

**Minutes**  
**INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**April 3, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Mejia called the April 3, 2024, meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority to order at 5:30 p.m. This was a hybrid meeting held at the Pattison Street facility.

**Members Present:** Chair and City of Olympia Councilmember Clark Gilman; Vice Chair and Thurston County Commissioner Carolina Mejia; City of Lacey Councilmember Carolyn Cox; City of Tumwater Mayor Debbie Sullivan; Community Representative Sue Pierce; City of Yelm Councilmember Brian Hess; Community Representative Don Melnick; Labor Representative Mark Neuville.

**Members Excused:** Community Representative Justin Belk.

**Staff Present:** Emily Bergkamp; Daniel Van Horn; Jason Aguerro; Pat Messmer; Nathan Davis; Thera Black; Matt Kenney; Amanda Collins; Jonathon Yee; Jeff Peterson; Duncan Green; Kerri Wilson; Rob LaFontaine; Thera Black; Alana Neal; Paul Kierzek; Jana Brown; Dena Withrow; Brian Nagel; Peter Stackpole.

**Others Present:** Jeff Myers, Legal Counsel; Garrett Fuelling, Betty Hauser and JoAnn Scott, Community Advisory Committee.

**STAFF INTRODUCTIONS**

A. David Chaffee introduced new hires **Christopher Jackson and Noah Guthrie, Service Workers, and Promotions Larry Ingram and Kai Allen, Service Workers.**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**It was M/S/A by Melnick and Sullivan to approve the agenda as presented.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Community members Larry Taylor, Dave Gibson, Diane Gibson, and Bethany Davis provided public comment regarding their concerns about the proposed traffic circle and the impact on traffic flow on Martin Way, specifically from Ridgeview onto Martin Way and Duterrow and Meridian Roads. Mr. Taylor provided copies of letters on this topic signed by other members of the community. These letters will be filed with the Clerk's office.

**NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Digital Radio Services Extension.** Jeff Peterson, Senior Procurement & Project Management Coordinator, presented for consideration the extension of an

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agreement for digital radio services with Day Wireless Systems. Intercity Transit entered into a three-year term contract with Day Wireless to provide digital radio services on their TRBOWEST digital network. The digital radio services support communications within Operations and on revenue, maintenance, and facilities vehicles.

The primary communication solution used throughout our system is our CAD/AVL solution. The CAD/AVL solution is cellular based, and communication is critical to ensure safety of the community and our staff therefor a redundant system was acquired. Through an extensive study of radio solutions that can provide sufficient coverage within our Public Transportation Benefit Area service area (including services along I-5) it was determined that the services provided through the TRBOWEST digital network offered by Day Wireless was the appropriate solution.

The solution has been operating successfully over the past three years. The hardware has an expected useful life of at least 7-10 years and a replacement is not anticipated during this term. There have been advancements in the software and included in this agreement are programming costs to transition to a new software platform. This software enhancement will add value in that it will reduce resources required to make program changes moving forward and it does not affect hardware or day to day operations.

The cost to utilize the digital radio services is \$22 per month per unit (includes base stations, mobile, and portable radios). In the current configuration this equates to \$4,158 per month. A contingency of 10% is sought to account for potential new vehicles or portable radio needs that may arise over the next five years.

Staff have appreciated the communication redundancy when events occurred that limited our primary solution and recommend proceeding with the agreement to maintain digital radio services.

**It was M/S/A by Sullivan and Cox to authorize the General Manager to execute a purchase order with Day Wireless Systems to provide digital radio services on the TRBOWEST Digital Network up to a five-year term and payments made in monthly increments, for the not-to-exceed cost of \$274,428, including a contingency of 10% to account for potential expansion, does not include tax.**

- B. 2023 Walk N Roll Program Update.** Kerri Wilson, Walk N Roll Program Supervisor, shared the 2023 accomplishments of the Walk N Roll youth education program. Walk N Roll is Intercity Transit's education program that works to increase independence, improve safety, and inspire a healthy lifestyle by making walking, biking, rolling, and riding public transit more accessible to people in our community.

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In partnership with the Childcare Action Council's Safe Kids Thurston County program and funding from State Farm and the Capitol Centennial Rotary Club, IT installed two permanent traffic gardens at Lydia Hawk and Centennial Elementary Schools. The traffic gardens are used to teach bicycle and pedestrian safety skills during physical education classes and are open to the public when school is not in session. A traffic garden is a miniature streetscape that includes real world traffic features like intersections, roundabouts, and crosswalks. The garden provides an environment for children to learn and practice pedestrian and bicycle safety skills safe from cars.

In 2023 IT partnered with Safe Kids and Target Zero on a new Mobile Traffic Garden project funded by a grant from the Washington Traffic Safety Commission. We created both an indoor and outdoor traffic garden that travels to schools and youth programs around Thurston County. Included with the mobile traffic garden is a fleet of balance bikes, scooters, helmets, and educational tools. Last year we took the garden to Lydia Hawk Elementary school, Tumwater Summer Camp and Several YMCA summer camp locations. In 2024 the Mobile Traffic Garden has a full schedule, and we are excited to get it to more schools this spring and fall.

Walk N Roll supported bike rodeo events for Olympic View Elementary, McLane Black Lake Fire Department and the Cub Scouts at Mountain View Elementary School. At bike rodeo events youth visit stations where they practiced bicycle safety skills, get their helmet fitted and receive bicycle safety checks.

In partnership with Safe Kids Thurston County, Target Zero, the Olympia Police Department, and the City of Olympia, we held the second Great Olympia Bike Rodeo at Garfield Elementary School, where 70 youth participated in this fun, free, family-friendly event. We look forward to holding this event again this summer on June 1.

Walk N Roll helped eight schools in the Olympia, Tumwater and North Thurston school districts organize Walk N Roll to School events, including celebrations for national Walk and Bike to School Days. These events encourage students and their families to walk, bike and roll to school to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality around the school. The Olympia Police Department come out to support and walk to school with Olympus students. We partnered with Olympia Parks and Recreation, Jefferson Middle School, and Nisqually Middle Schools to provide afterschool and summer Earn-A-Bike classes. Sixty-four youth learned essential bicycle safety and maintenance skills through a series of hands-on activities and group bicycle rides on city streets. All participants received a refurbished bicycle, new helmet, and lock.

After school Learn-to-Ride classes were held at McKenny, Centennial and Tumwater Hill Elementary Schools and we offered classes in partnership with South Sound

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YMCA and Tumwater and Olympia Parks and Recreation. Through these classes we taught 96 youth and adults the skills needed to ride a bicycle.

In January 2023 the bike shop was relocated to our new permanent location at Intercity Transit's Administration and Operations building. Once settled into the new space, Walk N Roll volunteer bike mechanics got back to work learning and practicing bicycle mechanic skills while refurbishing 97 donated bikes. These bikes were given to youth who participated in our bicycle education programs. The community generously donated 85 bikes, including 20 bikes that came from a donation drive led by a volunteer in the Jubilee community.

Free community bike maintenance classes were offered for teens and adults, including a fix-a-flat class and a class on adjusting gears. We also piloted our first Bike Tune Up Class series that included a diverse group of underrepresented participants including women, trans folx, and non-binary people. We continued our partnership with Avanti High School, teaching students bicycle safety and maintenance skills as part of their physical education curriculum. During the spring, Avanti's Physical Education teacher and Walk N Roll staff co-taught the class. To increase access to the program, Walk N Roll gave refurbished bicycles to students who did not have their own. Avanti Bikes! students supported a Bike Festival at Madison Elementary School teaching 183 students bike safety skills.

To wrap up a year of learning, Avanti Bikes! students went on a bike camping trip. Walk N Roll staff and volunteers supported the trip, taking 16 students on a 40-mile ride on gravel roads through the beautiful Olympic National Forest. For many students, it was their first camping experience. We hired two Avanti students to serve as paid interns, supporting summer and fall bicycle education programs. The interns shared what they learned in the Avanti Bikes! program with younger students.

We supported the Hope Bike Shop at Reeves Middle School by sharing donated bikes, parts, tools, and mechanical advice. Hope students went on a field trip to the Walk N Roll Bike Shop where they were given a tour and demonstrated their knowledge by playing a bike anatomy game. The Avanti Bikes! program rode bikes to the Hope Bike Shop for a tour and to share their stories of learning bike mechanics.

Wilson said IT offered the first summer bike camp for youth ages 8 through 10. Campers learned bike handling and safety skills through fun games, group bicycle rides and hands-on activities. Each day we took campers on a new urban adventure traveling by walking, biking, and riding public transit. One day we took a ride to pick blueberries, then returned to the Olympia Transit Center and made smoothies with our bike blender. To celebrate a week of learning and bike adventuring, we took students and their families on a group bike parade through downtown Olympia.

Wilson said we provided transit education to 370 youth through two school bus visits and five Rolling Classroom field trips. Participants met a bus operator, toured a bus, and learned why transit is important to the community.

**What's new for 2024:**

- Adding a new staff member to the WNR team. This will allow us to expand the programming offered at the WNR bike shop including more bike mechanic classes and volunteer opportunities.
- Begin a new community bike shop program, where community members will be able to come to the shop to work on their own bikes with the guidance and supervision of skilled bike mechanics.
- With the addition of a new staff member, we will have the capacity to add more adult bike programming and hope to offer our first adult bike safety classes called Smart Cycling in the fall. Also working with the City of Olympia to provide some refurbished bikes to adults in our community.
- Purchased a new trailer that will be dedicated to a Learn to Ride bike fleet. This will allow us to offer more classes in 2024.
- Offer two bike camps in 2024 adding a second location in Lacey.

**C. Winter Bicycle Community Challenge & Bicycle Community Challenge (BCC) May Event Update.** Duncan Green presented the results of the Winter Bicycle Community Challenge held in February and shared the preparations for the Earth Day Market Ride later this month, plus the flagship event, the Bicycle Community Challenge in May.

Green said there was tremendous participation in the Winter BCC this year, in spite of typical February weather. Over 350 people logged rides on the website and racked up over 28,000 miles. Forty riders won fun and useful bike-related prizes in random drawings during the month. Collectively, we logged rides on 2,666 days. Many combined travel modes and biked part way and took the bus the other part while others joined group rides or formed clubs to engage socially while being active outside. The Winter BCC was born out of popular demand about ten years ago and has grown in popularity since. There is a dedicated core of year-round bicyclists in Thurston County, and we celebrate and encourage them.

Next up is the Earth Day Market Ride, scheduled on Saturday, April 20. Bike with a group from your part of town to Heritage Park downtown, where there will be treats and coffee and a prize drawing, and then we'll bike together to the Olympia Farmer's Market to enjoy Earth Day celebrations with live music, food and all the Market has to offer. There will be a free one-dollar Market Token for each rider!

For the entire month of May, which is National Bike Month, it's the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Bicycle Community Challenge! Participants can log their rides at <https://bcc.intercitytransit.com> for a chance to win a prize, including a new bike.

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For extra fun and team spirit, join Intercity Transit's team Crank IT. Our new Team Captain this year is A Puri from the Walk N Roll Program who encourages all Intercity Transit employees to join the fun and pull for our team.

Bike to Work Day is Thursday, May 16, with Bike Refresher Stations in several locations around town to stop by on the morning commute for coffee, treats, bike information and swag. Some stations will have a mechanic on hand with a few tools in case bikes need an emergency repair.

The BCC has a new website this year. As seems par for the course with websites, we are still ironing out a few small wrinkles, but the site is up and running, and is a definite upgrade from our old site, so take a look at <https://bcc.intercitytransit.com>.

**D. Transit 101 & Ridership Update.** Planning Deputy Director, Rob LaFontaine, provided a presentation intended to assist ITA members better understand transit operations, supporting technology and related policy decisions. He started with the service area explaining the county's Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA) RCW 36.57A which includes a 1.2% local sales tax with current boundaries including the cities of Olympia, Tumwater, Lacey, and Yelm. LaFontaine reviewed the services IT provides and explained the terminology used by the FTA of the word "mode" which describes the various services a transit agency offers:

- Fixed Route Bus
  - Local service, of various types
  - Commuter Bus to Pierce County
- Dial-A-Lift (ADA Paratransit)
  - ¾ of a mile within fixed route
- Other modes
  - Vanpool
  - [Future] On-Demand (micro-transit)
  - Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) - not currently provided
  - Rail (Sound Transit & WSDOT) - not currently provided

LaFontaine introduced the Planning Discipline of Scheduling that focuses on measuring service. He introduced **Intercity Transit's Planning Schedulers:**

- Steve Swan - Senior Planner
- Brian Nagel - Senior Planning Scheduler
- Paul Kierzek - Associate Planning Scheduler

He went on to show and explain how and what staff measures to arrive at a variety of different resources, namely the number of vehicles it takes to operate service and the number of operators to drive the vehicles. He went on to show another slide identifying the words "trip (the frequency of each bus)," "span (hours of operation)," "headway (frequency of buses each hour)," and "block (all trips assigned to a bus)."

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LaFontaine touched on the importance of frequency which provides less wait time and makes connections easier and convenient and provides trip security; and the importance of span of service since the job market expands beyond the standard 9 to 5; discretionary, non-work-related trips are often during non-peak times; and longer span of service allows more trip types to be served. LaFontaine showed a slide of IT's current span of service times - showing the vast majority of service is uniform. Service begins approximately at 6 a.m. and extending to around the 10 p.m. timeframe. He noted IT is still working on restoring service and late-night trips will return.

LaFontaine talked about IT's current labor resource using example of Routes 62A and 62B considered the "workhorse" of our system with 15-minute frequency. At 3:30 in the afternoon there are eight buses (8 operators) in motion. Looking at this from an annual level, just these two routes require 30 full-time coach operators. LaFontaine reviewed routes blocked together (Routes 13, 48 & 66) with 30-minute frequency on the 48 and 66 and 15-minute frequency on the 13 equals 9 buses in motion at 3:30 p.m. for a total of 37 full-time coach operators.

LaFontaine talked about "building blocks / routes and runs. Bus "trips" are assigned to "Blocks" which are cut into Operator "Runs" summarized on "Paddles." Trips with varying lengths of time are blocked together (i.e. an "interline") to balance headways. Buses and Operators work on varying routes throughout their day. The schedule is the backbone. Planning Schedulers measure and monitor on-time performance to keep Intercity Transit's buses and Operators in a constant state of motion. Favored Sources of intelligence:

- GPS location Data (new Avail CAD/AVL system)
- Operator feedback (OCPC)
- Customer comments
- Direct observation

LaFontaine explained how schedules are assembled and how it's about balancing service with budgeted resources.

- Adjusting trips (span & frequency)
- Measuring the blocks and runs
- Forecast the Availability of Operators
- Financially sustainable

Staff create work for the buses - write a schedule of trips by Route and assign trips to Blocks. Then creates work for the Operators - cut the blocks into Runs and Roster the Runs into biddable work weeks.

LaFontaine delved into the external side of transit planning which is community orientated. A common question often asked by the community is, "When will they ever add a stop to my neighborhood?" He reviewed all of the considerations regarding route designs and bus stop placement.

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LaFontaine talked about the consideration of transit availability and proximity starting and showed a slide and explained the variety of things staff is working on to become familiar regarding demographic equity.

- New Standards & Policies
- Service Monitoring
- Route Profiles
- 2020 Census Data
- Rider Surveys
- Evaluating Service Change
- Measuring Disparity
- Magnitude of Adversity

LaFontaine talked about density - the consideration of land use, population density, and road classifications.

### **Supportive land use**

- Zoning districts to guide allocation.
  - Prioritize high-density residential, Central business districts, medical districts & shopping centers.
- Colleges, Universities, High Schools
- Employers of significance (i.e. State of Washington)

### **Supportive infrastructure**

- Arterials & Major Collectors
  - Integration with bike/pedestrian amenities
  - Avoid local access roadways (i.e. neighborhoods)
- Pursue directness and reliability.
  - Avoid circuitous deviations and large one-way loops.

LaFontaine went on to review productivity versus coverage trade-off, the importance of route directness, the evolution of a bus route. In the beginning there was well designed route that was direct with well-spaced stops and performed well. Over time some passengers asked for stops to be added so they didn't have to walk so far, and the transit agency added the routes. Then new apartment complexes were built near the route, so residents didn't have to walk to the bus - the bus went to them. Then a big box store opened beyond the end of the route and the route was extended to serve it. Good intentioned small changes like these can degrade service and increase the cost of service.

LaFontaine reviewed operability - getting to hard-to-reach places. Considerations to be mindful of include:

- Turning Around
- School Zones
- Pedestrian Access
- Lighting
- Reliability (60+ time/day)



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- Traffic Control
- Uncontrolled intersections
- Roundabouts
- Private Roads
- On-street parking

LaFontaine said in the end, staff plans a “harmony of considerations.”

### **Resource Considerations**

- Operating Costs; Span & Frequency
- Labor/Fleet/Facility requirements

### **Community Considerations**

- Regional Plans; corridor strategies; public investment partnerships
- Population density and roadways to support transit

### **Passenger Considerations**

- Accessibility: sidewalks, bike lanes, shoulders, lighting; first & last mile
- Demographic Equity
- Availability, Proximity, and Connectivity
- Dial-A-Lift implications: New eligible areas?

### **Operational Considerations**

- Reliability, limitations, access, safety

LaFontaine provided a snapshot of fixed-route ridership statistics over the last few years with 2019 having the highest at just over four million and the highest fixed-route revenue hours at over 230,000. Ridership along the Martin Way-Harrison corridor where frequency remained unchanged and resulted in stable ridership. He noted Route 64 that serves College and Yelm Highway in Lacey has more service today than in 2019. That data is being used to drive home the point that frequency yields ridership. He went on to point out the statistics at other corridors. He reviewed bus stops adjacent to high schools with the past six years of data reflecting activity at those stops. He noted that Timberline High School ridership has grown significantly.

## **GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT**

Intercity Transit welcomed Class 24-02 on Monday, March 25, 2024. This class consists of 19 new Operators.

Staff, Authority, and CAC members attended a webinar on March 21, 2024, hosted by Jarrett Walker entitled, “Human Transit: How Clearer Thinking about Public Transit Can Enrich Our Communities and Our Lives.” In 2011, Jarrett published what became a classic for sustainable transportation advocates, Human Transit. He recently released his updated and expanded edition to further deepen his initial explanations. The content

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moves into new territories, such as the problem with specialization; the role of flexible or “demand response” services; how to know when to redesign your network; and responding to tech-industry claims that transit will soon be obsolete. Additionally, a major new section exploring the idea of access to opportunity as a core measure of transit’s success has also been added.

Bergkamp, Peter Stackpole and Rob LaFontaine continue to meet with Jason Robertson from JRO+CO to fine tune the agenda for the annual planning session. This event is scheduled for May 10, 2024, from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the AdOps Board Room. Robertson (JRO + CO) and Thomas Wittmann (Nelson-Nygaard) will facilitate and lead discussions at the first planning session since 2019. Robertson will cover the history behind the public outreach that took place prior to the creation of the Long-Range Plan and Wittmann will review peer industry trends as they relate to elements of our Long-Range Plan. Bergkamp and LaFontaine will present elements of the Long-Range Plan that we have completed or are ongoing, and review those yet to be completed, leading a conversation with the Authority on prioritizing them and updating implementation dates. Stackpole will discuss Development Priorities and Grant Funding, along with a Financial Forecasting discussion with CFO Jana Brown, followed by a conversation around possible implications if the CCA was repealed.

Human Resources staff Alana Neal and Amy Zurfluh worked with the Athena Group to complete an employee engagement survey and are working to process the results and next steps. A sneak peek shows the results were overwhelmingly positive – something for us to celebrate as an agency as testament to our positive work culture – and we have some areas we will work to identify ways to improve to make Intercity Transit an even better place to work, and to maintain the amazing work environment we enjoy.

Bergkamp visited the Olympic Region Clean Air Agency (ORCAA), and met with Jeff Johnston, specifically about what ORCAA is doing to help reduce the impacts of burning in the area known as the “Jungle” homeless camp with their partners OlyMap.

Intercity Transit’s management team, ATU and IAM union leadership, spent time together at the 47<sup>th</sup> Labor and Employment Relations Collective Bargaining and Arbitration Conference (LERA). This event welcomes the diverse views of labor, management, government, academics, and advocates alike, providing conference sessions with something for everyone. During the planning of this year’s conference, Intercity Transit’s management and union leadership group were approached by staff from LERA to consider hosting a session at the conference. LERA staff thought the long history Intercity Transit and their labor partners have of co-creating a collaborative and positive labor-management relationship had the makings of an inspiring conference session.

Customer Service Manager, Joy Gerchak, Administrative Services Director, Heather Stafford, ATU Finance Secretary, Kierstin Price, and Operations Deputy Director, Cameron Crass created a session entitled, “Don’t Stop Believing – You Too Can Have an

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Epic Labor-Management Relationship.” The session was so well attended it was standing room only. As a moderated discussion of where great labor relations start and what happens when it’s not all sunshine and rainbows, it also provided practical tools attendees could take back to their workplace to foster an even better labor-management relationship - even if they’ve stopped believing it’s possible. Please join me in congratulating this group for representing us so well at the conference.

Together with our labor partners, we understand that actively working on our relationship together and maintaining a positive work culture is fundamental to ensuring the community we serve doesn’t pay the price for our periodic workplace issues. While misunderstandings and disagreements in a unionized environment are not necessarily uncommon, Bergkamp is proud to say that during her two decades at Intercity Transit, she’s experienced the mutual respect for each other carries us through them.

Bergkamp, Board Chair and City of Olympia Councilman Clark Gilman and Board Member Mayor Debbie Sullivan will attend APTA’s Legislative Conference in Washington D. C. April 6-9. They are scheduled to meet with Senator Patty Murray’s office, Congresswoman Marilyn Strickland’s office, and Senator Cantwell’s office. This is a great time to visit with our legislators and provide an update on agency activities and future funding needs.

Sihe (Simon) Sun, Master’s in Environmental Science candidate at The Evergreen State College, completed a Zero-Fare Bus Thesis Research project, examining factors that influence people's choice of public transit in Thurston County. He distributed an online survey and posted flyers at different locations throughout the Intercity Transit system with a QR code linking to the survey. The Marketing Department helped spread the word about the survey to recruit more participants to ensure the findings are directly relevant for Intercity Transit. Simon plans to share his collected data with Intercity Transit under the appropriate confidentiality protocols so we can utilize the findings for purposes of understanding the impact of zero-fare on ridership. The survey officially ended March 31. Simon shared that he received a total of 547 valid responses. Among these, 335 participants provided their geospatial location information, and 336 participants provided answers to the open-ended question, sharing their valuable feedback on their bus-riding experiences, suggestions, and/or complaints.

Intercity Transit celebrated National Transit Employee Appreciation Day on March 18 with banners posted throughout the facilities, sweet treats in the lounges and social media posts celebrating our frontline drivers, maintenance, and facilities staff. Marketing, Communications & Outreach Coordinator, Ally McPherson, created slides that Bergkamp shared with the Board. Many people took time to comment and share their thanks for the dedication Intercity Transit’s frontline staff shows to the community every day - driving, keeping vehicles operating safely and keeping buildings and stops looking good.

## **AUTHORITY ISSUES**

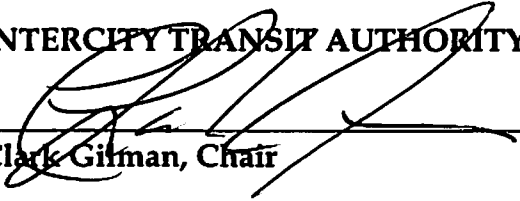
Sullivan said the light at the roundabout at Capital and Trosper will be removed, and it will become a functioning roundabout.

Melnick encourages everyone to view the webinar video by Jarrett Walker. Melnick feels this information could provide affective information to the Authority.

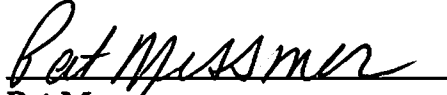
**ADJOURNMENT**

**With no further business to come before the Authority, Vice Chair Mejia adjourned the meeting at 7:22 p.m.**

**INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

  
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**Clark Gilman, Chair**

**ATTEST**

  
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**Pat Messmer**  
**Clerk to the Authority**

**Date Approved: May 15, 2024**

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