

Minutes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
December 4, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gilman called the December 4, 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 Councilmember Kelly Von Holtz; Community Representative Sue Pierce; Community Representative Don Melnick; Community Representative Justin Belk; Labor Representative Mark Neuville.

Members Excused: City of Yelm Councilmember Brian Hess; City of Tumwater Mayor Debbie Sullivan.

Staff Present: Emily Bergkamp; Pat Messmer; Matt Kenney; Amanda Collins; Daniel Van Horn; Katie Cunningham; Michael Maverick; Tammy Ferris; Jonathan Martin; Brenden Houx; Peter Stackpole; Thera Black; Noelle Gordon; Nicole Jones; Brian Nagel; Dena Withrow; Jessica Gould; Nick Demerice; Jesse Eckstrom; Rob LaFontaine; Cameron Crass; Alana Neal; Fiona Sheehan.

Others Present: Jeff Myers, Legal Counsel; David Payton and Doug Riddels, Community Advisory Committee; Jakub Kocztorz, Law, Lyman, Daniel, Kamerrer & Bogdanovich.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC HEARING

A. Draft 2025-2030 Draft Strategic Plan. Bergkamp said the strategic plan recognizes the primary goal of returning to pre-pandemic levels and re-establishes a clear focus on accomplishing goals from Proposition 1. IT is currently at 102% pre-COVID levels of service with ridership at 98% pre-COVID levels, nearly matching our service restoration. Bergkamp reviewed notable changes to the strategic plan:

- Streamlined redundant content
- Grant reimbursement amounts/projections
- Included grants applied for through end of Plan
- Total cost of ownership of zero-emissions technology
- Sales tax trends
- Issues like I-2117 and overall funding impermanence
- Guiding Principles reflecting our values of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Removed expired references of COVID-19 impacts
- Incorporated feedback from ITA, CAC, Public Comment

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

December 4, 2024

Page 2 of 10

- Employer of Choice
- Community Outreach
- Zero Emissions

Bergkamp said the final draft out for publication contains different formatting and she thanked the Marketing team, notably Ally McPherson, for creating the new formatting look. Also new is an Executive Summary which will assist members of the public to digest and understand our strategic goals for the next few years. Bergkamp reviewed next steps:

- Complete updates to the Draft 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, including consideration of public comment received.
- Final 2025-2030 Strategic Plan adoption is slated for December 18, 2024.

Chair Gilman opened the public hearing at 5:35 p.m.

With no members of the public giving testimony, Chair Gilman closed the public hearing at 5:36 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Alex Patel of Olympia spoke in support of the Operators receiving a fair wage increase and asked the Authority to consider the ATU's bargaining proposal.

Intercity Transit Coach Operators Kenny Farver, Gryffen Snyder-Chavez, Alena Parisi, Bert George and ATU Vice President Michael Cornelius gave public comment regarding wages and benefits being considered in Intercity Transit's current contract negotiations with the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1765. ATU is the labor union representing Operators, Customer Service Representatives and Dial-A-Lift Dispatch Specialists.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Security Services Contract Extension.** Sr. Procurement & Project Coordinator, Brenden Houx presented a contract for renewal with PalAmerican Security, Inc. for transit security services. In June 2022, PalAmerican was awarded Intercity Transit's contract for unarmed security services at Intercity Transit's facilities. The initial contract term was for a period of eighteen (18) months, with four one-year renewal options. The next term was a 12-month extension for security services in 2024. This item represents the second one-year renewal for services in 2025.

Under this renewal effective January 1, 2025, PalAmerican will continue to provide daily unarmed security services at Intercity Transit facilities, including the Olympia Transit Center, Lacey Transit Center, Pattison campus which also includes the leased Bobcat parking lot, and patrols of the Martin Way Park and

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

December 4, 2024

Page 3 of 10

Ride. Under this renewal, PalAmerican will provide approximately 3200 hours of security services each month.

In accordance with the contract terms, the proposed renewal reflects a 3.8% rate increase. This rate increase is in alignment with the Seattle Consumer Price Index increase over the past year. Market research indicates the proposed renewal rates are fair and reasonable.

Based on PalAmerican's record of performance and adaptability throughout the first two terms of the contract, staff remain confident that the firm will continue to provide necessary services at our facilities with a professional and valuable presence and recommend that the contract is renewed.

It was M/S/A by Mejia and Cox to authorize the General Manager to execute a contract amendment with PalAmerican to renew the contract for transit center security services for a period of one year in the amount of \$1,046,183.

- B. September 2025 Network Restructure.** Rob LaFontaine, Deputy Director of Planning, provided an overview of the anticipated restructuring of fixed routes in September of 2025. Staff identified September 2025 to implement significant changes to the existing fixed-route network. The primary purpose is to establish an enhanced route on the Martin Way/Harrison Ave/State Ave corridor consistent with the Long-Range Plan element of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). With the frequent corridor route serving as an anchor, it becomes necessary to consider other route changes to reduce duplication of coverage. A restructuring of routes also provides opportunities to adjust service in hopes of addressing evolving mobility needs and improving the community's access and use of transit.

LaFontaine said for several years staff have been working on various efforts to realign bus routes to fulfill the elements of the long-range plan, and that adjustments are needed to address growing/changing needs of the community. To improve the directness of routing as well as connections with frequent corridor service. Other considerations in routing include improved circulation around high schools and crosstown service to college campuses.

LaFontaine shared three reasons that influenced the fixed-route changes: (1) The short & long-range plan adopted in the fall of 2018 in concert with the Proposition 1 sales tax ballot measure; (2) Our operations and facilities staff; and (3) the community/public.

LaFontaine explained how a restructuring supports the long-range plan in goals to provide service to new areas within the Public Transportation Benefit Area, with bus stops served at least every 30 minutes, and further the implementation of bus rapid transit. Correspondingly, added service along the Martin Way Corridor would allow reducing service on our 62 A and B. There are still details

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

December 4, 2024

Page 4 of 10

to be flushed out and on-demand service remains cumbersome and expensive. Many stops on the 62 A and B would not have 30-minute service if we were to scale them back, namely the areas that are out on the East end of Lacey. There's a heavy concentration on portions of the corridor on Martin Way. We're looking to restructure the network to help with the reduction of duplication and free up important financial and service resources to meet other needs.

Making meaningful adjustments to service to help with the efficiency of our operation is part of the influence. We don't often talk about our facilities staff and they're our unsung heroes and we look at our nearly one thousand bus stops in the network and we're used to seeing buses stop at those bus stops, but every single one of those bus stops is serviced regularly by our facilities team, which includes parking their service vehicle for 10 to 40 minutes and that's a much different requirement on the infrastructure than a bus for a few seconds. LaFontaine said operability is arguably the most significant influence on fixed route design. If we can't drive the bus there, we can't drive the bus there. We're only as good as the road network.

LaFontaine reviewed the public piece of this and conversation/comments. We've received over 1,200 comments from the customer comment module as it pertains to planning. Themes emerge from these comments.

LaFontaine reviewed the recipe for change. A lot goes into changing a fixed-route network and he reviewed four primary considerations.

1. Consistent with regional development and land use
 - Coordinated effort with housing and transportation
2. Emphasis on being both direct and convenient
 - Preserving existing stops and segments
 - Intersections and Operability
3. Influenced by data
 - Population & demographics
 - Ridership
4. Incorporates years of community input
 - Long-Range Plan
 - Operator feedback
 - Customer Comments

LaFontaine reviewed each of the four individually:

Consistent with regional development and land use, serving the areas the cities expect **higher densities** of residents

- Concentrating where needed
- Comprehensive Plans
- Sub-Area Plans

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

December 4, 2024

Page 5 of 10

- Martin Way Crossings
High-Capacity Study
- Express **commuter service** between the Lacey Transit Center and Lakewood, via Hawks Prairie and JBLM

Emphasis on both direct and convenient - Align bus routes to intersect with the new **corridor express**

- The grant for *The One* expires July 2025, which is why we've selected September 2025 for the change
Evolve *The One* into a BRT-influenced **corridor express**
- Rebrand?
Increase frequency on College Street
Improved directness to schools, colleges, and the State Capitol

Influenced by data:

Population & Demographics

- Medium+ Densities
- Low-income residents (Title VI)
- Racial Minorities (Title VI)
- 2023 Passenger Survey

Operability

- Reliable roadways and maneuvering

Resource capacity

- Balancing available employees and revenue

Incorporates years of community input:

I need late night service

- increased span/frequency according to our Long-Range Plan (Prop 1)
riding the bus takes too long
- New Express Corridor service (i.e. BRT Lite)
- More direct routes between major destinations, including the Capitol, colleges and high schools

I need to travel north

- New commuter routes, connections to JBLM (PT206) and Sound Transit
the bus doesn't stop where I am?
- Several new segments to be added including Henderson Blvd, Black Lake Blvd, Billy Frank Jr. Blvd, Marvin Rd, and Kinwood St.

LaFontaine said we have an opportunity to reshape our system in a way that is very meaningful to not only high school students, but those who are trying to do the running start curriculum that is a few classes at the high school and then transitioning to courses at the College in the middle of the day. LaFontaine covered why change is for the better.

- Research suggests **<5% of the population** use transit on a regular basis

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

December 4, 2024

Page 6 of 10

- Teens are driving less; research indicates **young adults use transit** proportionately more than older adults
- The restructured network **purposefully supports** mobility of younger riders

LaFontaine reviewed the key differences as to why a restructured network is better, emphasizing convenience, introducing crosstown service to popular destinations like educational sites, shopping and state capital and state offices. One seat rides to nearby schools and commerce, and then direct. Maintaining our heaviest investment, the highest span of frequency on arterials and major collectors with ideally less out of direction travel connections. One of the greatest barriers we face in motivating people to use the bus is when we're traveling out of direction. The more we can work on direct routing, the more appealing riding the bus becomes.

LaFontaine reviewed the tentative timeline for the next few months:

Fall 2024

- Operational Assessment
- Preliminary outreach

January - March 2025

- Release Major Change Summary & Draft *Equity Analysis*
- Open Houses, stakeholder engagement, public hearing

March 2025

- CAC Review of Summary & Draft *Equity Analysis*
- April 2025: ITA Adoption of Final *Equity Analysis*

April - August 2025

- Assemble Route and Operator schedules; new bus stops
- Effective, Sunday, September 7, 2025

LaFontaine reviewed an interactive route map that was emailed to the Authority. It's a web-based tool that shows us changes that we're proposing to be made. We've shared this within the last few months with internal staff to get feedback, which has been positive.

Demerice said staff plan a very robust public process and a lot of communications with the public such as being out on the platforms at the OTC and LTC with tablets sharing the routes and top-level data. Demerice said we'll meet with stakeholder groups and organizations within the community and the school districts.

Pierce suggested as LaFontaine moves forward to share with the Board the various types of outreach he has planned and/or groups he's met with, because that would be helpful to them as they are out and about and talking to individuals in the community. Demerice said staff can create specific talking points the Board can use. Gilman said he'd like to make sure that the Board

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

December 4, 2024

Page 7 of 10

gives a general thumbs up before staff provides talking points and implementation.

- C. Community Advisory Committee Recommendations/Appointments.** Bergkamp said at the direction of the Intercity Transit Authority, an ad-hoc committee formed to conduct interviews of applicants for the Community Advisory Committee. Interviews took place on November 8, 2024. The committee consisted of Debbie Sullivan, Carolina Mejia, Justin Belk, Eliane Wilson, Rachel Weber and Rachel Wilson. Upon conclusion of the interviews, the group discussed applicant qualifications, committee attributes and brought their recommendation forward to the Authority for consideration.

It was M/S/A by Pierce and Von Holtz to re-appoint the following individuals to serve second consecutive three-year terms beginning January 1, 2025: *Eliane Wilson and Rachel Weber.*

To appoint the following individuals to three-year terms beginning January 1, 2025: *Brandon Mixon, Dara Dotson, Hallie Sutter, Margaret Janis, Michael Gray, Shawn Sandquist, and Suzanne Simons.*

To re-appoint the following individual to a consecutive one-year term youth position beginning January 1, 2025: *John-Paul Fox-Seidel.*

To appoint the following individual to a one-year term youth position beginning January 1, 2024: *Julian Preston*

Selected the following individuals to be on the list of approved alternate candidates for 2025: *Kristi Duke, Jim Hanley, Will Stuiivenga, and Wayland "Mike" Hubbart.*

- D. ITA Community Representative Recommendation/Appointment.** Community Representative Don Melnick's term expires December 31, 2024. He will have served three consecutive three-year terms. The Authority directed staff to conduct a recruitment to fill the position. Five applications were received by the deadline of October 4, 2024; however, one applicant pulled their application, and the Authority conducted interviews at a special meeting held on Friday, November 22, 2024. The candidates who completed interviews were Michael Van Gelder, Eliane Wilson, Dara Dotson and Wendy Goodwin. Chair Gilman brought forward the Authority's recommendation to appoint Wendy Goodwin to fill this position for a term to begin January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2027.

It was M/S/A by Mejia and Pierce to appoint Wendy Goodwin to the Intercity Transit Authority as a Community Representative, for a term to begin January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2027.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

December 4, 2024

Page 8 of 10

A. Community Advisory Committee (Nov. 18). David Payton reported the CAC started off by recognizing outgoing CAC members. There was an election of new Officers. Rachel Weber was elected Chair and Clair Bourgeois was elected Vice Chair. Nick Demerice from Marketing gave the same presentation as the one given this evening on the Zero Fare survey. Payton said the CAC was glad to hear about heartfelt and real time impacts the bus system has on everyday people and there were some really heartfelt testimonials that Demerice shared directly from that survey. The CAC had a lot of dialogue around the impact of the zero-fare system and the bus operators and everyone who supports them as well. Rob LaFontaine gave a presentation on the new fixed-route network, and the CAC had an open conversation about that as well. Lastly, Bergkamp provided an update on the 2025-2030 draft strategic plan.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Intercity Transit Leadership and the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) met today and will meet again on December 6 to negotiate ATU's next contract. Negotiations can be deeply emotional because they deal with deeply personal issues of compensation and benefits, as we heard this evening from co-workers. IT remains committed to bargaining in good faith with the ATU and co-creating a contract that allows us to support our employees, continue providing an essential service to our community, supports financial stability, and ensures IT remains a great place to work.

On November 22, 2024, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) completed an audit of IT's federally mandated drug and alcohol testing program for safety-sensitive transit employees. Kudos to HR Analyst Amy Meierhoff and HR Specialist Alysia Bair who coordinated the program for ensuring the audit went smoothly. Audit Team Leader Laurena Stoddard shared that working with enthusiastic, well organized, happy people like Amy and Alysia changes the entire audit feeling. She further stated that FTA understands these audits place an additional management effort that entails a great deal of time and planning on our part. FTA greatly appreciated our cooperation, patience and hospitality during this review.

To honor and in recognition of Rosa Parks' contributions to promote civil rights, equal rights, respect, and dignity, Intercity Transit reserves a seat on our buses on December 1, marked with a single red rose. This yearly tribute is important because we should remember the role public transportation once played during segregation. Through this remembrance, our industry can and will remain united against institutionalized racism. On December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, Parks was arrested after refusing to give up her seat on a crowded bus to a white passenger. The Montgomery City Code required all public transportation be segregated and bus drivers had the "powers of a police officer of the city while in actual charge of any bus for the purposes of carrying out the provisions" of the code. While operating a bus, drivers were required to provide separate but equal accommodations for white and black passengers by assigning seats.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

December 4, 2024

Page 9 of 10

Ms. Parks said “I’d see the bus pass every day. But to me, that was a way of life; we had no choice but to accept what was the custom. The bus was among the first ways I realized there was a black world and a white world.” She later recalled that her refusal wasn't because she was physically tired, but she was tired of giving in.

Bergkamp and several staff members will attend the Regional Economic Development Council Expo on December 5. This annual conference is an opportunity for our region's leaders to network and discover strategic actions that build a strong, inclusive economy.

Employees, Board and CAC members, and Intercity Transit volunteers are invited to the Holiday Banquet December 11 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is a recognition program at noon, followed by singing from the Miracles on Pattison Street.

AUTHORITY ISSUES

Cox said the City of Lacey had the holiday lighting and this was the first year they did not do a lighted vehicle parade, but they had lighted vehicles positioned within Huntamer Park. The lighted bus was missed, and she is hoping to have it back next year. The city is almost finished planning their 2025 budget and balance fund and not expecting any layoffs and anticipating adding some staff.

Mejia said she was very thankful to participate in both rounds of interviews for the CAC and ITA. She said it was great to hear how passionate members of the community are about IT. Mejia said she spoke with Thurston County Auditor Mary Hall who thanked IT for having those extended bus times to allow voters to ride the bus into the voter registration center on Mottman. It helped many citizens exercise their right to vote.

Von Holtz said she’s been the ITA alternate for Mayor Sullivan for the past year and effective January 1, 2025, Holtz will be full time on the ITA, and Sullivan will be alternate. Von Holtz said the City of Tumwater will hold its holiday tree lighting event on Saturday, December 7. On December 3 the city passed their 2025 budget and also voted to pass a Resolution providing a policy statement that affirms the council’s “commitment to equality, dignity, and protection of civil rights,” as well as its “standing against hate, bigotry, and discrimination.”

Neuville reinforced what members of the ATU commented on this evening regarding bargaining negotiations.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Authority, Chair Gilman adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

ATTEST

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

December 4, 2024

Page 10 of 10

Carolyn Cox

Carolyn Cox, Chair

Patricia Messmer

**Pat Messmer
Clerk to the Authority**

Date Approved: January 15, 2025

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