

**Minutes**  
**INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Held Remotely**  
**April 21, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Cox called the April 21, 2021, meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority to order at 5:30 p.m. This meeting was held remotely in accordance with [SCR 8402](#) extending certain gubernatorial orders issued in response to the COVID-19 state of emergency.

**Members Present:** Chair and City of Lacey Councilmember Carolyn Cox; Vice Chair and City of Olympia Councilmember Clark Gilman; City of Tumwater Councilmember Debbie Sullivan; Thurston County Commissioner Carolina Mejia; City of Yelm Councilmember Molly Carmody; Citizen Representative Don Melnick; Citizen Representative Sue Pierce; Citizen Representative Justin Belk; and Labor Representative Paul Tischer.

**Members Absent:** Labor Representative David Sharwark.

**Staff Present:** Ann Freeman-Manzanares; Jason Aguero; Emily Bergkamp; Mike Burnham; Suzanne Coit; Cindy Fisher-Waterhouse; Jessica Gould; Duncan Green; Steve Krueger; Ally McPherson; Pat Messmer; Eric Phillips; Nicky Upson; Daniel Van Horn; Kerri Wilson; Jonathon Yee.

**Others Present:** Legal Counsel, Jeff Myers; Marie Lewis and Ursula Euler, Community Advisory Committee; Sophie Stimson, City of Olympia.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**It was M/S/A by Citizen Representative Melnick and Commissioner Mejia to adopt the agenda.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - No public comment was received.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- A. City of Olympia Transportation Master Plan Update.** Development Director, Eric Phillips, who participated on the Plan's steering committee, introduced Sophie Stimson, Transportation Planning Supervisor for the City of Olympia.

Stimpson explained the Transportation Master Plan is a unified approach to building our streets system and the goal is to advance the comprehensive plan vision and that vision is grounded in increasing the number of trips in the community in Olympia made by walking, biking, and transit. The main outcome of this planning process is a long-term set of prioritized project lists, that includes

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the ideal complete system identified as a 20-year list. Stimpson provided an overview of the contents of the Plan.

An important feature looked at is funding, particularly capital funding. Now that there is a transportation plan, the transportation concurrency and impact fees can be updated.

The Growth Management Act is a requirement of the city and impact fees are a way that new transportation improvements can be funded. The Olympia City Council is very interested in updating these programs.

The Plan includes a chapter on Policy Considerations that are issues to talk about further in the future. The best example is the role and impact of autonomous vehicles on our system. This is just one example of a topic the committee will spend more time on in the future. Also identified were geographic areas of the city where the committee needs to spend more time understanding the issues and identifying improvements.

Stimson pointed out the Maintenance and Operations chapter is more than just building new things out of concrete and asphalt. A person's day-to-day experience on our streets system is often very influenced by how it's operated and maintained.

Stimson continued with Public Input. She said as the committee develops this Plan, they use two online story maps to share ideas with the public and seek input. The story maps are an online tool where they can present text, graphics, and maps made using GIS geographic information services. In the story maps they embedded surveys, to ask people for feedback, and each time they created a story map and used a survey, they received over 300 responses. Through the surveys they were able to hear from the public about the types of projects to include in the Plan, and how they might prioritize the projects, and they shared some of the criteria with the public and received feedback. They also talked to the public about funding and asked for their priorities for future. These were valuable tools for informing the public about the whole plan development process.

Types of projects in the Plan include: *Sidewalk; pathways; enhanced crosswalks; bicycle corridors; enhanced bike lanes; roundabouts; resurfacing; street reconstruction; safety improvements and transit treatments.* These projects will improve the street system for people walking, biking, riding the bus and driving. They used methodologies that allowed them to prioritize most of the project class. Stimson pointed out that for many of the pedestrian projects, like sidewalks and enhanced crosswalks, they made proximity to bus stops a very high priority.

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Transit and access to transit was an important part of how they prioritized many of these projects and were strategic about where improvements are needed.

They recognized that not all streets need all types of improvements. To do this, they established system targets for the different types of projects. The system target is a metric that describes what an adequate level of service is. They wanted these types of improvements on the major streets and 300 feet of major common pedestrian destination.

People should be no more than a quarter mile from a low stress bike route and a low stress that is one that serves more people of broader age and ability who are interested in bicycling, so that might be a protected bike lane or a bike corridor through a neighborhood. Another metric is sidewalks to be on at least one side of all of our major streets. This is a data-driven approach, and by doing this, they can be more predictable and more equitable in how to plan for improvement.

Stimson reviewed funding. Typically, there is about \$6.5M in revenue per year for transportation capital projects, which is different from the operations and maintenance budget. This was the first time they took a comprehensive look at capital funding, and it helped set the stage for what they could accomplish in this transportation master plan. Any possible new revenue would be applied to the prioritized Project list that is contained in the Plan. While we will make progress building the needs we have identified it became clear that new revenues are going to be important. Stimson shared a chart showing the funding gap for a few of the projects.

The committee was strategic with these metrics and identified the full network need. She showed a chart that shows what we can afford to build in 20 years based on typical annual funding of \$6.5M. The safety projects and transit projects are not types of projects identified or secured by a funding source. This is a finite need. At some point they will be done making improvements to the streets system, but not everything is a finite need. Safety projects would be categorized as something that they will have to address on an ongoing basis, as behaviors change and population grows. Safety will change on the streets system and they will address it then.

Another big funding consideration is pavement management. Street resurfacing needs are also not finite. They are ongoing as streets continue to deteriorate and to keep everyone safe and in good condition, a more secure ongoing funding source is needed.

Stimson reviewed what is new and what they learned from doing the Transportation Master Plan. It's the first comprehensive look at future transportation needs. Many new challenges were identified. The prioritized

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project list is exciting and definitely a new approach, because they're more formal and data driven than past practices, and they are proposing a whole new approach to bike facilities. Standard bike lanes are not enough to encourage a wide margin of the community to bicycle. They are placing greater emphasis on improving intersections with roundabouts because they've shown to be safer, and they effectively slow traffic. And placing greater emphasis on making better use of the street space that we have two lane reconfigurations, so modifying or removing lanes and using the space to serve more people, more types of modes on our streets with them. They also heard a lot from the public about equity, and as a community. The role that transportation plays in serving our community more equitably.

The committee addressed distinct transit improvements in the Plan. The Plan is not prescriptive about transit, about where these improvements are needed. Intercity Transit does a great job understanding what the system needs are. The Plan is showing a commitment to help Intercity Transit operate on the streets system. We identified working with Intercity Transit in a range of different types of transit improvements. Some improvements were made outside of the Olympia Transit Center in order for The One to operate. In addition, some improvements are on Fourth Avenue right in the downtown core. The city is interested in helping resolve route circulation issues on the streets in Olympia.

There are several reconstruction projects in the Transportation Master Plan that are the biggest, most comprehensive projects, and they only come around every few years, really dependent on how successful we are with grants. Several of these are on transit routes. All but Fones Road on this list is a transit route. Intercity Transit will be consulted as the city scopes and designs these projects. Olympia will work with Intercity Transit's staff as these projects move forward.

- B. 2021 Bicycle Commuter Challenge Update.** Duncan Green, BCC Specialist, provided an update on the Winter Bicycle Commuter Challenge (BCC). Green shared this year's poster entitled, "Bicycle for Joy!" The poster was adapted by a drawing created by the daughter of an Intercity Transit employee for the Bike Art Contest.

The Winter Bike Challenge began in February 2021 and ran the entire month. It included weekly prize drawings and a bike art contest. The event was well attended in spite of really bad weather.

**Event statistics include:**

- 270 Riders – 20 less than 2020
- 60 Teams
- 1,827 Total Days
- 19,571 Miles – more than 2020

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- 25 Prizes distributed

Future Events Coming in 2021:

- **April 22 – Earth Day Market Ride:** The event runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Olympia Farmer’s Market. The Farmer’s Market will offer a gift and the BCC will offer a gift to the first 50 people who arrive by bike or on foot. The first 50 people who arrive by bike will receive a gift bag from the BCC.
- **May – 2021 Bicycle Commuter Challenge:** Participants can count miles for any type of bike ride which coincides with this year’s motto: Fitness, transportation and fun – all rides count in 2021! Everyone enjoys the many prizes up for grabs and there are a lot again this year, like bike gear and coffee mugs. Also, a hand-made quilt is being donated by a long-time BCC participant.

All participants, whether on a team or not, need to create an account on the BCC website or log into an existing account. They must also:

- Log at least one ride in May and receive valuable coupons.
- Log at least one ride in a given week and be entered in that week’s prize drawing for bike gear.
- Log 10 days or more and get an extra page of coupons.
- Log 15 days or more and be entered to win the Grand Prize bike vacation with Adventure Cycling.

T-shirts should be available by May 1. Selling the t-shirts could be a challenge because there is no physical location to sell them, but Green is working with a local vendor who will print them and place them in an e-store where folks can purchase and pick them up from the printer or have them shipped.

The sponsorship program is also restarting. It’s a really great part of the BCC – a great way to connect with the local business community. Green also mentioned the Youth Bike Challenge which is running concurrently with the BCC. Youth can participate in both programs.

Belk suggested keeping the BCC open to all kinds of rides to encourage people to replace any type of short trip with their bike. Carmody suggested running the BCC year-round with an ongoing awards program. Mejia asked if IT has partnered with Olympia Experience Beyond – they have nice bike maps associated with local businesses.

- C. **Schedule 2022-2025 TIP Public Hearing.** Grants Program Administrator, Jessica Gould, provided an overview of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for 2022- 2025.

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The TIP is Intercity Transit's complete program of anticipated federally funded projects for the next four years. All transit systems are required to have a TIP to be used as a guide for future projects and programs. The TIP:

- Helps identify and reprioritize projects based on funding changes and project priorities. An example is a project that you'll see in the TIP such as the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure project, which doesn't have federal funding yet. Once funding is secured, we'll be able to move more quickly because the project is in the TIP.
- The FTA requires a review of all potentially federally funded projects publicly. The TIP is the first step in the annual cycle that we do of reviewing and updating IT's planning documents and identifying projects that need to be programmed in the STIP, which is the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. Projects that have funding need to be in the STIP so we can obligate them and then actually utilize the funding.

Could reviewed the TIP projects:

- Capital Preventive Maintenance - We can use federal funds for Operating Costs associated with maintaining our fleet which includes many vehicles that are federally funded.
- Replacement Vanpools - Vanpools have a useful life of four years though IT keeps them longer because of how well we maintain our fleet. Using federal funds for Vanpools helps to off-set some of the local costs for the agency.
- Bus Stop Enhancements and Accessibility - This is a project we especially want to pursue federal funding on because of the need for more stops that are accessible for rear-door boarding. The catalyst for this is the zero-fare demonstration project and the effects of COVID-19. Rear-door boarding is faster and safer for operators and customers. Enhancements also include shelters, solar lights, benches and bus signals.
- Walk N Roll Program - We are always pursuing regional federal funding for this program. IT's been successful for years and has secured funding up to 2025, but having this in the TIP positions us for other opportunities.
- Replacement Coaches - We expect the need for 23 replacement coaches in the timeframe of 2022-2025. The number reflects the expected increased cost of coaches that may incorporate alternative fuel. We will aggressively

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look for external funding for this project and hope to get at least half if not more federally funded.

- Dial-A-Lift Vehicles - We are positioning ourselves for external funding for DAL vehicles. We'll have a need for 28 replacements in the next four years.
- Pattison Street Project - The Pattison project is moving along well. We still have a chance to apply some additional federal funding if we get the opportunity, but from a funding perspective, the window on getting more outside funding for this project is closing. We've been accumulating funds both from our direct apportionments and from competitive applications and we've done quite well with piecing that quilt of funding together from state and federal sources.
- Regional Mobility Grant Program - We are working to get transit-only access either into the Martin Way park-and-ride or with an inline station to the side of the park-and-ride. This project is critical for the BRT project and allows IT quicker in and out access which equals faster service for customers.
- State's Regional Mobility Grant Program for BRT station construction and we have a significant legislative ask out with Senator Murray's office and Congresswoman Strickland's office. This project needs significant federal funding and we're definitely looking for it wherever we can.
- Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Project - Will be informed by the study that is currently underway. This is another project we are requesting a significant federal investment and we're optimistic particularly with the Administration change and the emphasis on transit and alternatively fueled vehicles that we're seeing in the new legislation.

### **TIP Timeline -**

April 19 - Presented an overview of the TIP to the CAC.

April 21 - Requesting to set a public hearing May 19.

April 22- May 19 - Soliciting public comment in the following ways:

- Article in the Rider News
- Legal Notice in the Olympian
- News Release to media outlets
- Social media including IT's Facebook and Twitter accounts

After the public hearing, the ITA has two weeks to consider public comment.

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On June 2, the ITA will decide whether to adopt and finalize the TIP or modify it. If adopted, we will share the TIP with Thurston Regional Planning Council and Puget Sound Regional Council so they can include it in their Regional TIPs. From there, it rolls forward to the Statewide TIP, which is expected to be adopted in January 2022.

- D. Vanpool Fares.** Vanpool Manager, Cindy Fisher Waterhouse, presented whether to adopt a flat rate fare structure for vanpool, or continue with the current fare structure that was implemented in 2013. She believes the current fare structure is a barrier to accessing vanpool for many citizens.

Intercity Transit's vanpool program serves commuters who have at least one end of their trip in Thurston County. The program, which started in 1982 with 2 vans, currently has 62 active vanpool groups due to the pandemic, down from 183 pre-covid. Thirty-five (35) additional groups are commuting very intermittently, and 33 groups are teleworking.

In 2013, staff was directed to collect 100% of direct operating expenses, which includes vanpool division expenses, vehicle maintenance, fuel, and insurance. In 2019, vanpool direct operating costs were approximately \$1,472,000. Revenues from 2019 fares were approximately \$1,389,000. In 2019, fare cost recovery was at 94%. Adopting the proposed flat rate fare structure, based on 2019 fare recovery costs, is projected to generate \$1,124,000, which is 76% recovery of direct operating costs.

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

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

### **Challenges with Current Fare Structure:**

- Fares Vary Month to Month
  - Number of participants
  - Roundtrip length of commute
  - # of days traveled
  - Mileage adjustments for detours, incentives for full ridership, van wash credit



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- Pre-paying fare for next month based on last month's data
- Administering Fare Collection
  - Complex administration of program
  - 2 FTEs 50% of time calculating, collecting, and discussing fares
- Potential customers do not know the cost of participation
  - Difficult to engage employers or potential customers if we can't tell them the cost
  - How much does it cost - well, it depends!

### **Flat Rate Fare Benefits:**

- Advertise and communicate cost of vanpool - best marketing strategy
- Reduce administrative costs of collecting fare by reducing staff time from 160 to 40 hours/month
- Allow more staff focus on Outreach and retention
- Attract employers and encourage subsidies
- Attract essential, industrial, lower income workers with affordable consistent fares
- Autopay option for fare through website for timely payment
- Retention - the fare is not based on ridership - it's individual
- Per person fare allows groups to split for social distancing without changing cost
- For the first time in vanpool history, we will be able to tell potential customers and employers how much vanpooling costs.

### **Proposed Vanpool Fare Structure:**

Zone 1: Daily Round Trip Miles - up to 75 miles - \$75/month

- 120 groups affected - 659 vanpool participants - 4 groups slight fare increase

Zone 2: Daily Round Trip Miles - 76 up to 100 miles - \$100/month

- 34 groups affected - 186 vanpool participants - 3 groups slight fare increase

Zone 3: Daily Round Trip Miles - 101 up to 200 miles - \$150/month

- 26 groups affected - 171 vanpool participants - 13 groups slight fare increase

### **Cost Recovery:**

- 2019
  - Annual Revenue - \$1,389,143 - monthly average \$115,762
  - Direct Operating Costs - \$1,471,873
  - 94 % Direct Cost Recovery
- Projected revenue based on 2019 data implementing flat rate
  - Revenue - \$1,124,100
  - Reduction of \$265,043 annually/\$22,087 monthly
  - At \$75 rate, 294 additional riders needed to make up revenue loss

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- Increased ridership expected with ability to market program effectively by clearly stating the cost to vanpool.

### **Current Status:**

- Pre-covid - 180
- Currently 130 groups
- 62 groups currently active
- 35 groups commuting intermittently
- 33 groups teleworking
- Fares were suspended March 2020
- 62 active groups resume fares May 2021

**The Authority directed staff to move forward to adopt a flat rate fare structure.**

Carmody suggested reducing the requirements and citing that IT could cover much of the costs since the implementation of the sales tax increase. She said IT also needs to consider that housing prices have skyrocketed, and people are moving away from the city and that means more will be telecommuting.

Sullivan said IT's philosophy is to make it simple, for staff and the public, especially since zero-fare. She's in favor of the three-tiered process citing it's easier to sell.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **A. Transportation Policy Board.** Melnick said at the April 14 meeting:

- Tumwater Mayor Kmet gave a presentation on the new segment of the Tumwater Deschutes Valley Trail that connects Tumwater Historical Park with the Brewery Park at Tumwater Falls. With TPB's recommendation, TRPC provided federal funding for this project.
- The Board received an update and draft timeline on evolving to a new process for the Call for Projects. It appears it's going to involve a more substantive role for the Technical Advisory Committee, because they plan to initiate this project for the 2022 Call for Projects and want to move on to making decisions based on established criteria.
- The Board received the results and key findings of the Trails Survey conducted by TRPC. The survey collected input on the update to the Thurston Regional Trails Plan - 1,200 people participated in the online survey.

### **B. Community Advisory Committee.** Lewis said the CAC met on April 19 and the members received the same presentations as the ITA this evening.

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**Traffic Safety Campaign.** Kerri Wilson shared information about a new grant funded Walk N Roll event. Walk N Roll is partnering with the Olympia Police Department, Safe Kids Thurston County, and Target zero, and there is funding through State Farm to distribute yard signs with traffic safety messages. These signs were designed by Thurston County youth through an art contest. The goal of the project is to encourage drivers to slow down making the roads safer for people who are walking and rolling. All Olympia residents are invited to pick up a yard sign at one of the distribution events. Everyone who lives in Olympia is encouraged to pick up a sign for their yard. Wilson asks everyone to help spread the word about this project. If the project is successful and more funding is received, she hopes to expand to other parts of Thurston County. The distribution dates and sites are:

- Jefferson Middle School, May 11, 4:00-6:00 PM
- Garfield Elementary School, May 13, 4:00-6:00 PM
- Reeves Middle School, May 18, 4:00-6:00 PM
- Roosevelt Elementary School, May 19, 4:00-6:00 PM

### **GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

- The agency held a topping off ceremony on Monday, April 12 at the Pattison construction site, and Congresswoman Strickland addressed the audience. Staff had the opportunity to discuss with Strickland the possibility of future grants, specifically funding for bus rapid transit and alternative fuel infrastructure and vehicles.
- The Marketing and Communications staff along with Information Systems staff are working to advance the IT website, and improvements include using the state's usability lab. They are recruiting individuals to participate and extended an invitation to the Community Advisory Committee. Staff will present the results at a future ITA meeting.
- The CAD/AVL system contract is completed and approved. Staff is looking forward to the kick-off meeting and hopes to have the system in test mode later in the year and fully accepted in 2022.
- All fourteen new Gillig buses are onsite. These vehicles are part of the pilot group for the new CAD/AVL system.
- The pre-submission meeting was held today with the City of Olympia for the development of the next phases of the Pattison Street Master Plan project which includes the renovation of the Maintenance Facility, bus yard and demolition of the existing administrative/operations building.

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- There is continued interest in zero-fares. Posted on the IT Facebook page is the radio interview Cool Solutions conducted with Councilmember Gilman and Freeman-Manzanares. To view click here: <https://soundcloud.com/cool-solutions/the-stone-soup-recipe-for>. The interview starts around 6:44.
- Freeman-Manzanares gave a “shout-out” to Cindy Waterhouse and all of the Vanpool staff for all of the research that has gone into the vanpool fare proposal. They have been working with a consultant, AECOM, through a grant received from the state to educate staff on how to process and sell vanpool. It’s called Persuasion and Behavioral Change training. The vanpool staff has been reaching out and doing a lot of reading and experimenting on how to expand selling skills.
- The APTA Legislative Conference will be held virtually on May 18 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. This conference provides education on important federal legislation and policy initiatives. Board members interested in attending can contact Pat Messmer.
- Nick Redmond joined IT for a six-week internship through the WorkEx program. This program is designed to provide civilian work experience for soldiers planning to exit the military. He will be helping IT research and gather information on the alternative fuel study. Nick is a West Point graduate with a degree in economics and has spent his military career as a commissioned Army officer in Korea, Texas, Virginia and Washington.
- Thera Black, who is familiar to many for her work with TRPC and SCJ Alliance, joined the Development Department as a part-time Project Coordinator. Thera will provide much needed support for several new projects in Development that support full implementation of the adopted Long-Range Plan including many of the corridor-based service programs such as High-Capacity Transit (BRT Light).
- Freeman-Manzanares gave a “shout-out” to the Human Resources team for thinking outside of the box on how to recruit new employees. Anyone who has visited the SPSCC campus lately will have noticed when exiting the facility signage indicating that IT is hiring. It must be working because applications are coming in. The message is also posted on the front of the buses.
- The last three days, Operations staff has been conducting interviews for the next Operator class. Training is scheduled to begin at the end of May.

### **AUTHORITY ISSUES**

Tischer thanks Maintenance for the great job of keeping the buses clean. He’s received a lot of positive input about how well the buses are being sanitized. The buses are extremely clean, and he’s heard a lot of encouraging comments from the riders as well.

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He wanted to again thank Freeman-Manzanares and her staff for their continued support and leadership throughout this public health crisis

Mejia, Pierce and Belk enjoyed the “topping off” ceremony and tour of the new building and gave “kudos” to staff for planning a successful event.

Carmody gave a presentation to the Yelm Rotary Club about Intercity Transit’s Zero-Fare program and the sales tax initiative Prop 1.

Carmody said Yelm has to postpone their planned bypass for another two years, for several reasons. For example, the state money going towards COVID, and pocket gopher holes were found at that site and more mitigation needs to be conducted. And they also found a hunters’ gathering site at the same location.

Gilman referred to the interest in IT’s zero-fare, and shared that he has an acquaintance who's a Boston area city councilman, and he had a t-shirt made that he wears to the council meetings that say’s “Free the “T” that stands for Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority in support of the zero-fare program.

Gilman recognized Eric Phillips for keeping the IT strategic plan vision as one of the planks of the Olympia Transportation Master Plan and appreciates Phillips’ for his work going above and beyond. He hopes each of the jurisdictions have had a really strong relationship between their planning, staff, and Intercity Transit’s planning staff, which is essential to implementing the vision.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**With no further business to come before the Authority, Chair Cox adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m.**

**INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

*Carolyn Cox*  
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Carolyn Cox, Chair

**ATTEST**

*Patricia Messmer*  
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Pat Messmer  
Clerk to the Authority

**Date Approved: May 5, 2021**

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