as any other strategy they could employ. The second was transit. Gilman said the third most impactful item was transportation demand management and trip reduction strategies.

Community Advisory Committee. No Report.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

A meeting was held with the Olympian on November 14, 2019, resulting in an article referencing the proposed zero fare.

Applicants applying for the Community Advisory Committee were interviewed on November 6, 2019. A recommendation for a candidate will be presented to the Authority at the December 4, 2019, meeting. Two of these candidates also applied for the Citizen Representative position. Interviews for those candidates will be held November 25, 2019.

Freeman-Manzanares along with other staff members continue to present information about zero fare to the various jurisdictions and other community members.

Gilman asked if it's possible to address those affected by the closure of the Olympia Library and getting them to Tumwater and Lacey. Freeman-Manzanares said they will work with Operations and figure out how to provide transportation for those individuals.

AUTHORITY ISSUES

Cox asked if there could be noise makers at the December 4, 2019, Authority meeting.

Messmer asked for clarification regarding the meeting schedule for December, and whether there will be a meeting on December 18. Freeman-Manzanares said she was waiting for all of the public comment to come in on the budget and strategic plan, in the event there was the necessity to hold that second meeting in December. If the Authority feels comfortable with canceling that meeting, she will place the cancelation on the December 4 agenda.

Messmer said she was surprised and unaware of whether the Authority had policies about how we engage in legal activities such as I-976. She asked at what level does that become a Board or policy decision to get involved in litigation or is it delegated authority to General Manager. As far as she's aware, the Board was not involved in the

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decision to enter into a litigation of any kind, and the Board should have a discussion about who makes that decision.

Vice Chair Warner said Freeman-Manzanares consulted with him and the Chair regarding the ramifications and pros and cons of joining that litigation. Sullivan said this was a time-sensitive situation and there was no time or no mechanism to consult with the rest of the Board.

Legal Counsel Myers said Freeman-Manzanares called him about this situation and he reviewed the Bylaws for guidance as to how that decision is made and the Bylaws are silent on the issue. Myers suggested there was precedent which supported the Executive making such a decision. Myers suggested the organization may want to amend the Bylaws providing for specific guidance and criteria on this topic.

Gilman said he asked at the last meeting to have the issue of the closed library transportation for library patrons placed on the next agenda, and he thought there was general agreement. He asked if there is a formal process for Board members to get items on the agenda. Myers said the Board can set the agenda and add or delete topics any time during a regular meeting. If the Board wanted to hold a special meeting between now and when they need that action to occur, a majority of the Board can call a special meeting. The Board could even deal with the issue at tonight's meeting. Freeman-Manzanares stated that based on the conversation at the previous meeting, staff planned to provide transportation to assist during construction.

Melnick thanked Freeman-Manzanares, Phillips and LaFontaine for educating the public about the zero fare. He also thanked them for setting up the initial ride of The One. And he thanked LaFontaine for spending time showing him scenario planning modeling for the long range financials.

Sullivan thanked Freeman-Manzanares, Phillips and LaFontaine for the presentation to the Tumwater City Council. She appreciated the PowerPoint presentation.

Chair Sullivan recessed the meeting for five minutes prior to the start of the Executive Session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - LITIGATION - Pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(i), Chair Sullivan recessed the meeting at 7:25 p.m. to go into an Executive Session to discuss with legal counsel representing the agency matters relating to litigation or potential litigation to which the agency, is, or is likely to become, a party to, and public knowledge regarding the discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the agency. She announced the Authority would be in Executive session until 30 minutes.

EXHIBIT A
SURPLUS PROPERTY - NOVEMBER 2019

VANPOOL VEHICLES						
ITEM	VEHICLE #	YEAR	MAKE/MODEL	# SEATS	MILEAGE	VALUE
1	2000	2009	TOYOTA SIENNA	7	128,206	\$4,708.00
2	2005	2009	TOYOTA SIENNA	7	148,293	\$4,241.00
3	2125	2011	DODGE CARAVAN	7	83,336	\$5,611.00
4	2132	2011	DODGE CARAVAN	7	72,532	\$6,075.00
5	2208	2012	DODGE CARAVAN	7	121,388	\$4,592.00
6	2240	2012	CHEVROLET EXPRESS	15	120,388	\$7,482.00
7	2313	2013	DODGE CARAVAN	7	105,642	\$5,112.00
8	2361	2013	CHEVROLET EXPRESS	15	101,789	\$9,782.00
9	2400	2014	DODGE CARAVAN	7	108,097	\$5,905.00
10	2405	2014	DODGE CARAVAN	7	115,620	\$5,645.00
11	2517	2015	CHEVROLET EXPRESS	12	92,812	\$11,516.00
TOTAL VALUE						\$70,669.00

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Those attending the executive session included: *Commissioner Menser; Councilmember Cox; Citizen Representative Messmer; Councilmember Gilman; Citizen Representative Melnick; Citizen Representative and Vice Chair Warner; Councilmember and Chair Sullivan; General Manager Ann Freeman-Manzanares; Clerk of the Board Pat Messmer; and legal Counsel Jeff Myers.*

Chair Sullivan reconvened to regular session at 7:55 p.m.

Legal Counsel Myers asked the Authority for discussion about how they wish to respond to the I-976 lawsuit, and to consider approval to participate in the litigation as determined by the General Manager. Intercity Transit is now a party to that litigation and it's appropriate for the Authority to weigh in and take a position on how they feel and express concerns about the merits of I-976 and take action as they see fit.

It was M/S/A by Citizen Representatives Warner and Melnick to approve participation in litigation opposing Initiative 976 as determined by the General Manager.

CLOSED SESSION - Pursuant to RCW 42.30.140 (4) (b), Chair Sullivan announced once the meeting is adjourned, there will be a Closed Session to allow Authority members and necessary staff to discuss items related to the IAM District Lodge 160. No further action will be taken.

Attending the Closed Session: General Manager Freeman-Manzanares; Admin Services Director Heather Stafford-Smith; Authority members Sullivan, Warner, Melnick, Gilman, Messmer, Menser and Cox.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Authority, Chair Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY



Debbie Sullivan, Chair

ATTEST



**Pat Messmer
Clerk to the Authority**

Date Approved: December 4, 2019.

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

