

KITSAP TRANSIT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES OF March 18, 2025

Board of Commissioners Present:

Driskell, Robert, Teamsters Local No. 589, *non-voting member - Virtual Attendance*
Erickson, Becky, Mayor, City of Poulsbo - *Virtual Attendance*
Root, Oran, Kitsap County Commissioner
Mockler, Anna, Councilmember, City of Bremerton
Moriwaki, Clarence, Councilmember, City of Bainbridge Island - *Virtual at 9:24 AM*
Putansuu, Robert, Mayor, City of Port Orchard, **Chair** - *Absent*
Rolfes, Christine, Kitsap County Commissioner
Rosapepe, Jay, Councilmember, City of Port Orchard
Walters, Katie, Kitsap County Commissioner, **Vice Chair**
Wheeler, Greg, Mayor, City of Bremerton

Staff Present:

Sanjay Bhatt, Marketing & Public Information Director; Jackie Bidon, Clerk of the Board, Public Records Officer; John Clauson, Executive Director; Dennis Griffey, Vehicle and Facilities Maintenance Director; Steffani Lillie, Service and Capital Development Director; Mary Pauly, Human Resources Director; Charlotte Sampson, Executive Assistant/Deputy Clerk of the Board; Raymond Scott, Marine Services Director; Paul Shinnars, Finance Director

Also Present: David Weibel, Legal Counsel, *Virtual Attendance*

Select the video Zoom address below or copy and paste into your browser address field to hear the Kitsap Transit Board of Commissioners discussion of a specific topic, or the complete meeting. Note the video time stamp beside the topic.

<https://kitsaptransit.zoom.us/rec/share/TXfRYsNgxyf7ILUZ90vuU2oSE1F-C709CCvgB5eXMieNMmY9krJqz9cM2PNEok5F.mlYTxHJYIXgcBCNw> **Passcode: *8*cV*By**

1. CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chairperson Commissioner Walters called the meeting of the Kitsap Transit Board of Commissioners to order at 8:33 AM.

2. AGENDA REVIEW

Upon review by the Board, the agenda remained unchanged.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Walters shared that March 18, 2025, is Transit Driver Appreciation Day and thanked Kitsap Transit bus drivers for all they do in the community. Commissioner Walters stated that since learning the Washington State Ferry system will be getting a second boat, Kitsap County Commissioners have been advocating to keep the fast ferry schedule through the summer of 2026.

0:03:42, Executive Director Clauson shared that there is a rumor that the House Transportation budget is going to maintain funding the previous administration put in place. He added that until Governor Ferguson signs the budget, funding is not guaranteed.

4. FULL DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS

a. Presentation – Kitsap Transit Operational Safety Report

0:04:59, Safety and Security Administrator Dustin Rodrigues shared results of the 2024 Operational Safety Report. The Safety and Security audit of Kitsap Transit's Safety Management Systems (SMS) programs and accident prevention plans were discussed, with process improvements and changes made. The 2022-2024 data was reviewed, with performance metrics for the previous year presented. Kitsap Transit's SMS program was approved by the board, with input from frontline workers, management and Union representatives.

The safety and security audit performed in December 2023 outlined several programmatic updates. There were 11 identified findings and 23 observations for changes. Including program progress, 3 of the 11 findings were closed right after the audit was completed, strengthening processes in the agency's SMS and comprehensive revisions of the Agency Safety Plan (ASP), Accident Prevention Plan (APP), and supporting procedures.

A Safety and Security Audit performed in December 2024 outlined several programmatic updates and was based on the 2023/2024 plan. One finding and three observations were identified. The one finding was that processes to review workplace hazards had not been formally addressed. This has been addressed in the new 2024/2025 Agency Safety Plan with a Safety Corrective Action Plan (CAP) drafted and approved. Noted updates of safety documentation are the separation of safety plans, stronger accountability and comprehensive safety updates.

Mr. Rodrigues shared that increasing injury trends are attributed to the encouraged request for employees to accurately report all incidents, small and large. He highlighted a 31% reduction in accident frequency rate in 2024, with significant improvements within the Worker/Driver fleet. Mr. Rodrigues clarified that while 50% of injuries involve drivers, this represents only a small percentage of the total driver workforce. He emphasized the importance of data analytics in targeting resources, revising safety goals, objectives, and the need for mitigation infrastructure to address safety concerns.

Next steps are to continue to prioritize the use of data to make decisions, continue to design and implement SMS processes, and to revise and update goals and objectives for the Safety and Security program.

0:17:35, Board discussion included questions on the high number of safety events compared to the national average, safety concerns raised by routed drivers, the need for increased protection, potential redesign of coaches, driver suggestions about the collisions, accidents and safety violations, and a potential third party to perform safety audits.

Mr. Rodrigues shared that the Routed drivers' concerns are improving driver safety and steering concerns with new buses. Kitsap Transit is researching solutions to improve driver safety, including expanding the glass in coaches and redesigning the coach design. He stated that most of the collisions are fixed object collisions and noted the need for increased training for drivers, particularly in de-escalation techniques. He shared that Kitsap Transit had an outside contractor to perform the safety audit but has not partnered with other agencies. Kitsap Transit has started a Risk and Opportunities Commission subcommittee with their risk partner, noting that other large agencies have been talking about this and it would be a good recommendation to partner with.

0:24:12, Executive Director Clauson shared that Kitsap Transit is involved in Washington State Transit Insurance Pool (WSTIP) and Washington State Transit Association (WSTA) which offer many resources to transit agencies. He stated that at the next WSTA meeting he will present the idea of a more training type of focus. At a recent meeting with WSTIP, he suggested they assist Kitsap Transit in developing a "train the trainer" program or develop best practices, providing training for all agencies.

0:29:59, Commissioner Root asked about the issue drivers raised with steering the buses and if there is an alert system for drivers in distress?

Mr. Rodrigues stated that there is an uptick in shoulder injuries related to hand over hand steering on the new buses. On the electric buses, the steering system does not engage until the coach has power, unlike traditional power steering systems; it feels more like rack and pinion steering.

Mr. Rodrigues shared that the Clever Devices system has an emergency activation button for the operators, putting them in contact with Dispatch immediately. It allows the operator to covertly notify Dispatch that there is an emergent need. The CoPilot camera system has an emergency break-in so if something is occurring on the coach, Dispatch can use the camera system to see what is happening.

0:37:07, Commissioner Rolfes asked if the accident rate compared to the industry standard is using just transit or transportation in general, i.e. commercial drivers?

Mr. Rodrigues shared that the industry standard is passenger ground transportation in general. He explained, in detail, the percentage of driver injuries in the report.

b. Discussion – Kitsap Transit Mission and Vision Statements

0:35:59, Executive Director Clauson shared that the Board had expressed an interest in reviewing and updating the Kitsap Transit Mission and Vision Statements. He stated that when the statements were developed years ago, Board members met in a retreat-like setting with a facilitator assisting with the development.

0:37:43, Board member discussion included suggestions to add sustainable transportation

options, the role of transit in dense urban development, addressing climate concerns, and future goals.

0:40:23, Commissioner Rolfes asked when the statements were last revised. Executive Director Clauson stated 2012. Rolfes continued, saying this was before Kitsap Transit had the passenger only ferry, before State mandates were in place, directing densification and eliminating parking; all this requires transit. She stated that she supports a retreat-style discussion to go over all the changes, service and upgrades that have taken place since 2012.

0:42:46, Executive Director Clauson shared that providing safe, reliable and efficient transportation choices is a broad description. He stated that the focus on safety, reliability and quality of service delivered is great but efficiency of service is as important.

0:48:49, Mayor Erickson shared that Kitsap Transit should be looking to the future and the potential for automated taxis and smaller buses for more localized services.

0:51:10, Members suggested updates emphasizing the importance of efficiency and ambition in transportation planning, reflecting current services, and community in the Mission and Vision Statements. The other discussion proposed should be about the role of public transit in facilitating information flow and addressing state-mandated densification requirements.

0:55:55, Executive Director Clauson stated that this discussion is more than just looking at the wording of the statements and would involve at least a half day in a retreat-style setting. He added that there is a difference between efficient and effective; the discussion would include the two statements, financial picture, constraints, and requirements by state and county for public transit.

c. Discussion – Ferry Naming

0:59:53, Executive Director Clauson shared that this was placed on the agenda for discussion but he has since realized that there are two vessel names remaining on the list that was approved by the Board July 17, 2018. Clauson explained the process, criteria, and discussions involved in determining the vessel naming.

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ITEMS

1:07:27, Executive Director Clauson stated that it was discovered that data used to create the quarterly reports was inaccurate, resulting in previous quarterly report information being incorrect. The discovery was made while producing the Fourth Quarter Report. Corrections were not made to the three previous quarterly reports; however, the 2024 Fourth Quarter Report is correct.

Executive Director Clauson shared that he will be extending the hiring incentive to Worker/Drivers. He will be working with the Teamsters representative Robert Driskell on a MOU to implement a six-month new hire incentive program to serve as a recruitment incentive. The incentive program

will be different than that for Operations because they are part-time operators versus full-time operators and are required to be Federal employees.

Executive Director Clauson stated that Kitsap Transit purchased the West Bremerton Bowling Alley with the idea of enhancing the transit center and possibly putting in a hydrogen fueling facility. Green programs are not a priority in Washington, D.C. currently and there is uncertainty in funding from the Federal Government to support a hydrogen fueling facility. Clauson shared that with this uncertainty of funding, moving forward is questionable and options for a hydroelectric fueling facility are limited. Executive Director Clauson is bringing this to the Board for a future discussion to move forward with exploring hydrogen fueling, creating a park and ride, pause plans, or return the funding.

1:19:06, Board members made the decision to bring this item to a future work study meeting for further discussion.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

1:20:06, None at this time.

7. FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:

1:20:11, Councilmember Rosapepe recommended Board members review the Long-Range Transit Plan as it includes background information of where transit has been, where it is headed and provides financial information as well.

1:20:53, Mayor Wheeler shared that he has contacted representatives about continuing funding for the fast ferry supplemental service.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION


1:24:35, Commissioner Walters called the Executive Session to order.

1:33:25, Commissioner Walters adjourned the Executive Session.

9. ADJOURN: At 10:05 AM, Commissioner Walters adjourned the regular meeting.

ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioners of Kitsap Transit at a regular meeting thereof, held on the 6th day of May, 2025.

Attest:

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Jackie Bidon, Clerk of the Board

Signed by:

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Rob Putaansuu, Chairperson