

Minutes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
December 17, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cox called the meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority to order on December 17, 2025, at 5:30 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; Thurston County Commissioner Carolina Mejia; Community Representative Wendy Goodwin; Labor Representative, Mark Neville; Community Representative Justin Belk; City of Tumwater Councilmember Kelly Von Holtz; City of Yelm Councilmember Brian Hess; and City of Olympia Councilmember Robert Vanderpool.

Staff Present: Emily Bergkamp; Pat Messmer; Katie Cunningham; Nicole Jones; Thera Black; Jana Brown; Jonathon Yee; Ramon Beltran; Jessica Gould; Lynne Cunningham; Daniel Van Horn; Michael Maverick; Peter Stackpole; Brenden Houx; Rob LaFontaine; Dena Withrow; Cameron Crass; Kyle McPherson; Lynne Cunningham; Michael Midstokke; Christina Loomis; Jane Denicola; Matthew Kelzenberg.

Others Present: Jeff Myers, Legal Counsel; Jessica Houchin, Thurston County Chamber; and Ashley Stone, Express Employment Professionals.

STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

A. Michael Midstokke introduced Operator Class 25-04.

RECOGNITION

A. **Boss of the Year Honorable Mention Award - Dena Withrow.** Bergkamp introduced Jessica Houchin, from the Thurston County Chamber and Ashley Stone, from Express Employment Professionals, who were invited to present Dena Withrow, Director of Operations, with the 2025 Boss of the Year Honorable Mention award. Houchin and Stone detailed the rigorous selection process, which has been a community staple for 15 years. The award is unique in that it begins with nominations from direct reports and involves Saint Martin's University students, who interview the finalists and "pitch" their respective bosses to a selection committee. Withrow was chosen from a large pool of candidates, notably receiving the highest volume of nominations from her own team.

The presentation highlighted Withrow's "people-first" leadership style, rooted in her professional journey from bus Operator to Director. Her staff praised her visibility and accessibility, noting that she is often found riding buses, visiting dispatch, and engaging directly with customer service. Specific achievements mentioned included the creation of a dedicated training department and her

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efforts to break down communication barriers – symbolized by her decision to keep office doors permanently unlocked. Stone described Withrow as the "anchor" of operations, a steady presence who treats mistakes as learning opportunities and encourages her staff to grow through cross-training and certifications.

Chair Cox recessed the meeting for 15 minutes to serve refreshments.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT - None.

APPROVAL CONSENT AGENDA

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

- A. Minutes - November 5, 2025, and November 19, 2025, Regular Meeting**
- B. Payroll November: \$3,826,007.18**
 - Warrant Numbers: 44088-44090; and 44202-44204 in the amount of \$11,178.31
 - ACH Payments: \$3,814,828.87
- C. Accounts Payable November: \$5,181,669.12**
 - Disbursed Warrants, Numbers: 44043-44087; 44091-44148; 44149-44201; 44205-44259; and Voided Warrant Number 43693 totaling \$5,161,259.27
 - ACH Payments: \$20,409.85

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Zero-Emissions Update.** Fleet & Facilities Maintenance Director, Jonathon Yee, provided an update on Intercity Transit's zero-emissions program, outlining the agency's strategic transition toward more sustainable vehicle technologies. He explained that the Dial-A-Lift service will transition to battery electric vehicles (BEVs) rather than hydrogen fuel cells. This decision was driven by the prohibitive cost of fuel cell options and the nature of Dial-A-Lift's operations; since the service is appointment-based and operates on a more flexible schedule than fixed routes, it is easier to manage within the range and charging capabilities of current battery technology.

The agency is also targeting battery electric solutions for its vanpool and support vehicle fleets. While Intercity Transit has already introduced three electric

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passenger vehicles into its motor pool, further expansion is temporarily on hold until facility construction is finished, and the necessary charging infrastructure is installed. This shift is being planned with a long-term view toward Washington State's Clean Vehicles Law, which mandates that all new light and medium-duty vehicles sold in the state must be zero-emission by 2035.

Yee addressed the unique logistical challenges of electrifying the Vanpool program. Because these vehicles are typically kept at the homes of participants, the agency must develop a long-term strategy to facilitate charging. This will involve exploring options for home charging as well as collaborating with regional employers to ensure workplace charging availability. With these planning stages established, Yee noted the agency is now prepared to move from the research phase into active implementation.

Yee answered questions.

An inquiry was made regarding the definition of "Clean Diesel" and the hybrid components of clean diesel buses.

Yee detailed the physical requirements for the transition, noting the need for medians between lanes to house charging infrastructure. The facility plan includes widespread charging stations dedicated to:

- Staff/motor pool vehicles
- Vanpool vehicles
- General non-revenue fleet

The agency remains committed to a mixed-fleet approach. Hydrogen is preferred for fixed-route services due to range requirements, while battery electric is slated for Dial-a-Lift and smaller vehicles.

Due to shifts in the industry and changes in federal support, the agency is purposefully slowing the implementation timeline. Future large-scale steps are on hold – outside of current hydrogen and small-scale battery electric projects – while the agency monitors:

- Advancements in technology
- Federal direction and funding availability

Despite the potential cancellation of the California hydrogen hub, projects continue across the Pacific Northwest and California, primarily focusing on transit, trucking, and sustainable aviation fuels.

Unlike gasoline or diesel, hydrogen currently lacks standardized "weights and measures" regulations for fueling.

- Work is underway (initiated by the Douglas County project) to establish these state regulations to prepare for a broader hydrogen economy.

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There is significant cross-sector partnership between end-users, producers, and nonprofits. The agency is actively leaning on California's experience and collaborating with various industry associations to align standards.

The Authority thanked Yee for the informative presentation and gave their approval of the current strategic direction.

- B. Adopt 2026-2031 Strategic Plan.** Bergkamp presented the final 2026-2031 Strategic Plan for adoption. The Strategic Plan defines the levels and types of public transportation services for the next six years and outlines the revenue sources to finance them. This update maintains the existing Mission, Vision, and Goals or Policy Positions while refreshing operational data.

The Strategic Plan's ongoing process is to document Intercity Transit's intended direction. Strategic planning prioritizes efforts, allocates resources, aligns stakeholders and employees on our goals, backed by data and sound reasoning.

- Defines levels and types of transportation services offered over the next six years.
- Determines the amount and sources of revenue to finance services.
- Represents the continuation of our commitments created from a multi-year transit planning process and increased funding.
- Guiding principles, capital program and service levels are reviewed and outlined for the next six-year period.
- Recognizes the One IT project's impact on business operations.

The plan continues commitments made during the "Intercity Transit Road Trip" planning process. Following the passage of Proposition 1, the agency's sales tax authority increased to 1.2%. Intercity Transit is one of only two transit systems in Washington with this funding level (others are capped at 0.9% without legislative permission).

Upcoming Milestones Include:

- Large bus replacements. The plan includes a thorough overview of received and pending grants. Reimbursements for the Hydrogen Project (specifically for buses) are expected to begin soon.
- Major redesign scheduled for May 2026.
- Post-redesign focus will be on on-time performance and route tweaks based on community and operator feedback.
- Plans are being explored for areas where 40-foot buses cannot operate (e.g., Yelm).
- An on-demand service is planned to supplement "Nightline" for downtown Olympia social events.

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Hess expressed appreciation for the inclusion of micro-transit initiatives within the plan. He highlighted the importance of these services for the Yelm area and voiced a hope to see implementation within the next 5 to 10 years.

Belk thanked Bergkamp and the entire agency staff. He acknowledged that while strategic plan presentations may not draw large public audiences, the document is vital for setting the agency's long-term direction and representing its values.

It was M/S/A by Belk and Mejia to adopt the 2026-2031 Strategic Plan.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Thurston Regional Planning Council (Dec. 5).** Vanderpool said TRPC received an update from the Port of Olympia on their current projects. The plan primarily focuses on three things - land use, economic development, and the environment. TRPC remains active in the Port Peninsula Plan, which outlines the strategy for the coming years. While originally intended to be a shorter process the timeline will likely be extended.

TRPC provided a review of and updates on the Martin Way Crossing Strategy, focusing on the crossroads of accessibility, safety, and equity. The strategy targets areas with high crash rates and high pedestrian density, specifically looking at proximity to bus stops and key destinations. The project has reached the 30% design milestone. There is an ongoing dialogue regarding the standardization of design to ensure consistency across the corridor. Because Martin Way was historically a highway and now passes through Olympia, Lacey, and Thurston County, Vanderpool emphasized the need for continued inter-jurisdictional coordination.

- B. Transportation Policy Board (Dec. 10).** Belk said the TPB received an update from the Port of Olympia, which covered several overlapping regional topics. Regarding transportation, the Port has been engaged in discussions concerning the potential for a ferry service. This service would provide a water connection between the local area and northern destinations, such as Tacoma, Seattle, or transit points closer to the airport. Belk expressed interest in this development. Additionally, the Port advocated for the continued importance of rail infrastructure, emphasizing its role in moving both people and goods. Belk noted that rail should remain a priority option for future regional planning.

Belk said the TPB recognized outgoing members, and appreciation was expressed for Bob Iyall from the Port of Olympia, who is stepping away as he will no longer be on the Commission. The Board also recognized John O'Callahan from the city of Tenino and Emeritus Representative Pete Kmet for

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their service. Belk said the recruitment process for community and business representatives is currently ongoing.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

- Bergkamp announced the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) Legislative Conference is being held April 12-14, 2026, in Washington, D.C. This is an opportunity for the public transportation industry to make their presence felt and our voices heard in D.C. The conference helps educate APTA members on important federal legislation, policy initiatives and an opportunity to shape the industry's positions and federal advocacy agenda. Bergkamp said Commissioner Mejia expressed interest in attending, and traditionally two Board members attend. Board members interested in attending should let Bergkamp know.
- Three days of CDL testing for Operator Class 25-04 begins December 18. Best of luck to these soon-to-be CDL holders.
- Intercity Transit submitted a grant to the Department of Commerce for technical assistance to design solar power and battery storage at the Pattison campus. If awarded, this grant phase could lead directly to implementation after the design phase. Special thanks to Thera Black and Jessica Gould for their work on this application.
- Bergkamp said staff is working with WSP on a new long range financial planning tool. She feels it's going to be important because it's going to allow IT to take into consideration historical information as well, which we can't do right now with the current tool. It will give us a more workable tool to plug in different dynamics as they change over time. At some point, Jana Brown can provide a test drive for the ITA and give some examples of how we're able to use it.

AUTHORITY ISSUES

Mejia said the County completed committee assignments and she will remain on the ITA.

Von Holtz said the City of Tumwater passed its Comprehensive Plan. She was on the Planning Commission and is excited to see it finally come to fruition. During her day job, Von Holtz is working on several projects with WSDOT that IT may have access to. She noted that WSDOT will launch a public survey regarding freight mobility. This initiative is designed to gather data on the movement of goods and services to ensure the state's freight system functions efficiently. Von Holtz said the state rail plan is also going to be doing more work and the first part of its engagement has finalized, and we'll be learning more about that. Von Holtz said the Transportation Resiliency Improvement Plan (survey) will be coming out probably in January/February.

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Pierce encourages members to participate in this year's Legislative Conference. Also Pierce encourages everyone read through the Strategic Plan because it's a good source of information for new Authority and CAC members.

Cox said the City of Lacey passed a \$240 million budget and update to their Comprehensive Plan. She said it's been a tough year for many, but she's happy to see we're coming back together in a family spirit, and hoping 2026 will be a much brighter year for everyone.

Goodwin thanked Cox and Councilmember Robin Vasquez for making the Martin Way Corridor comment about making it a Thurston County issue that all of us need to work together on to make that a much better way of travel.

Goodwin said there are a few community members who want to thank Intercity Transit for the trip planner updates. She would like confirmation from staff if there is an option such as an app that shows the new routes.

Also, Goodwin is looking forward to working with members of the Marketing and Communications staff on the Olympia Free Clinic meet and greet being held with local businesses in 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Authority, it was M/S/A by Goodwin and Von Holtz to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY



Carolyn Cox, Chair

ATTEST



Pat Messmer
Clerk of the Board

Date Approved: January 21, 2026

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