

CAC MEETING MINUTES

December 10, 2024

The meeting was called to order by Chair Judy Jones.

Members Present: Ray Bock, Doris Brevoort, Robin Gosney, Madeline Handzlik, Chris and Judy Jones, John Norman, Monette Partin, Dick Phillips, Irene Prokuski, Valerie Rose, David Stevens, Cheryl Willis, and Crystle Stidham.

There were no guests or public comments.

It was moved by Dick, and seconded by Chris and Ray the November Meeting Minutes be approved as printed. Motion carried.

Cheryl then suggested speakers for both January and February. She proposes Skagit Transit's Eligibility Specialist, Jo Pemant, address the committee regarding all things para transit.

For February, the consultants of Kimley-Horn And Associates, working with Skagit Transit's Long-Range Transit Plan (LRTP) development, wish to present their latest findings and recommendations.

Next, Cheryl announced an invitation to the CAC from Cascade Job Corps to visit their current location at the historical northern state facility. In the interest of developing community relations, they are offering a tour as part of the event, with an additional option to relax in a comfortable rest area. This is to take place in May, with date and time to be determined.

In the CEO report, Crystle confirms that consultants are continuing to work on the LRTP with the completion goal of mid-2025. They are focused on the three elements of the plan, being local routes, regional routes, and micro transit. Upon completion, the consultants will develop a list of recommended network changes, with the goal of carrying out net zero changes first, then transit staff will pursue grant opportunities to assist in implementing recommendations that would require additional capital or operating funds.

Another consultant recommendation is to develop a micro transit pilot program, which will begin on Fidalgo Island, then expand the program if the pilot is successful. Skagit Transit has already applied for a consolidated grant for it, which possibly ranks 6 out of 14 projects, having a fair chance of application acceptance.

The regional study will focus on intercounty connections for community members wishing to travel within Whatcom, Skagit, Island, and Snohomish counties.

For the December board meeting, we will see a budget amendment that will almost balance the 2024 budget, due to under-estimated tax revenues for the year. While currently showing a deficit of \$24,000.00, revenues will be received at year's end. The 2025 budget has already been balanced, with an approximate \$1000.00 in excess, which may allow projects that were formerly cut to be reinstated.

At their December 18 meeting, the board is finalizing mediation for former consultants in an executive session, then will continue with a very full agenda.

Crystle then addressed Doris' question of last month, regarding how a bus driver would handle passenger needs, were a bus to experience a lengthy delay during a regular route. She explained that supervisors have the authority and discretion to detour routes as they see fit and make necessary decisions during a delay. Doris recommends communication relayed to the passengers from the driver as information is provided by the supervisor. It was also stated that passengers should be encouraged to speak up, should a personal need arise when aboard a stalled bus.

Crystle also stated she has met with the Department Of Emergency director several times, offering the assistance of emergency-trained personnel to provide services to community members when called upon. She is also in process of trying to get an interlocal agreement with the county in place, and is committed on behalf of the agency to be available to assist the community in the event of an emergency.

Judy recommends the appropriate personnel come speak to the committee regarding the agreement and emergency protocols, once such an agreement is in place.

Note that CPR certification is required of drivers at the onset of the agency onboarding process.

Crystle then fielded questions explaining micro transit and future plans for the area.

Next, Cheryl reports a para transit ridership count of 5133 passengers for the month of November.

Judy announced the new 2025 slate of officers of the CAC. She has met with them, as well as been in communication with both Crystle and Cheryl, outlining the meeting content, and plans to have the officers meet with both Cheryl and Crystle in giving them a chance to share their vision and passion in developing the CAC.

Cheryl announced that everything is in place to handle any upcoming snow routes, and announced the December 25 and January 1 agency holiday closures.

She then gave an overview of the late-November and December events attended.

For the Connector report, Valerie stated she is once again experiencing problems with the WTA 80X buses not recognizing her pass. This seems to happen whenever there is either a system change, or pass change.

Another issue requiring immediate and ongoing attention moving forward is the real time updating of bus screen information, currently displaying August's Skagit County Fair.

As patiently and repeatedly stated many times before, Doris expressed the necessity of developing better connector service in the morning with the 90X to get to Lynwood to take the light rail to Northgate or Seattle to get to work. Her longtime and oft-expressed idea is to give one of the early morning 90X buses the route to go down to the South Everett park and ride first, then return to the station, next, continuing north, letting people off, which could be done without changing the service. This also includes anyone going to the airport.

Irene asked if Sound Transit plans to make any changes to the 512, as it is our county's major link to the light rail. Crystle stated she will seek an answer.

The discussion then turned to long-existing marketing shortfalls, when it comes to bus advertising to raise public awareness, with several simple solutions being re-introduced by the committee.

With no further discussion, Valerie moved and Dick seconded the meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Jones

CAC Chair