

**Minutes**  
**INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**August 21, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Mejia called the August 21, 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:** Vice Chair and Thurston County Commissioner Carolina Mejia; City of Tumwater Mayor Debbie Sullivan; City of Lacey Councilmember Carolyn Cox; Community Representative Sue Pierce; Community Representative Don Melnick; Mark Neuville, Labor Representative.

**Members Excused:** Chair and City of Olympia Councilmember Clark Gilman; City of Yelm Councilmember Brian Hess; Community Representative Justin Belk.

**Staff Present:** Emily Bergkamp; Pat Messmer; Matt Kenney; Jessica Gould; Amanda Collins; Daniel Van Horn; Noelle Gordon; Dena Withrow; Jonathon Yee; Katie Cunningham; Michael Maverick; Tammy Ferris; Zach Heinemeyer; Lynne Cunningham; Alana Neal; Heidi Fox; Dustin Korn; Magic Aguinaga; David Chaffee; Jonathan Martin; Brenden Houx; Kyle McPherson; Peter Stackpole.

**Others Present:** Jeff Myers, Legal Counsel; Rachel Weber, and Betty Hauser, Community Advisory Committee; Jakub Kocztorz, Law Lyman Daniel Kamerrer.

**STAFF INTRODUCTIONS**

- A. **Jonathan Martin**, Construction Projects Coordinator (*Katie Cunningham*)
- B. **Brenden Houx**, Sr. Procurement & Project Management Coordinator (*Katie Cunningham*)
- C. **Heidi Fox**, HR Analyst (*Alana Neal*)
- D. **Dustin Korn**, Vehicle Cleaner (*David Chaffee*)

*Vice Chair Mejia noted there was not yet a quorum of Board members and proceeded to non-action items.*

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Brandon Mixon of Tumwater expressed concern about the lack of night-time service in West Olympia. He noted there are no plans indicated in the upcoming service changes or in the 2024-2029 Transit Development Plan for Routes 45, 47, 48 and 68 to incorporate night-time service. This severely limits people's working and leisure activities. He is suggesting one additional outbound trip to Capital Mall station, two additional inbound trips to LTC and two truncated inbound trips terminating at Tumwater Square. This would provide night-time service to West Olympia without needing to spend revenue hours along the entire line.

**VANPOOL PROGRAM UPDATE.** Vanpool Manager, Lynne Cunningham provided an update on the Vanpool Program. Cunningham shared an award Intercity Transit

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recently received from the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) for Organizational Member of the Year.

Cunningham went on to explain the fundamentals of the Vanpool program. An IT vanpool is made up of three or more people who share their commute to work in an Intercity Transit van. Vanpool groups establish a route and schedule, and one or more people in the group volunteer to become approved drivers and reporters. They all pay an affordable fare and IT provides the vehicle, fuel, insurance, and maintenance. The benefits of vanpooling include reduction in the wear and tear on vehicles; shared driving responsibilities; access to HOV lanes; and many employers pay part or all of the vanpool fare for their employees.

### **Cunningham shared statistics and fun facts:**

IT's vanpool program is 42 years old. It started in May 1982 with two leased vans from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).

The vanpool service has grown to 155 active vanpool groups that commute to 311 employers in the Puget Sound region. There are five vans available to start new vanpools, and their goal is to have all available vans in service by the end of the year.

Cunningham said testament to the benefits of vanpooling is longevity in our vanpool groups. Thirty-nine of our vanpool groups have been in operation for 10 years or more. The two groups that have been on the road the longest started in 1992, **that's 32 years ago** and are still in operation today, carrying commuters from Olympia to Boeing Tukwila and from Shelton to the Washington Department of Highways and Licensing in Olympia. The group with the longest commute travels 175 RTM daily from Olympia to Boeing Everett.

Cunningham shared slides showing a comparison of vanpool statistics from 2019 through 2023. Pre-pandemic in 2019 our numbers were the highest, with 183 vanpool groups, over a quarter million miles traveled and an average of 40k trips per month. Due to the pandemic and shutdown in 2020 through 2021 vanpool usage was at its lowest. In 2022 and 2023 vanpool usage started to recover with significant increases in the number of groups and miles traveled as people started commuting again. In 2023, there was a monthly average of 150 vanpool groups, and that number has continued to increase so far in 2024. Today there are 155 active vanpools

Cunningham showed IT's driver to rider ratio, and more than half of the vanpool customers volunteer to drive for their vanpools - 54% is really high and demonstrates a high level of customer engagement. There is at least the required one driver for each of our 155 vanpools, and we also have 241 additional drivers who share the driving and jump in to do the work that makes their vanpools succeed.

**Cunningham reviewed projects staff is working on:**

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- In 2023, Intercity Transit was awarded a grant from WSDOT for just over \$710k (\$710,208) to purchase 20 replacement vehicles. However, the number of 7-passenger vans produced and sold to fleets in Washington drastically reduced since the pandemic. After much work, our fleet manager, David Chaffee, was able to reserve 14 7-passenger Toyota Siennas, but we still had 6 more vehicles to purchase to meet our need of replacing 20 vehicles. Chaffee had the idea to look at 5-passenger Toyota Camry's, which were much easier to obtain. Smaller vehicles, popular with customers, have almost all of the needed tools to work on them. Six Camry's were ordered as well, with expected delivery of all vehicles in January 2025.
- Cunningham moved on to the vanpool fare subsidy grant. Washington state employees recently learned they are able to vanpool for free because the Legislature provided funding for state agency employees (with a few exceptions) to cover 100% of the cost of their vanpool fare.
- The vanpool team is currently reaching out to state agencies to help spread the word and form new vanpools. Staff held vanpool informational meetings on August 20, 2024, at DOC and DOL and expect two new vanpools to form as a result. Staff is excited to help state employees take advantage of this new benefit.
- Since rolling out the subsidy on July 1:
  - 26 state agencies signed up with WSDOT
  - 63 Intercity Transit vanpool participants had their fares paid for in the first month
  - Over \$4,000 in total fares were subsidized, allowing commuters go to work with more money in their pockets!
- As a transit agency, monitoring driving records for employees and vanpool drivers is an important part of the accountability process and a best practice required by the insurance pool. Staff considered it an honor when the insurance pool, Washington State Transit Insurance Pool (WSTIP), asked Intercity Transit to partner with them to help create an internal audit process whereby we could check our own work to ensure we are properly managing and monitoring driving records. The self-audit process our agency helped develop is now used by all member agencies of the insurance pool to help ensure we are all following best practices in the area of driver record monitoring. Intercity Transit staff who worked on this project included employees from Vanpool, HR and Village Vans.

Cunningham shared a screen from the vanpool database showing information about one of our vanpool groups, one in which she herself is a member. Cunningham said IT began using this database in mid-2022 and she feels this is one of the best investments IT made. The RidePro database helps staff manage every aspect of the vanpool program. They use it for customer information, all customer and employers served, vanpool group management, creating statements and managing payments, customer comments and more. Total cost was about \$260k (\$260,140) and because we were able to obtain a regional mobility grant through WSDOT, we were reimbursed for \$220k – so we only spent about \$40k out of pocket.

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Cunningham said in 2021, IT was awarded a WSDOT Regional Mobility Grant (Business to Business Vanpool Marketing) in the amount of \$220,000 with required local match of \$55,000. This funding was used to purchase Vanpool Management software. The total software cost was \$298,102 and was implemented in 2022.

Cunningham said this year's vanpool marketing theme is "Work together? Ride together!" She shared a photo of postcards mailed to home and businesses in Thurston County during the first half of 2024. These mailings were part of an effort to inform the community about the amazing benefits available to them by vanpooling.

Cunningham shared information about the Telematics Demonstration Project that is currently underway. Vanpool and Maintenance departments are working together on this project, and the purpose is to install telematics on the entire vanpool fleet to track and record odometer readings and vehicle location. This will help ensure we are reporting accurate mileage on required monthly and annual reports to the National Transit Database. It will also help verify vanpool routes and tell us a van's location at any given time.

Phase 1 of the demo is complete wherein we installed and tested the telematic devices on five IT employee vanpools for the last few months. We found the devices to be working as expected. She said staff is starting Phase 2 of the demonstration, where the devices will be installed on 10 customer vanpools (who are not IT employees). If all goes as expected, staff will install the telematics devices on all vanpool vehicles.

*Mayor Sullivan arrived, and Vice Chair Mejia announced there was a quorum and the ITA was able to proceed with the remainder of the meeting agenda.*

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

### **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

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

- A. Minutes - July 17, 2024**
- B. Payroll July: \$3,688,580.66**
- C. Accounts Payable July: \$3,728,517.05**
  - Warrants: \$3,478,950.95
  - ACH Payments: \$249,566.10

### **NEW BUSINESS**

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**A. Hazard Mitigation Plan Presentation-Adoption.** Training and Safety Coordinator, Zach Heinemeyer, provided an overview of Intercity Transit’s Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) that will be an annex within the “Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region.” He also presented Resolution No. 04-2024 for adoption which accepts Intercity Transit’s annex portion of the “Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region.”

In an effort to manage risk, contain costs and promote sustainable communities, the federal government outlined new hazard mitigation planning requirements for states, tribes, and local governments in the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The act establishes the requirement for local government to adopt a federally approved hazard mitigation plan to be eligible to receive federal mitigation assistance program grants. Local hazard mitigation plans must be updated and resubmitted to FEMA for approval every five years. This updated plan complies with all of the federal hazard mitigation planning requirements.

A component of the plan is Intercity Transit’s Mitigation Initiative to implement self-identified priorities. Intercity Transit identified six. Priorities do not need dedicated funding to be listed in the plan. Having a plan will provide opportunities to apply for grant funding in the future to fund these priorities.

Heinemeyer explained hazard mitigation is best accomplished when based on a comprehensive, long-term plan developed before a disaster strikes. Mitigation planning is the process used by state, tribal, and local leaders to understand risks from natural hazards and develop long-term strategies. Mitigation planning helps us take action now, before a disaster, to reduce impacts when a disaster occurs. Overall, the HMP is an investment in our community’s future safety and sustainability.

Having a hazard mitigation plan will:

- Increase awareness of hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities
- Help us identify actions for risk reduction
- Allow us to focus resources on the greatest risks
- Effectively communicate priorities to state and federal officials
- and increase overall awareness of hazards and risks.

IT committed to certain aspects of emergency management. Those commitments are laid out in our strategic plan and in Thurston County’s emergency management plan.

**Strategic Plan:**

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- **Goal 3** - Maintain a safe and secure operating system. **End Policy** - Focus on the continual improvement for the safety and security of all customers, employees and facilities.
- **Goal 8** - Integrate resiliency into all agency decisions to anticipate, plan, and adapt given the critical functions of transit operations. **End Policy** - Promote community, organizational and individual resiliency.

### **Thurston County Emergency Management Plan (Emergency Support Functions):**

- ESF1 - Transportation: Provide “windshield” damage assessments of roads, assist with evacuations, and provide transportation needed to doctor’s and medical appointments.
- ESF6 - Mass care, Emergency Assistance, Housing & Human Services: Provide transportation resources to transport special needs or isolated populations to shelters as needed and provide buses for use as temporary shelters.
- ESF15 - External Affairs: We have been recently recognized as a support agency for this ESF during Thurston County's emergency management plan update, although our specific role is not defined right now the general reason for this ESF has to do with local PIOs and the communication that is shared between partners and with the community. This ensures cohesive and consistent messaging throughout emergencies or disasters.

The initiatives shown are presented in order of priority, and the development or revision of each initiative was informed by:

- The jurisdiction (Thurston County) and Intercity Transits hazard risk ratings
- Hazard maps
- Capabilities assessments
- Intercity Transits benefit/cost review

Heinemeyer showed a timeline that outlines of what we have recently done in preparation to submit to the State and FEMA.

**Stages 6-9** are markers that will be accomplished in the immediate and near future.

**Stage 10:** It is important to note that a Hazard Mitigation Plan is an ongoing process that will require constant revisions and potentially implementing new mitigation strategies while completing others. This stage ensures that our plan stays relevant as our community and environment changes. If this plan is approved, it will be reviewed again in February 2029.

**It was M/S/A by Sullivan and Melnick to approve Resolution No. 04-2024, which accepts and approves Intercity Transit’s designated annex portion of the “Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region.”**

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**B. Community Advisory Committee Stipend Program.** Executive Assistant/Public Records Officer, Amanda Collins, presented Policy EX-0017, Advisory Committee Stipend Program; Resolution 03-2024; and proposed changes to the CAC Bylaws.

On March 6, 2024, the ITA reviewed and approved proposed changes to the CAC Bylaws. During the discussion, ITA Member, Don Melnick, brought forth the issue of considering compensating CAC members for attending meetings through a stipend program. Melnick referenced Lacey City Council's 2023 approval of an Advisory Board Stipend Program, which aims to remove barriers for civic participation by offsetting costs of travel, parking, internet, and childcare. Melnick also requested staff gather feedback from the CAC on this topic.

At the April 15, 2024, CAC meeting, the CAC reviewed the proposal for a CAC member stipend and shared their feedback with staff. Per CAC Bylaws, the Staff Liaison forwarded a summary of the various points of view of the issue to the ITA for discussion on May 1, 2024.

On May 1, 2024, the ITA reviewed CAC feedback and sample policies from the City of Lacey and the City of Olympia, and as a result Collins presented the following for ITA consideration:

- Stipends paid to volunteers or "lived experience compensation" is becoming a standard practice, locally and nationally.
- In 2022, Washington State's Office of Equity developed best practices for government agencies to follow so they can achieve equitable outcomes in their programs and services.
- Stipends and incentives to promote community engagement continues to be a topic of discussion in transit agencies across Washington State.
- Advisory Committee Members remain volunteers and are not employees of Intercity Transit.
- This is not compensation for services but is a nominal fee to cover expenses that are incurred incidental to the volunteer activity performed by the Advisory Committee Member.
- All stipends will comply with applicable federal tax requirements.
- All Advisory Committee Members are eligible to receive \$40 per meeting attended, whether virtually or in-person, not-to-exceed \$500 annually (from January to December) as a part of this program.
- Committee Minutes will be utilized to verify and document meeting attendance.
- Intercity Transit shall provide stipends to Advisory Committee Members at intervals determined by the General Manager but distributed no fewer than four (4) times annually.
- Advisory Committee Members may "opt-out" of the program, in writing, at any time.

Discussion ensued among the Board members.

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Pierce asked for a better explanation about the sign-up form and what it will look like. She understands CAC members can opt out of the program at any time however she noticed on page 2, number 5 of the Policy, it reads, "forms must be submitted within 90 days to be eligible for enrollment and failure to submit enrollment paperwork will result in members' waiver of participation." Pierce is concerned that by submitting paperwork that it's an opt in, and if members don't do anything within 90 days, it's considered an opt out. Collins responded staff will need additional information from the CAC members in order to process payment for the stipend. This includes another step the members need to complete to participate in the program, and it is an opt in step. This necessitates some form of an enrollment process and if members choose not to participate in the enrollment process, we also want to make clear they're not approving backlog payments. This process gives the members 90 days to decide whether they wish to enroll which corresponds to the quarterly payments, and if they choose not to enroll within the 90 days, they waive their compensation or if they choose to enroll and later change their mind they can do so in writing.

Pierce is concerned about the type of information being requested on the sign-up form other than name, address, etc. Is the stipend considered taxable income, and does the form ask for other private information like income levels. Collins said the form is being directed by the Finance team and she doesn't believe there is intent to solicit information from members regarding financial status or household size or anything like a traditional application. The Finance team needs specific information to report for tax purposes. Collins said staff will bring a draft of the sign-up form to the Authority for review and consideration.

Melnick is concerned about the statement number 3 in the Policy under Budget, "If unfunded, the program is not in effect." Is this language placed in other policies when expenditures are expected? Collins responded she was unable to locate another policy where it references budget appropriations. She said this program is unique in that we are providing a new stipend program for individuals who are not employees of the agency but are receiving a stipend amount to cover expenses in relation to their volunteer work for the agency. The Finance Manager, Jen Amendala, did not see any issues including this language in the Policy. However, Amendala did offer a possible amendment: "Intercity Transit shall consider expenses related to the Advisory Committee Stipend Program in its annual operating budget. The total of annual stipends shall not exceed budget allocated without prior approval from the General Manager." Melnick said he is comfortable with this amendment.

Cox said this language feels unnecessary. Everything allocated is budgeted and we wouldn't do this if there wasn't a budget, and it feels as though we're placing this in a special category that needs extra approval.



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Pierce said Bergkamp did say there is money in the budget to cover this program through the end of 2024, budgeted under the ITA/CAC items, and a separate budget line item will be added to the 2025 budget for this specific program.

Pierce suggested a trial period to give the Authority a better idea of how the program works. Sullivan said whenever you conduct a trial period and have it run for so long, it's challenging to remember what the end time is, and we should consider the amount of time it takes to re-establish a program. If people are not taking advantage of the program or it's too costly, etc., a future Authority Board can choose to end the program as opposed to spending a great deal of staff time monitoring a trial period.

Sullivan would prefer the budget stay as written because it's good to have these types of stipulations within a budget, so staff doesn't have to keep going back and forth for approvals when changes are necessary. The budget is in place and there when needed, and if the funding isn't available at any particular time, at least the policy is still in place for when it is available. It's difficult to continuously have to reapprove a program or policy.

Discussion closed with a quote from Melnick, "Social equity is the fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract, and the fair and equitable distribution of public services, and implementation of public policy, and the commitment to provide fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy."

**It was M/S/A by Melnick and Cox to adopt Resolution 03-2024 to implement Policy EX-0017 "Advisory Committee Stipend Program" and proposed amendments to the CAC Bylaws to reference stipend eligibility.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS - None.**

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

Chief Financial Officer, Jana Brown, is currently guiding staff through the annual budget preparations. IT is incredibly lucky to have Jana at the helm of the Finance division, as she brings a wealth of financial experience and leadership in local government, grounded in transparency and integrity. Jana joined Intercity Transit in June of 2022. Prior to coming to IT, Jana worked at the City of Olympia where she spent three years as their Accounting Manager, and prior to that she spent 19 years at City of Poulsbo. Since she started, she's been working tirelessly to help IT mature in the budgeting and financial practices.

At the end of July, Jana hosted a 2025 budget kickoff meeting with department leaders. Department budgets were due by August 20 for first internal review. Next, a preliminary budget will be presented to the Intercity Transit Authority Board (ITA) in

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early October, followed by a public hearing in early November, and finally, budget adoption by resolution of the ITA in early December. This timeline is very important because an ITA resolution must be approved by December to spend funds starting on January 1, 2025. The annual budget is also an important tool that ensures IT meets the goals and end policies laid out in the Strategic Plan, which also reflect the mission and vision of Intercity Transit, and our commitment to serving the community.

IT's State Rodeo competitors did an amazing job representing Intercity Transit in both the driving and maintenance competitions last week. They all deserve our gratitude for the hard work and dedication they lead with to compete on behalf for the agency. And, if it weren't for the coordination and planning efforts of the State Rodeo Planning Committee, which includes Intercity Transit's own Service Impacts Supervisor David Dudek, Operations Supervisor Bill Miller and his wife Shanika as committee members, the State Rodeo wouldn't be as successful as it is.

Please congratulate the following competitors on their accomplishments and for representing Intercity Transit:

- 2nd Place Overall Maintenance Competition: Richelle Loken, Sean Malay, & Jonathan Reynolds.
- 2nd Place 35-foot Coach Competition: Fred "Uncle Freddie" Sombrano - in his very first State Rodeo appearance!
- 3rd Place Body-on-Chassis Competition: Dan Savage
- Honorable Mention 40-foot Coach Competition: Clinton Jimenez

The following Intercity Transit employees and family members were essential volunteers with the State Rodeo, as judges and in other roles: Operations Supervisor Rob Wood, Family Member Susan Wood, Fixed-Route Manager Michael Midstokke, Operations Deputy Director Cameron Crass, Intercity Transit Authority Board Member Sue Pierce, Operator Janet Depoe, Maintenance Director Jonathon Yee, Human Resources Deputy Director Alana Neal, Customer Service Supervisor Russell Gilsdorf, Family Member Lillian Dudek, and Administrative Services Director Heather Stafford.

Bergkamp also commemorates that while Intercity Transit was the runner up for State Grand Champion this year, IT held the title for 7 years straight. Kitsap Transit won the 2024 Grand Champion - and we congratulate them on this outstanding achievement. Sharing the opportunity to hold the Grand Champion title with other transits only showcases how Intercity Transit shares rodeo knowledge with others to help them learn and grow, which improves the overall competition on the State Rodeo stage and the public transit industry overall.

The word "champion" not only describes the winner of first place in a competition but is also used as a description for individuals who are warriors and fighters. While "winning it all" is nice, Intercity Transit is a champion because our Rodeo Competitors are willing to put themselves in the ring, repeatedly, and simply to compete, regardless of the outcome. They are all warriors in our hearts and are true front-line fighters for

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the mobility needs of the most vulnerable members of our community. We are all so proud of them.

The annual State Audit is taking place now, coordinated with the SAO by Jen Amendala and Jana Brown. The exit conference is scheduled for September 5, 2024.

**AUTHORITY ISSUES**

Pierce said she attended the WSTA conference and rodeo and she was very pleased to see more staff in attendance on Saturday and Sunday for the rodeo portion of the conference, who helped with many aspects of the event.

Melnick encourages IT staff to continue the connection with WSDOT to find out more about their public participation process and how to engage public in advance of changes.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**With no further business to come before the Authority, Vice Chair Mejia adjourned the meeting at 7:03 p.m.**

**INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

*Clark Gilman*

Clark Gilman, Chair

**ATTEST**

*Patricia Messmer*

Pat Messmer

Clerk to the Authority

**Date Approved: September 18, 2024**

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