

Minutes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
Held Remotely
March 16, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Belk called the March 16, 2022, meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority to order at 5:30 p.m. This meeting was held remotely in accordance with Governor Inslee's Proclamation 20-28.15 Safe Start/Roadmap to Recovery.

Members Present: Vice Chair and Citizen Representative Justin Belk; City of Tumwater Mayor Debbie Sullivan; Thurston County Commissioner Carolina Mejia; City of Lacey Councilmember Robin Vazquez; City of Yelm Councilmember Brian Hess; Citizen Representative Don Melnick; Citizen Representative Sue Pierce; Labor Representative Paul Tischer.

Members Absent: Chair and City of Olympia Mayor Pro-Tem Clark Gilman.

Staff Present: Ann Freeman-Manzanares; Emily Bergkamp; Jessica Gould; Steve Krueger; Ally McPherson; Pat Messmer; Eric Phillips; Nicky Upson; Daniel Van Horn; Jonathon Yee; Alex Auty; Jeremy Eaton; Jackson Madison; Grant Stevens; Kevin Karkoski; Cindy Waterhouse; Duncan Green; Zach Heinemeyer; Kyle McPherson; Magic Aguinaga; Riley White

Others Present: Legal Counsel, Jeff Myers; City of Olympia Councilmember Dani Madrone (Alternate).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was M/S/A by Sullivan and Mejia to adopt the agenda as presented.

INTRODUCTIONS

- A. **Jeremy Eaton and Jackson Madison, Service Workers** (*Jonathon Yee*)
- B. **Grant Stevens, DAL Dispatch Specialist** (*Kevin Karkoski*)

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comments were received.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Schedule 2023-2026 TIP Public Hearing.** Grants Administrator, Jessica Gould, presented the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is Intercity Transit's complete program of anticipated federally funded projects over the coming four years. All transit systems are required to have a TIP and it's used as a guide for future projects and programs.

The TIP helps identify and prioritize projects based on funding changes and priorities. An example is the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure project, which doesn't have federal funding yet but we're anticipating and working hard to get funding. Once we are successful, we'll be able to move much more quickly because the project is already in the TIP. Also, the review all potentially federally funded projects publicly is required by the FTA.

Gould reviewed the Program elements in the draft 2023-2026 TIP:

- Preventive maintenance of vehicles in IT's fleet during the years 2023- 2026.
- Acquisition of heavy-duty coaches to replace ones that are at or beyond their expected useful life.

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- Purchase of replacement *Dial-A-Lift* vans to meet the needs of our region's eligible clients.
- Purchase of replacement vanpool vans.
- Continuing Youth Education Program(s) that foster skills and provides education on using transit, bicycling, and walking as transportation choices.
- Planning, design, and construction of facilities and capital improvements to support local and commuter services consistent with the adopted Long-Range Plan.
- Planning, design, and capital improvements to provide High Capacity or "BRT Light" corridor service consistent with the adopted Long-Range Plan.
- Funding for operating services, capital projects and capital replacement of vehicles utilizing "earned share" formula funds for approved projects via PSRC/Seattle-Tacoma-Everett metropolitan area.
- Planning, design, and construction of Alternative Fuel Infrastructure systems.

Over the next four years of this TIP cycle, IT needs to replace 23 coaches, 12 DAL's and 25 Vanpool's. Staff is planning for that and how to best leverage grant funding. Capital Projects include Capital Preventive Maintenance, Bus stops, the completion of Pattison, and the potential construction of Alternative Fuel Infrastructure. As projects are completed, they drop off the TIP. Other projects included in the TIP are Walk N Roll and High-Capacity Corridor Service. IT secured regional federal funding for Walk N Roll spread over the next four years for about 40% of the Operating expenses required. Additionally, IT will continue to seek federal funding for the continuation of the effort started with The One to have High-Capacity Corridor Service.

The proposed TIP Timeline is:

- **March 16, 2022** – Brief ITA on schedule and request Public Hearing Date
- **March 18, 2022 – April 20, 2022** – Publish Draft TIP & Public Comments period
- **April 20, 2022** – Public Hearing on Draft TIP
- **May 18, 2022** – Consideration of 2023-2026 TIP for adoption by the Authority
- **June 1, 2022** – Submit Approved TIP to MPO and State. Update Projects in STIP

It was M/S/A by Mejia and Melnick to schedule a public hearing for April 20, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. to receive public comment on the draft Intercity Transit 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

- B. 2022 Winter Bicycle Challenge and BCC Update.** BCC Specialist, Duncan Green provided an update on the Winter BCC and upcoming BCC scheduled in May.

Green said the Winter Bicycle Challenge is designed to encourage and celebrate the stalwart year-round riders in the community. It runs for the month of February, with weekly random prize drawings for all participants. This year's Winter Bicycle Challenge was highly successful – IT had the highest numbers ever of riders, and miles and days ridden in the Winter Bicycle Challenge's eight-year history! All of those metrics were up nearly 30% from last year.

Green reviewed upcoming spring events, including a proposal to make the "All Rides Count" philosophy permanent, and update the name of our flagship event to the Bicycle COMMUNITY Challenge.

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Green said the BCC had to adapt and evolve in the past couple of years, and bicycles are very adaptable and all-encompassing in their benefits. With the adaptations that were made, participation in the events remained strong through the pandemic and continues now as we enter the next phase. Even prior to the pandemic, the prevailing wisdom in the bicycle advocacy world was shifting towards encouraging people to try bicycling for any reason, not just for transportation. Biking for recreation and health is very beneficial and opens peoples' minds to the possibility of using their bikes for transportation, too. He expects participation in the May BCC and other spring events to grow as people find out the BCC is not just for commuters, but for everyone!

With COVID restrictions relaxing, and the outdoor nature of BCC events, Green is bringing back some traditional spring events, including the Earth Day Market Ride and Bike to Work Day! The next event is the Earth Day Market Ride in April.

This year's theme for the BCC is "Take Your Vitamin **Bike!**" We're also celebrating 35 years of the BCC, the longest running bicycle challenge in Washington state. As always, there will be many prizes to encourage people to ride, and to celebrate our accomplishments. Green has practical bike gear from Portland Design Works, prizes and discount coupons from many local businesses.

In 2020, the sponsor program was put on hold, but in 2021 sponsors started coming back, and this year the trend continues. Some of the local sponsors are really going the extra mile to help promote the BCC this year. Ralph's Thriftway, Olympia Food Co-op, Batdorf and Bronson, Three Magnets, and the Farmer's Market have agreed to cross promote on social media along with their own events.

The Authority advised staff to continue the "All Rides Count" philosophy and adjust the name to "Bicycle Community Challenge."

- C. Vanpool Five-Year Demo Project Update.** Vanpool Manager, Cindy Waterhouse, provided an update on the Vanpool Five-Year Demonstration Project that the Authority adopted in September of 2021, and was implemented on January 1, 2022.

The new fare structure resulted in moving over 2,000 price points down to eight. The simplification of the fare structure allowed staff to better promote the program to form new vanpool groups and better serve the community, and the change has been very well received by current vanpool customers and is leading to productive recruitment discussions promoting vanpool with both potential customers and employers. The success IT is experiencing in Vanpool is in direct response to the support of the Authority and the CAC. These changes are allowing IT to address the complexity associated with changing commute behavior and engage with individuals and employers with a far simpler message. Along with the change in fare structure, newly purchased vanpool management software is currently being implemented with completion anticipated in September 2022.

Waterhouse introduced and recognized Kyle McPherson, Vanpool Coordinator for receiving the 40 Under 40 Award from The Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT). ACT is a premier organization and leading advocate for commuter transportation and transportation demand management professionals (TDM). Their mission is to create an

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efficient multimodal transportation system by empowering the people, places, and organizations working to advance TDM in order to improve the quality of life of commuters, enhance the livability of communities and stimulate economic activity.

ACT celebrates a group of young TDM professionals with this award – the award is given to ambitious leaders working to find creative solutions to improve the quality of life of commuters and the livability of communities and developing TDM programs that shift behavior. McPherson was nominated by Veronica Jarvis from Thurston Regional Planning Council. They have been working closely together to promote vanpool, biking and bus riding. Jarvis wrote about McPherson:

“Kyle is a vanpool Rockstar! I am constantly impressed by his positive attitude in encouraging employees in our region to try vanpooling. We all know changing commute habits can take some hard work, and Kyle is here to put it in. Kyle was able to start 25 new vanpools in his first 9 months on the job...in the middle of a global pandemic! With the motivation and work ethic Kyle has, the sky is the limit in his next several years. Kyle has been recognized for his creative vanpool marketing and I know he will continue to innovate and bring new energy to the TDM industry. I look forward to watching Kyle take on more challenges and succeed in the TDM industry-we need more people like him!”

Waterhouse reviewed some of the employers who are new to the vanpool program like Amazon, Children’s Hands-On Museum, Pace Edwards, and the Lacey, Tumwater and Olympia Fire Departments. Since the start of the flat rate fare program, IT is seeing great results - there have been 15 new vanpool groups totaling 68 new vanpoolers – all essential workers. Waterhouse shared customer comments from those groups.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston Regional Planning Council met March 4, 2022. Sullivan said Executive Director Marc Daily requested the Council approve forwarding the National Highway Freight Program application to WSDOT that was submitted by Thurston County for replacement of the Tilley Road Bridge. The presentation can be found here:

https://www.trpc.org/DocumentCenter/View/9526/A5_NatHwyFreight030422.

TRPC Deputy Director Veena Tabbutt, and Eric Phillips from Intercity Transit, provided an update on the progress of the Smart Corridors & Transit Signal Priority Project. The project is intended to provide signal priority (extended yellow lights) for IT buses and optimize traffic signal timing. The presentation can be found here:

https://www.trpc.org/DocumentCenter/View/9527/A6_Smart-Cor-TSP-TRPC-update-3-4-2022-final.

There was an update on Housing Attainability and Action Plans. Executive Director Marc Daily, Leonard Bauer, City of Olympia, Rick Walk, City of Lacey, and Mike Matlock, City of Tumwater, updated the Council on the housing action planning occurring in Thurston County. The presentation can be found here:

https://www.trpc.org/DocumentCenter/View/9528/A7_RegHousing030322.

Staff provided an update on the draft Federal Funding Call for Projects – Equity – and asked for Council input. TRPC is updating the call for projects process and equity will be one of

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the project selection criteria. The presentation can be found here:

https://www.trpc.org/DocumentCenter/View/9525/A9_Call-for-Projects-Equity-2022

- B. Transportation Policy Board met March 9, 2022.** Melnick said the TPB is looking for new Business and Community Representatives to serve as voting members. They have a number of applications for the community representative but there are three vacancies for business representatives, and only received one application so far. If anyone knows business people who would be interested, have them contact TRPC. It's really a good connection with the elected officials and others that are on the TPB, and he encourages anyone to apply.

TPB received a Household Travel Survey Update. TRPC contracted with Resource Systems Group to complete a travel survey which will provide data to update the regional transportation model. RSG provided an overview of the project. Melnick said interestingly enough, in order to achieve equity, the consultant selected a representative group from the community, and they made a point of providing incentives for under-represented segments of the community.

Melnick said starting in May, TPB will conduct hybrid meetings, and attendees will be able to attend in person or participate via Zoom.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

The State Legislative session ended on Friday, March 11. Many thanks to all who delivered such a beneficial package for transit. The Governor is anticipated to sign off on the Transportation Package on March 25. IT will begin to work in partnership with WSDOT as they put the pieces in place to administer the programs authorized in the package. We are anticipating more dollars to assist with special needs transportation and dollars to support free fare statewide for those 18 and under.

IT has policy direction from the Authority regarding zero-fare, but we anticipate there will be additional work to be done in order to access those dollars. New dollars were not designated for DASH service, but we are listed for \$5M for the Pattison Maintenance Facility rehabilitation project. In addition, there are dollars for a bus and bus facility program, and a green transportation program.

There are so many projects going on, and at the same time we are working our way through, trying to staff up to complete the required work. The employment market is a tricky thing right now and IT is struggling to keep up. The Pattison Street project and the Computer Automated Dispatch/Automatic Vehicle Location (or CAD/AVL) projects are moving forward, and they are keeping our hands full.

We will plan another tour of the Pattison Street North Parcel construction project likely late in the second quarter and once we clear several more targeted tasks with the CAD/AVL project, we look forward to presenting the outcome and improvements associated with that project.

All ten Gillig buses have been delivered.

It's "Grant" season, and staff is strategizing in relation to the Strategic Plan work and what might be the most successful path now with the funding available.

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The Transportation Security Administration extended the federal mask mandate for transit until April 18. We look forward to hearing what the CDC has to say over the next month and how the masking policy unfolds. Our staff have incredible skills working with community members, and while masking has been a controversial issue, we are focused on keeping everyone safe while complying with federal requirements.

Friday, March 18 is International Transit Driver Appreciation Day. IT is recognizing Operators as well as Maintenance and Facilities staff with “thank you” banners and chocolate treats. They all deserve our appreciation on this day and every day.

AUTHORITY ISSUES

Melnick volunteered to represent IT on the High-Capacity Transportation Project Steering Committee, and he attended the first and only meeting. Because it wasn't determined the exact role of this steering committee, it was determined the committee be disassembled and go back to the standard way of running things. Melnick said the project is about public transit, between Thurston County and Tacoma in various forms. He encourages IT staff to continue to help TRPC understand how transit business works. The project belongs with TRPC, and they have the funding.

Belk said the solicitation from the WSDOT Active Transportation Program for their safe routes to school and the bike/pedestrian grants are about to be published. He encourages all local jurisdictions to take advantage of improving their bike and pedestrian connections, using the WSDOT grant money.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Authority, Vice Chair Belk adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Clark Gilman

Clark Gilman, Chair

ATTEST

Patricia Messmer

Pat Messmer

Clerk to the Authority

Date Approved: April 20, 2022

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