

**Minutes**  
**INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**November 20, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Gilman called the November 20, 2024, meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority to order at 5:35 p.m. This was a hybrid meeting held at the Pattison Street facility.

**Members Present:** Chair and City of Olympia Councilmember Clark Gilman; City of Lacey Councilmember Carolyn Cox; City of Tumwater Mayor Debbie Sullivan; City of Yelm Councilmember Brian Hess; Community Representative Sue Pierce; Community Representative Don Melnick; Community Representative Justin Belk; Labor Representative, Mark Neuville.

**Members Excused:** Vice Chair and Thurston County Commissioner Carolina Mejia.

**Staff Present:** Emily Bergkamp; Pat Messmer; Matt Kenney; Amanda Collins; Daniel Van Horn; Jonathon Yee; Katie Cunningham; Michael Maverick; Tammy Ferris; Peter Stackpole; Brian Nagel; Jana Brown; Rob LaFontaine; Nick Demerice; Dena Withrow; Heather Stafford; Jana Brown; Jeff Peterson; Noelle Gordon; Cameron Crass; Thera Black; Drew Goffeney; Jesse Eckstrom.

**Others Present:** Jeff Myers, Legal Counsel; Clair Bourgeois, Community Advisory Committee; Jakub Kocztorz, Law, Lyman, Daniel, Kamerrer & Bogdanovich.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT - None.**

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

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

- A. **Minutes** – October 2, 2024, and October 16, 2024
- B. **Payroll October: \$3,858,478.48**
  - Warrant Numbers: 40970-40971; 41061 in the amount of \$33,233.18
  - ACH Payment Amount: \$3,825,245.30
- C. **Accounts Payable October: \$3,232,141.96**
  - Disbursed Warrants: 40914-40969; 40972-41060; 41062-41113 in the amount of \$3,217,480.33
  - Voided Warrant: 40906
  - ACH Payments: \$14,661.63

**NEW BUSINESS**

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- A. Change Order Fleet Vehicle Camera System.** Senior Procurement & Project Coordinator Jeff Peterson presented an amendment to the agreement with Transit Solutions LLC to upgrade storage capacity on our security camera hardware residing on the Coach and DAL fleet of vehicles.

In June of 2024 the Authority approved the extension of our warranty and support plan through December 31, 2027. Included with this agreement was an upgrade of our 4-terabyte obsolete hard drives to solid state devices of the same capacity. Rapidly advancing camera technology, and our public record requirement to store images longer, has created a new demand for increased storage capacity. Therefore, staff recommend increasing the storage capacity to eight (8) terabytes in the replacement solid state drives.

Investing in the larger storage capacity today will not only allow us to grow our image capturing capabilities, but it will also ensure a uniform solution is maintained.

Operations, Maintenance and Information Systems continue to be pleased with the performance of the camera system and vendor support. The proposal to enhance the storage capacity is reasonable to ensure full functionality and reliable performance.

**It was M/S/A by Sullivan and Pierce to authorize the General Manager to execute a change order with Transit Solutions LLC to increase the digital storage capacity on our Coach and Dial-A-Lift camera systems through December 31, 2027, for a total increased not-to-exceed amount of \$89,320, inclusive of a 10% contingency for adjustments in fleet size and exclusive of sales tax.**

- B. Adopt January 2025 Service Change Equity Analysis.** Planning Deputy Director Rob LaFontaine brought forth for final adoption the January 2025 Major Service Change Summary and Equity Analysis.

Staff prepared a fixed-route service schedule intended to be implemented on Sunday, January 5, 2025. The schedule includes added frequency on Routes 42 and 67, as well as a new Route 14 designed to operate in the vicinity of the State Capitol Campus. Each of the elements of the proposed change in service are consistent with Intercity Transit's 2018 Long-Range Plan. By Intercity Transit policy, a proposal to increase the volume of service on an existing route by more than fifty percent, or the introduction of a new fixed route to a geographic area are considered major changes to the existing service and require an elevated process to analyze and publish the demographic impact of the changes prior to being implemented by staff.

The draft Equity Analysis, accompanied by a Major Service Change Summary, was released for public comment on October 7, 2024. While no comments were received regarding the methodology, findings or conclusion of the Equity Analysis,

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comments came forth regarding the new Route 14, specifically the absence of north Capitol Way and the Olympia Farmer's Market not being included. In consideration of the public feedback, as well as operational concerns, the final version of Major Service Change Summary and Equity Analysis reflects the Route 14 with modifications from the version presented in the draft. The modified version includes service to the Olympia Farmer's Market, as well as a decision to operate on a segment of Plum St. in lieu of Eastside St. for operability reasons.

The findings of the Equity Analysis have been adjusted to reflect changes in population. The conclusion remains consistent with the draft analysis; no significant disparate impact or disparate benefit to racial minority or low-income populations related to the changes in service anticipated to take effect on January 5, 2025.

**It was M/S/A by Melnick and Sullivan to adopt the January 2025 Major Service Change Summary and Equity Analysis, as presented.**

**C. Marketing/Communication Zero Fare Survey.** Chief Marketing Communications and Outreach Officer, Nick Demerice, provided an update on the feedback received through the Zero Fare Survey that was launched in October. Questions included: Who are you? How has zero fare impacted your family? What sort of things do you use the bus to do in our community? What sort of rides do you take? What sort of routes do you ride? Overall, we received wonderful feedback. Results included the following using various means:

- a. 270 people participated
- b. Rider News link 135
- c. Website link 60
- d. Social media link 75

By working through one of our partners (contractor), we offered a financial incentive like gift cards that helped motivate people. Last year during the focus groups we learned a lot about our ridership, and the more we talk to the riders, there's a disconnect between what people hear us say about ourselves and what people hear other people say about our service.

Demerice said we also started promoting the ride for free and zero fare and to check on how's it going. Demerice said IT extended the pilot through 2028, and this marks the halfway point. Demerice reviewed key takeaways:

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Themes included:

- Family benefits
- Essential and empowering access
- Recovery and rebuilding
- Accessibility and independence
- Improved rider experience
- Community and quality of life

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Negative feedback came predominantly from non-riders and included:

- Feeling unsafe due to substance use or unclean, crowded conditions on buses
- Complaints or concerns regarding financial viability of Zero Fare

Multiple respondents expressed the benefit Zero Fare had on their families, citing their ability to cut down significantly on transportation costs and reducing their need for multiple cars.

Busy parents appreciated needing to spend less time driving their children to activities (or to be in two places at once) and helping their teens build independence by getting around safely by themselves. Teens also chimed in with appreciation!

- Savings on car payments, fuel, and maintenance, as well as transit fares
- Confidence in reducing to a single-car household
- Flexibility and increased independence for teens

Demerice shared survey comments:

*"For my kids riding a city bus knowing they will be safe and it's free for them whenever parents aren't able to give them a ride, truly is a blessing to our family! This is appreciated in so many ways!"*

*"It will soon help my teens get to college, as I am the only driver with five kids that often need to be two places at once."*

*"I really think the most amazing thing about free buses has been how easy and accessible it has made public transportation for my children and the other kids in our neighborhood. Kids started taking it to school when the school buses were not running consistently and have kept riding because they learned how easy it is to get around."*

Several respondents shared that Zero Fare gave them the ability to find and maintain employment, from printing off their resume at the library to having a reliable way to get to and from work, all while removing the financial burden which would have been a barrier.

Some respondents shared that Zero Fare made a huge difference in mobility while recovering from setbacks such as surgeries, injuries, or financial hardship.

Respondents of all abilities also shared the difference it has made in accessing necessities such as medical appointments and the grocery store, and some cited Zero Fare as a key factor in their decision to pursue education, because they know that transportation will not be a barrier. Essential and empowering access:

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- Reliable, cost-saving commute
- Access to health appointments and the grocery store
- Empowerment to pursue education, attend interviews
- Mobility retained during setbacks

*"It has helped me keep my job and housing while also allowing me to see family and friends more often. I also use the bus to go grocery shopping and run my daily errands. Being able to do this all for free has considerably improved my life overall."*

*"What a weight off my shoulders that I can hop on a bus without any thought to whether I have the resources to be there. I don't have to consider any barriers to entry; I belong there, on the bus, with everyone else."*

*"I was recently in a severe auto crash/accident and was facing losing my job. Because of the transit service I can continue my employment."*

Demerice reviewed the Recovery and Rebuilding category. This category included responses from people noting the impact Zero Fare has had on their ability to navigate and come back from difficult circumstances such as homelessness, unemployment, or addiction.

- Accessing services, grocery stores, and temporary housing
- Attending court, mental health services, and support groups
- Not losing mobility during unemployment
- Safety and independence during recovery

Accessibility and Independence - Multiple respondents who self-identified as seniors or people with disabilities shared that Zero Fare has provided them with mobility and independence, particularly when living on a fixed or low income, and that Dial-a-Lift is now easier to use because they don't have to pay before riding. Respondents also reported feeling less isolated, due to having the ability to engage more with their community due to lowered transportation and cost barriers. Some respondents also shared that removing the anxiety of interacting with the bus driver or using a special transit pass has given riders with mental health conditions more confidence in using public transit.

- Accessible, reliable mobility (including paratransit)
- Engaging more with community
- Cost savings redirected to more enriching activities
- Removed anxiety over special fares, public interactions

Improved Rider Experience - On the subject of removing anxiety, multiple respondents shared that Zero Fare has removed much of the stress and indecision of riding transit, as they no longer worry about carrying exact change, factoring in time to buy a bus pass, or dealing with delays or conflict on the bus

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due to fare disputes. Respondents also shared that they could travel more often and further if desired and don't need to carefully plot out their routes based on fare differences and transfers. Several shared they are encouraged to explore more places in their area because of Zero Fare. Multiple respondents were glad that the Zero Fare pilot has inspired zero-fare programs for other transit agencies, allowing them to travel throughout the region hassle-free. Multiple respondents shared they were glad that it was so easy to choose the safest, most environmentally friendly way to get around town and frequently recommend transit to new riders.

- No need to carry exact change or build in time to buy a pass
- Smoother boarding process
- Able to travel further and more efficiently without cost worries
- Peace of mind and confidence in riding often and recommending transit to others

Demerice continued with Community and Quality of Life - This bucket really encompasses many of the others already discussed, with respondents speaking to how Zero Fare has meant shifting out of a necessity mindset into one of enjoyment and community pride. Many respondents cited Zero Fare as helping them feel less isolated and more plugged in with community, whether through accessing local businesses at the center of town, or visiting friends and family, or enjoying events held further outside of town, such as the fair, without worry over transportation costs or parking. Several mentioned they enjoy the health benefits of walking or riding their bikes more, knowing they can get a "bus boost" uphill or home in the evenings. Mirroring other comments, many people shared that money they would have otherwise spent on transportation now goes toward more enjoyable activities, such as restaurants or the movies. Some respondents shared that they moved to the area in part because of the excellent transit system; others shared that they relocated from out of state or another country, and Zero Fare made it possible for them to get out and explore their new surroundings, so they felt far less isolated than if they had needed a vehicle to get around. Respondents shared that the convenience and cost savings of Zero Fare encouraged them to live downtown. Multiple respondents expressed a sense of community pride in seeing this important service made available to people from all walks of life, including those experiencing poverty or homelessness, people with disabilities, and the elderly.

- Access and financial incentive to enjoy local businesses
  - Visiting friends and family
  - Walking/biking more often
  - Accessing events and amenities downtown and further away
- Community pride

Demerice said improved rider experience was the most common feedback theme, with 113 comments in this category. Essential and empowering access and community and quality of life followed, with 39 and 36 comments, respectively.

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Unsafe/unclean conditions was the most common negative theme, with 9 comments in this category. There were 14 neutral comments.

### **Next Steps**

- Follow-up interviews
- Recording testimonials
- Reinforce key messages. For example, our discussion is more around how it's free to ride and ride for free because many don't fully understand what zero fare means.

Demerice said Marketing team member, Ally McPherson had a great idea to reach out to a woman, Bridget, who runs a social media account named Eat, Drink and See Oly with about 12,000 local followers. We started working with her in the summer and so far, we've had 14 posts involving our services and we've had really incredible engagement around these and engendered incredible connections and engagement. Just within those posts, not even including the ones in November have reached more than 39,000 accounts across the platforms that they interact with and reaches the demographics we're looking for. Bridget also interviewed the woman who runs the 41-fan account on Instagram - Route 41 has a fan account on Instagram that gets a lot of great posts and engagement.

Melnick asked if there's a way to engage employers and people who run businesses and is there some way you could engage those people because they become our advocates. Demerice said he and Bergkamp have been doing some tag teaming in the community with presentations. Bergkamp recently presented to the Gateway Rotary. We also have a robust LinkedIn engagement, and we'll do some more things with Bridget in the spring highlighting more service outside of our fixed route and doing some promotions around vanpool and Walk N Roll to continue educating the community.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. Transportation Policy Board (Nov. 13)** Belk said the TPB made a recommendation that TRPC adopt an additional project on the Contingency List Addition from the Regional Transportation Improvement Program and that project is of the nature that would allow TRPC to do some planning to incorporate multimodal level of service and that's a measure of effectiveness that incorporates other modes besides just the vehicle delay rather than normal level of service for vehicles alone. The TPB recommended TRPC fund a certain package from the 2024 Federal Transportation Call for Projects and in the recommended package Intercity Transit fares really well. Belk said submitted in those grants was funding for Walk N Roll from 2027 to 2030, and Smart Corridors Phase IV and a battery electric DAL vehicle with charging infrastructure project. Belk said of the \$3.9M we requested, we're getting \$3.8M and they were able to squeeze out extra funds for regional trails planning. Belk was part of the subcommittee that helped assess the scoring for all of the projects and while

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there are process improvements and lessons learned, the process is well received and ended up benefiting IT really well in addition to our partners. Belk said TPB received a presentation on the Regional Transportation Plan project list and financial forecast. This was a primer about how this goes and there's 30+ projects that will be assumed in the regional transportation planning and of course, that has to be a fiscally constrained plan and staff and agencies have a lot of work ahead of them.

### GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

- Twelve candidates interviewed on Friday, November 18 to fill six open positions on the Community Advisory Committee. The caliber of candidates was very impressive – they have a lot of passion for public transportation and the community. Recommendations of new CAC members will be made to the ITA at the December 4 meeting. Interviews for ITA Board member Don Melnick's Community Representative position will be held Friday, November 22. We all look forward to the outcome of these important recruitments.
- Intercity Transit hosted a discussion and ride-and-look with partners from Puget Sound Energy (PSE) and Lewis County Transit on November 12. The primary intent was to educate PSE Leadership and staff regarding the prospective outlook, market, and impacts of the implementation of hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles within our region and across their service territory. Several other transit agencies attended the discussion remotely. Over the past few years, Intercity Transit has been building a relationship with PSE as we explored our zero-emission transition, and we continue to strengthen that partnership as early-stage planning and implementation become reality. Just as we have discussed the impacts a major change will have on Intercity Transit, PSE is facing even greater challenges as they work to support similar customer efforts across their service territory, including increasing their own renewable energy supply.
- Intercity Transit commemorated Veteran's Day on November 11 to honor and thank our employees and their loved ones who served in the United States Armed Forces. Staff put together a wonderful slide show for agency monitors featuring pictures and quotes from IT employees who are Veteran's as well as employees' Veteran family members. Thank you to all our Veteran's past, present, and future, for your sacrifice in service to our country. In the words of Bob Dylan, "I think of a hero as someone who understands the degree of responsibility that comes with his freedom."
- Intercity Transit leadership attended a "Microaggressions" training to learn about subtle acts of exclusion and actionable strategies to **mitigate microaggressions** through conflict resolution. **We left with a better understanding of:**
  - How to be an ally when witnessing implicit discriminatory actions



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- Best practices for responding to microaggressions and exclusionary behaviors
  - Tactics for conflict resolution and bystander intervention
- Bergkamp attended the Washington State Transit Association's fourth quarter board meeting in Spokane. She rode Spokane Transit Authority's (STA) very convenient Routes 60 and 74 to get to and from the airport to the hotel downtown. It was super easy to board with a credit card tap and pay option, and convenient, dropping her off a short walk from her destination. Bergkamp joined transit CEO's and General Managers from across the state to discuss topics of safety and security, including a presentation from King County Metro's General Manager Michelle Allison about new safety and security initiatives, 2025 legislative priorities of preserving, maintaining and increasing public transit investments, incentivizing transition to zero-emission fleets, supporting safety and security for transit employees and customers, and protecting the effective and efficient delivery of public transit. They also took a tour of STA's [Downtown Plaza](#) transit hub, including further conversation about safety and security at transit centers, plus the fun of seeing an extremely busy hub during rush hour, including the operation and amenities of STA's new [City Line](#) Bus Rapid Transit service. The meeting culminated with updates about the Northwest Hydrogen Hub and Washington State Department of Transportation.
- Operator Class 24-05, the largest Operator class in IT history with 22 individuals, graduated Friday, November 15, and they are out on the road. Congratulations to Andrew Pritchett, Anita Donaldson, Brian Schumacher, Carolyn Mickel, Chris McConnon, Ernest Shabaan, Holly Persyn, James Phillips, Jason Robers, Jessica Adams, John Conley, Jon Phillips, Katerina Rose, Kristen Kibilowski, Miles Woodam, Payton Newell, Rachel Permann, Rebecca Chrisler, Shaun Stoffer, Stephen Crawford, Steven Williams and Thomas Dhamers. Intercity Transit is fortunate they said yes to serving our community in their role as an essential service provider. Operators are the face of our agency, and we are all very proud to support you as you represent IT.
- Intercity Transit leadership and the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) have begun meetings for ATU's next contract, and we look forward to bargaining in good faith together. These leaders already meet monthly during Joint Labor Management Committee meetings, where we strive to work through operational issues and concerns as they arise. We also attend an annual labor relations conference together each spring hosted by the Labor and Employee Relations Association to grow in our collaboration and understanding of each other's interests. Maintaining positive labor relations is vital to navigating times when we have differences of opinion or are faced with challenges that threaten our ability to provide public transportation to our community as an essential service provider. Contract negotiations offer management and union leadership alike the opportunity to better understand each other and work together with sincere

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intention to be fair, open, and honest, with the goal of offering a contract that supports the needs of our mutual employees and union members.

- Bergkamp gave a special thanks to ITA Board member Don Melnick for introducing and facilitating a meeting with Executive Director Mr. Phil Jones from the Alliance for Transportation Electrification (ATE). Alliance for Transportation Electrification (ATE) is a recently established industry-funded non-profit association that seeks to promote the acceleration of transportation electrification deployments, a robust utility role, and interoperability and open standards. Mr. Jones also served on the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) from March 2005 to March 2017. His unique experience makes him especially knowledgeable about purchasing electricity from regulated private electric utilities. We hope to host Mr. Jones at IT in the near future to provide an electric energy purchase 101 as we prepare for our zero-emissions transition.

### **AUTHORITY ISSUES**

Cox said the Lacey City Council held a small celebration for Lacey's Makerspace winning the Governor's Smart Cities Award. They held a reception before the council meeting where all the big partners attended, like Saint Martin's University, and Economic Development Council. Cox said there were impressive statistics about how membership has tripled and the space tripled thanks to generous federal grants. Cox said the City of Lacey is in hyper budget mode conducting public hearings and she anticipates their budget will be reduced next year, but there are no anticipated layoffs.

Hess said he's happy to hear about the wonderful marketing campaign to get more information from the riders. He thinks it's important that IT continues to work to get more influencers so to speak because there's a lot of fun things that can be done on the bus such as scavenger hunts which might encourage more ridership. Hess appreciates the service IT does provide.

Belk enjoyed hearing the presentation from Marketing and about the community. He also enjoyed serving on the CAC ad-hoc recruitment selection committee. He said we live in a fantastic community and they're so supportive of IT and we're very lucky.

Pierce said the City of Lacey is holding the Lacey Holiday Lights on Monday, December 2 at Huntamer Park from 5:30 to 7:30 instead of the traditional evening lighted parade.

Sullivan announced effective January 1, 2025, Councilmember Kelly Von Holtz will represent the City of Tumwater on the ITA and Sullivan will be the alternate. Sullivan also said she will not be running for re-election for Mayor.

Melnick is excited that the CAC is still alive and well and how they get involved by being presented with issues in advance of the Authority meeting, allowing them to

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provide input that is helpful to the Authority. Melnick said it's been helpful for him as a member of the ITA.

Melnick is glad the meeting with Phil Jones went well because it will help position a good start for IT to begin using hydrogen fuel and battery electric vehicles for the Dial-A-Lift fleet.

**CLOSED SESSION** - At 6:50 p.m. Chair Gilman announced the Intercity Transit Authority would conduct a closed session authorized by RCW 42.30.140 (4) (b) to allow Authority members and necessary staff to discuss strategies related to ATU collective bargaining. Chair Gilman announced the Authority would not reconvene to an Open Session and no further action would be taken. Attending the closed session were Clark Gilman, Debbie Sullivan, Don Melnick, Sue Pierce, Justin Belk, Brian Hess, Carolyn Cox; Emily Bergkamp, Heather Smith, Jeff Myers, and John Lee of Summit Law.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**With no further business to come before the Authority, Chair Gilman adjourned the meeting at 6:51p.m.**

**INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

*Clark Gilman*

Clark Gilman, Chair

**ATTEST**

*Patricia Messmer*

Pat Messmer

Clerk to the Authority

**Date Approved: December 18, 2024**

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