

Minutes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
April 2, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cox called the April 2, 2025, meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority to order at 5:33 p.m. This was a hybrid meeting held at the Pattison Street facility.

Members Present: Chair and City of Lacey Councilmember Carolyn Cox; Vice Chair and Community Representative Sue Pierce; City of Tumwater Councilmember Kelly Von Holtz; Community Representative Justin Belk; Labor Representative, Mark Neuville; Community Representative Wendy Goodwin; City of Olympia Councilmember Robert Vanderpool; City of Yelm Councilmember Brian Hess.

Members Excused: Thurston County Commissioner Carolina Mejia.

Staff Present: Emily Bergkamp; Pat Messmer; Amanda Collins; Brian Nagel; Dena Withrow; Heather Stafford; Jana Brown; Jonathon Yee; Katie Cunningham; Matt Kenney; Michael Maverick; Peter Stackpole; Ramon Beltran; Nicole Jones; Thera Black; Alana Neal; Jane Denicola; Jesse Eckstrom; Duncan Green; Alejandro Soto; Amy Zurfluh.

Others Present: Jeff Myers, Legal Counsel; Margaret Janis, Community Advisory Committee; David Foster, Foster Government Relations; and Joanna Grist, Grist Public Affairs.

STAFF INTRODUCTION

A. Katie Cunningham introduced **Alejandro Soto, Inventory Supervisor.**

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was M/S/A by Von Holtz and Goodwin to approve the agenda as presented.

To balance the needs of the public comment process and the business portion of Authority board meetings, there was an initial 30-minute public comment period after board agenda approval, and a secondary public comment period after the business portion of the meeting to accommodate any commenters not heard in the first round. Pre-registered on-line attendees were heard first followed by in-person attendees who signed up for public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT SEGMENT #1 Commenced at 5:46 p.m.

Members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1765 and the general public (in person and remotely) gave public comment regarding wages and benefits being considered in Intercity Transit's current contract negotiations with ATU Local 1765. ATU is the labor union representing Operators, Customer Service Representatives and Dial-A-Lift Dispatch Specialists.

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NEW BUSINESS

- A. State Legislative Review and Update.** Bergkamp said Intercity Transit has contracted with Foster Government Relations and Grist Public Affairs, LLC since 2016. David Foster and Joanna Grist are our primary state advocates who will discuss the current issues facing the Washington State Legislature and the Governor's Office and how they relate to Intercity Transit.

Bergkamp introduced Joanna Grist from Grist Public Affairs. Grist said it's day 80 of the 105-day Legislative Session which should end April 27 if they don't go into special session. The Democrats are in control in the House, the Senate and the Governor's office. The Democrats have 59 votes and the Republicans 39 in the House and the split in the Senate is 30 to 19. Grist said they started reaching out to new members Jessica Bateman, who moved to the Senate, and Beth Doglio has been around for a while and she was on the House Transportation Committee but just moved to Appropriations, and new member in the 22nd District is Lisa Parshley who is looking forward to a tour of the Pattison facility. Grist said they had a good meeting with Matt Marshall, who is a new member in the 2nd District, and the Senator in that district is Jim McCune, and the other House member is Representative Andrew Barkis, who happens to be the ranking member on the House Transportation Committee, with 27 members. Grist hasn't had the chance to meet with the 35th District. Dan Griffey is a Transportation House member, and Travis Couture is a House member who's been rising in leadership very quickly, and Senator Drew MacEwan. Both MacEwan and Griffey have been supportive in the past, as well as all the members that they've worked with, and it's been great to have good bipartisan support for Intercity Transit.

Grist said during this session they've met with Transportation Chairs, Jake Fey in the House and Marko Lias in the Senate, both great champions for transit, and Senator Curtis King is the ranking member from Yakima, and he's always been a supporter of Intercity Transit. Grist said they'll conduct more tours and get to know these individuals better.

Grist said during this session they're focusing on the capital, operating and transportation budgets. She said there's a major deficit primarily in the operating budget, where there's a \$12 to \$15 billion deficit. The legislature is looking at new taxes. The Governor has expressed concerns about doing a wealth tax, but the House and Senate budgets do depend on that tax and have a lot of work ahead of them to figure out how to balance the budget, which is a constitutional requirement, unlike the state federal government, they do need to pass a balanced budget by the end of the session. They also want to remove the 1% property tax cap so that it can go up to 3%. They want to create a payroll tax for high earners. They're looking at B&O tax on some very large businesses and the Senate budget includes a sales tax decrease, which would be great. The budgets

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have all been released in the six budgets, House and Senate, proposed capital transportation and operating budgets have been released in all three chambers. They're working their ways through committee, and then the House budget passed to the House floor, and the Senate budget passes on the Senate floor, and they meet in conference for the next few weeks to hammer out the details.

Grist introduced David Foster from Foster Government Relations. Foster spoke about the transportation budget. Like the operating budget, it is facing difficulties in large part due to the increased costs related to almost all projects and especially some of the mega projects on the roadside of things. There's been large increases over the past couple years and a lot of projects are underfunded and the legislature's trying to figure out how to fund those projects, including pushing out a number that have been put forward as related to previous revenue packages, trying to push those out a ways and complete those that are either under construction or under contract. There are revenue proposals that are out from the House and the Senate, and they both propose an increase in the gas tax, on the House side, it's \$0.09, on the Senate side it's \$0.06. They both propose sales tax on luxury vehicles and the Senate has in their budget proposal and revenue proposal a .3% sales tax transfer from the operating budget to the transportation budget. The Senate side includes vehicle registration fees for transit as well as tolling transit. But that's primarily in the King County area. The budgets were released last week and passed. The House budget initially made significant cuts that have actually zeroed out some of the different grants that transit has been relying upon, including regional mobility grants, as well as rideshare and vanpool grants. In the committee process they restored some of the regional mobility grants, roughly about \$35 million worth. They also restored most of the rideshare and vanpool grants, although it's about \$5 million short of where they had been. Commute trip reduction had been cut in half and was replaced in the House committee. They did retain the special needs funding rural mobility grants and others. On the Senate side good news is on the transit side of things, all of the grants were maintained in what's called the Book One budget. That's the one without revenue and Book Two budget is the one with assumed revenue. They also created a safety grant program for up to \$100 million, for safety and security enhancements related to transit.

Intercity Transit grants that are currently in place or proposed for funding are still in place. The House and Senate maintain the funding for the maintenance facility, that's \$5M in the upcoming biennium that starts on July 1, and in the Senate new revenue budget, they include funding and support for Route 14. If there is new funding, hopefully there will be a discussion related to support for this Intercity Transit effort.

Foster discussed two pieces of legislation that do not have a direct effect on Intercity Transit. One is House Bill 1418 that would add or allow the addition of community members to transit boards. Intercity Transit is exempt because of the

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Community members who already sit on the board. That bill is in the Senate Transportation Committee and will be voted on April 4. Another bill that doesn't have a direct effect on Intercity Transit but is of interest to transit in general is House Bill 1980 that allows counties over 2,000,000, like King County, to authorize a fee for use of transit-only lanes for private transportation employer services. For example, a large employer who operates their own bus transit system would be able to use the transit-only lanes if worked out with the local government. That's not yet scheduled for a vote in the Senate Transportation Committee.

Grist and Foster answered questions.

Vanderpool asked what the sense of priority is right now when it comes to the transportation budget for the state. Foster said there's still a push and pull when it comes to the budget between highways and non-road funding and we continue to see additional efforts made to try to increase the non-road side of things but again recognizing we still need to make sure that the roads we have today and the roads that are being expanded for a variety of different reasons are completed.

Vanderpool asked if there is any indication in the future of finding ways for transit authorities to obtain more progressive tax. Foster said there's an ongoing conversation among the majority party trying to find a more progressive tax system. Change is sometimes difficult, and we continue to be saddled or limited to the long-time funding sources at the local levels - all local governments that have existed for quite some time, and that's primarily sales tax for cities and counties that include property tax and for cities B&O taxes. Sales tax is not the only, but by far the biggest as it relates to transit funding.

- B. Winter Bicycle 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 participation in the Winter bicycle Challenge was pretty good this year, in spite of gnarly February weather. He said 270 people logged rides on our BCC website and racked up nearly 19,000 miles, and 40 riders won fun and useful bike related prizes in random drawings during the month and collectively we logged rides on 1,787 days during the month of February, saving car trips with a resulting climate impact. Some combined travel modes and biked part way and took the bus, others joined group rides or formed clubs to engage socially while being active outside.

The Winter Bicycle Challenge was born out of popular demand over 10 years ago and has only grown in popularity since then. We have a dedicated core of year-

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round bicyclists in Thurston County and we're here to celebrate and encourage them. Next is the Earth Day Market Ride on Saturday, April 19. Folks can bike with a group to Heritage Park Fountain in downtown Olympia, where we'll have treats and coffee and a prize drawing and group photo, and then we'll all bike together over to the Olympia Farmer's market to enjoy Earth Day celebrations with live music, food and all the market has to offer. Green said there will be a free \$1 market token for each rider who shows up at the fountain on the way over to the market.

The month of May is National Bike Month, and it's the 38th Annual Bicycle Community Challenge. Participants can log rides at www.bcc.intercitytransit.com for a chance to win one of many prizes. For extra fun and team spirit, people can join Intercity Transit's Team CRANK IT. For more details go to the BCC website or reach out to dgreen@intercitytransit.com.

Green said our observation of Bike-to-Work day is Thursday, May 15 with bike refresher stations in several locations around town to stop by during the morning commute for coffee, treats, bike info and swag. Some stations will have a mechanic on hand with a few tools in case a bike needs emergency repair.

Green answered questions. Belk said he appreciates these updates and asked if we measure the utilization of the front bike rack on coaches, and if we do what does that look like during these challenge months? He's curious how often someone has to skip a bus just to have room on a bus rack. Green said he doesn't measure the use of the bike racks. Green said it's likely use does increase during the spring because more people are on their bikes.

Bergkamp said Jonathon Yee said we do have some way to track when we deploy lifts, but not a way to track the bike rack usage. Neuville said occasionally, especially the last runs of the evening, riders are allowed to put a bike on the bus as long as no mobility device needs the space. He said Operators do their best to make accommodations. He said looking to the future, Seattle is setting a precursor, and we'll see a huge increase in the amount of bikes, especially electric bikes and that's a big unknown for how the new route integrates with local communities. Neuville may talk with Yee about installing hydraulic bike racks.

Goodwin asked if any type of promotion gets displayed on the buses before this event takes place? She hasn't seen anything on the bus that promotes this event. Green said he's not sure what opportunities there are on the bus, since we don't do bus boards. He hasn't been doing anything to promote the BCC on the buses other than an article in the Rider News and those are available on the buses. Bergkamp said there is some internal room for signage that's reserved for messages like the use of family friendly language and the volume of phone

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conversations. She said staff can check with Marketing about creating internal signage that could be seasonal.

Cox asked what prizes are available this year. Green said one of our big sponsors is Portland Design Works, which is a regional bicycle accessory purveyor with lots of different kinds of lights. There are water bottle carriers and bells. We get prizes from Ortlieb who is a maker of waterproof bike bags, and he hopes to get a bike from Ralph's Thriftway again this year. Green said he also gets coffee mugs with the BCC logo on them and there's a plethora of really fun items bike related.

PUBLIC COMMENT SEGMENT #2 Commenced at 6:34 p.m.

More members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1765 and the general public gave public comments regarding wages and benefits being considered in Intercity Transit's current contract negotiations with ATU Local 1765.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Planning Deputy Director, Rob LaFontaine presented to the Yelm City Council this week providing a general agency update and conceptual overview of our bus system redesign tentatively scheduled to launch in May 2026. LaFontaine took members for a walk down memory lane of IT's 2016 public engagement campaign known as the Road Trip which identified our community's desire to have more service in the form of a transformational transit system, then Proposition 1 being approved in late 2018 to fund the elements of the transformation, the decision process of going zero-fare January 2020, the barriers COVID created preventing completion of the transformation, how we've fought our way back to pre-pandemic service and ridership levels, and are now back on track to resume a redesign to usher in the remaining element promised with the additional funding of Proposition 1. The presentations were well received with a steady flow of good questions.

Last weekend our amazing Maintenance team, Jonathan Reynolds, Sean Malay, and Richelle Loken participated in the Pierce Transit Maintenance Rodeo, taking the 1st place title with them! They not only scored the highest overall but by over 300 points, a remarkable accomplishment! Their hard work and ability to work together sets them apart from other Maintenance teams.

Bergkamp also thanked Joe Bell, who inspires the team and is by their side at all competitions; Bill and Shanaka Miller, and David and Lillian Dudek volunteered their time to assist in facilitating the flow of the competition; and Bryce and Annie Reinhardt judged the Bus Inspection.

Intercity Transit is the reigning International Rodeo Grand Champion, meaning we have a title to defend! Operator Clinton Jimenez and Maintenance Team Richelle Loken,

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Sean Malay, and Jonathon Reynolds will compete at the American Public Transportation Association's International Roadeo April 4-8, in Austin, Texas. The Roadeo runs concurrently with APTA's Mobility Conference April 6-9. The conference addresses the critical priorities and challenges facing bus and paratransit systems and explores the changing environments in which these systems operate. As a result, several staff members will attend both the Roadeo and the conference and will be on hand to cheer our competitors on!

The Vanpool team met the goal to get all available vans on the road! We issued our last available van to a new group on March 13, which means future new groups wishing to start will be placed on a waitlist. New groups on the waitlist will complete all the onboarding steps and receive vans as they become available. Kudos to Kyle McPherson for his marketing and outreach efforts that helped make this happen, along with several new employer partners developed during the pandemic. We look forward to the road ahead and working toward our goal of increasing ridership in the remainder of the year.

Washington State Transit Insurance Pool (WSTIP) recognizes the long-term dedication and commitment to safety by awarding their annual Safety Star awards. Awards are made in three categories: Small-size agency, Medium-size agency, and Large-size agency. **This year's Large-size agency winner is Intercity Transit!** Members with the best ratio of actual auto liability losses (uncapped) relative to the Pool as a percentage of miles travelled are awarded the Safety Star Award. The 2024 award is based on the claim data/activity for the period 2019 - 2023. **Congratulations!! This is a testament to the hard work by everyone in the organization.**

Bergkamp read a compliment from EDC Executive Director, Michael Cade. Cade wrote, "Today I wanted to reach out with a note of thanks and appreciation to you and Intercity Transit. I was driving back to the office this afternoon from a series of fairly turbulent meetings and coming towards me was one of your buses. I noticed that the reader-board-sign on the front on top said, "Spread Kindness." It truly put a smile on my face. It made me so proud to live and work in a community in which the public transit system is a beacon of goodness and a spreader of the message of kindness. It truly was wonderful to see and made the difference in the rest of the day for me - and I am sure it will extend into the weekend as well and beyond. I don't know who makes the decisions for the reader board messages, but they are truly a wonderful person doing wonderful things."

The Community Transportation Association of the Northwest (CTANW) annual awards have expanded this year, and Bergkamp is very excited to announce that voting has commenced and three of our staff members, as well as our agency are nominated! There are 11 categories to vote on, however, Bergkamp is particularly focused on the following:

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- Morgan Hagquist is nominated for the Frances Rankos Excellence in Travel Training award.
- Intercity Transit is nominated for Urban Transit of the Year.
- Rick Smart is nominated for Driver of the Year.
- Tom Pulling is nominated for Dispatcher/Scheduler of the Year.

The winners will be announced at the Awards Banquet on Monday, May 19 in Bremerton, Washington. This information will be forwarded to the Board members so they can cast their vote, or you can click this link: <https://www.ctanw.org/2025-ctanw-awards>

AUTHORITY ISSUES

Goodwin said the City of Lacey discussed implementing and recognizing the creation for the Metropolitan Parks District. It was approved and will go on the ballot in August. There was a lot of community support for a cost gap being funded through our taxes and Goodwin thinks having so many resources here that we can count on because of the taxes that we pay speaks volumes of the people and the amount of years of doing that work. Our green spaces are very precious and she loved hearing everybody talk about that and the City Council supporting it.

Von Holtz said for Tumwater, ballots are being mailed to people's mailboxes for the Transportation Benefits District. It's not an increase in tax but is a continuation that allows Tumwater to fund the maintenance of roads.

Pierce reminded everyone about the upcoming South Sound Regional Roadeo held in July at the Tumwater Brewery grounds. July 12 is practice day, and the 13th is the competition. She encourages everyone to come out and witness the skills and amazing things the bus drivers can do with the buses. From there, winners will go on to the state competition in August.

Vanderpool said the City of Olympia had a Community Block Grant they do every year. A lot of their neighborhood associations fill out the applications and their Community Block Grant committee goes through the grants and determines which to approve. They are small grants, about \$36,000. Some of the applications included planter boxes for neighborhoods, block parties that you hear about every year, and neighborhood center improvements. Vanderpool said there were a couple of other grants of interest - applications that involved easements for walking and cycling, connection easements that are between property lines where there is no street but instead where there is a cul-de-sac and another street or cul-de-sac on the other side. It's a suburban area where there is not really a grid, but the neighborhood would like to get some funding to create a path for walking or cycling so they don't to go all the way around a road to get in and out. He said there were so many projects that for the first time ever, Olympia is \$6,500 over in requests and they have to narrow it down.

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ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Authority, Chair Cox adjourned the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Carolyn Cox

Carolyn Cox, Chair

ATTEST

Patricia Messmer

**Pat Messmer
Clerk to the Authority**

Date Approved: May 21, 2025

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