

Authority Meeting Highlights/Summary
a brief recap of the September 4, 2024, Intercity Transit Authority Meeting

Wednesday night, the Authority:

- Authorized the General Manager to enter into a contract with Northwest Cascade, Inc. for drainage and pavement repairs at the Lacey Transit Center and Amtrak Station in the amount of \$178,413. *(Tammy Ferris)*

Other Items of Interest:

- Nicky Upson from Marketing & Communications provided a presentation about an Accessible Wayfinding Pilot Project (NaviLens).

General Manager's Report:

The fifth Operator class of the year starts Monday, September 9 and it will be one of the largest classes to date, with a possible 31 drivers. We look forward to this group starting their careers with us.

The service change taking place Sunday, September 8, 2024, marks the final step in a series of 17 incremental adjustments that began in June 2020, aimed at restoring service levels to those before the COVID-19 pandemic. With this latest change, we will exceed pre-pandemic service levels, reaching 102% of the service we provided prior to the pandemic. Routes 12, 13, 41, 62A, 62B, 65, and 66 will have late night service restored on weekdays and weekends. Route 41 will have extended late-night service on Friday and Saturday nights when The Evergreen State College is in session.

The exit conference for the annual state audit is scheduled for September 5, 2024, and was coordinated with the State Auditor's Office by Finance Manager Jen Amendala and CFO Jana Brown.

Bergkamp shared she was interviewed by Transportation Choices Coalition Executive Director Kirk Hovenkotter & Policy Analyst, Nivya Murthi for a future blog about topics of Transit Safety and Workforce shortage. Bergkamp shared key points about Intercity Transit's motto of "Safety, Service, Schedule." This is a training tool for all bus drivers that emphasizes Safety first, followed by Service to our customers, placing the pressure they sometimes feel to keep to the timeliness of their Schedule as last. The safety of and service to our customers is paramount. This includes safety on the road and taking the time to answer questions about our service.

Bergkamp shared Intercity Transit has comprehensive "Rules of Conduct" for our riders that we carefully uphold. Bus drivers inform passengers of the rules of the ride if they encounter passengers not following them, and always have the option to refer the enforcements of these rules to our Road Supervisors if they encounter a chronic issue.

Bergkamp said another big cornerstone of the safety of our service is that Intercity Transit has cameras on all revenue vehicles, as well as being a Zero-Fare system. Nationwide, the number one cause of assaults on bus drivers is disputes over fares, and we simply don't have that.

Another point Bergkamp included during her interview with TCC is the difference between feeling unsafe versus feeling uneasy. Transit serves a diverse group of people from all walks of life, backgrounds, and lived experiences. Riding public transit offers the unique opportunity to ride with the general public and that means encountering others who don't look like or behave like us, or speak the same language and there can be a discomfort from being around others different from ourselves, but that doesn't constitute unsafe conditions.

Bergkamp was happy to report during the interview that Intercity Transit is no longer experiencing the workforce shortage challenges COVID brought to the industry. She said we integrate transit hiring practices with workforce development programs in Washington state. IT began to gain traction when HR partnered with WorkSource. WorkSource streamlined the application process providing access to folks who are actively seeking work. IT worked hard to shorten the timeline from when people apply to when they are offered a position. IT used to have applicants apply, then attend a separate customer service test session, then bring them in for an interview, and sometimes have them come in separately for a practical fit test. Using this new model, candidates are brought in for a day-long hiring event to get all of these parts of the recruitment process done on one day.

The Zero-Fare survey is wrapping up on September 5. Intercity Transit's bus and Dial-A-Lift services have been zero-fare (fare free) for a few years, and our goal is to continue to share and promote the ease, convenience and equity this service provides. Over the last few years, IT staff attended local events and talked with many members of the community, and we've seen that many still don't know that riding all Intercity Transit bus routes is free, and we want to change that. The link to the survey can be found on the website: <https://www.intercitytransit.com/news/rider-survey-zero-fare-demonstration-project>

Stately Speakers Toastmasters (in partnership with Board member Carolyn Cox) is hosting an Open House at Intercity Transit Thursday, September 12 during the noon hour so employees and anyone from the community can learn the many benefits of Toastmasters. The club will hold a hybrid meeting weekly at Intercity Transit every Thursday from 12:05 p.m. to 12:55 p.m. Toastmasters is a learn-by-doing workshop where participants hone their speaking and leadership skills in a no-pressure atmosphere. There is no instructor in a Toastmasters meeting. Instead, members evaluate one another's presentations. This feedback process is a key part of the program's success. Meeting participants also give impromptu talks on assigned topics, conduct meetings and develop leadership.

Those interested should plan to arrive at 11:45 a.m. to learn about the club and how to join, ask questions, plus have the opportunity to socialize and enjoy some light refreshments. Intercity Transit will cover the cost of employees' membership if they choose to join. Professional development is priceless, and joining Toastmasters is one of the best investments you can make no matter what your career aspirations.

*Prepared September 5, 2024
Pat Messmer/Clerk of the Board*