

KITSAP TRANSIT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES OF July 7, 2026

Board of Commissioners Present:

Driskell, Robert, Teamsters Local No. 589, *non-voting member*
Moriwaki, Clarence, Mayor, City of Bainbridge Island, **Vice Chair**
Putansuu, Robert, Mayor, City of Port Orchard
Rebelowski, Jane, Councilmember, City of Bremerton
Rolfes, Christine, Kitsap County Commissioner, *Absent*
Root, Oran, Kitsap County Commissioner
Rosapepe, Jay, Councilmember, City of Port Orchard
Stern, Ed, Mayor, City of Poulsbo
Walters, Katie, Kitsap County Commissioner, **Chair**
Wheeler, Greg, Mayor, City of Bremerton

Staff Present:

Sanjay Bhatt, Marketing & Public Information Director; Jackie Bidon, Clerk of the Board, Public Records Officer; Michael Bozarth, Operations Director; John Clauson, Executive Director; Dennis Griffey, Vehicle and Facilities Maintenance Director; Steffani Lillie, Service and Capital Development Director; Charlotte Sampson, Executive Assistant/Deputy Clerk of the Board; Paul Shinnery, Finance Director; Nick Zylstra, Marine Services Director

Also Present: David Weibel, Legal Counsel, *attended virtual*

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/HP1FdnmtFN7rPN3d0Oovfx0SMeseB07GieuMU7eCdAbtCLMk-sw90ty_9vzYsNGJ.-NwRdgEczntB5u3z Passcode: 1B=**Wcc

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Walters called the meeting of the Kitsap Transit Board of Commissioners to order at 10:30 AM.

2. AGENDA REVIEW

Upon review by the Board, the agenda remained unchanged.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS

0:00:26, Chairperson Walters thanked Executive Director Clauson for providing the Kitsap Transit branded FIFA World Cup scarves, noting they were very well received. She reported that yesterday marked the final official Fan Zone activation. Although the game outcome was disappointing, the events were marked by strong community spirit and engagement.

She expressed appreciation for Kitsap Transit's extensive pre-planning efforts, saying she looks forward to the upcoming debrief. She emphasized that the activations were a great opportunity to bring the community together and thanked staff for their work.

Chairperson Walters reminded the Board that the extended ferry service will continue only through August, now that the World Cup is concluding, and noted that community feedback regarding continuation of the additional service is expected.

4. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

0:01:30, Executive Director Clauson reported on the Community Advisory Committee's (CAC) meeting, highlighting positive feedback on bus stop pole wraps, additional Orca card readers on the Bremerton ferry runs, and updated bike racks. There was also discussion regarding educating passengers on guide dogs on the bus, issues with the recorded stop announcement on some of the buses, and a presentation of the 2026 – 2031 Transit Development Plan.

The CAC discussed ongoing issues with the crossover ramps on the Bremerton ferry docks, noting that scooter and wheelchair users are experiencing difficulties. Marine Services Director Nick Zylstra presented photos illustrating the concerns and assured members that staff are actively working to address and correct the challenges.

The CAC Chair provided a reminder to committee members regarding compliance with the Open Meetings Act. Members were advised not to respond to group communications in a manner that could constitute a serial meeting. If a member has information they wish to distribute to the full committee, it should be sent to the Chair or to Charlotte, who can then ensure it is shared appropriately with all members in advance. This process helps prevent any inadvertent violation of the Open Meetings Act.

5. CONSENT / ACTION ITEM:

- a. Warrants for May 2026
 - Warrant numbers transit fund 176955 to 177258 of \$3,062,488
 - Warrant numbers ferry fund 610339 to 610447 of \$3,073,342
 - Payroll account disbursements of \$4,008,837
 - ACH clearing account payments of \$93,593
 - Travel account disbursements of \$6,367
 - Purchasing card disbursements of \$80,064
- b. Minutes of June 2, 2026
- c. Resolution No. 26-40, Renewal of CAC Member

0:05:36, **Mayor Putaansuu moved and Councilmember Rosapepe seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda.**

Discussion:

None.

Motion passed unanimously.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

- a. Presentation: Transit Development Plan 2026-2031
Hyperlink for 2026-2031 TDP <https://www.kitsaptransit.com/uploads/pdf/planning/2026-2031tdpplan-draft.pdf>

0:06:41, Transportation and Land Use Planner Ed Coviello shared that the Transit Development Plan (TDP) is required by state law and is an annual report provided to the State Department of Transportation and the Puget Sound Regional Council. He added that the report is a guide document for the commissioners and public to see where Kitsap Transit is going in the next five years.

Mr. Coviello presented the 2026 – 2031 Transit Development Plan, highlighting key 2025 accomplishments including the receipt of five electric coaches, a three and a half percent ridership increase, and expanded Sunday service to Bainbridge Island and Poulsbo. The plan includes future goals such as constructing a training facility, completing the Ruby Creek Park & Ride, and installing inductive chargers at transit centers, with delivery of new electric and diesel buses expected in 2026.

0:14:18, Board discussion included the need for a roundtable retreat with transportation departments to address future funding challenges and transit solutions as the community densifies.

0:16:20, Chairperson Walters opened the Public Comment portion of the Public Hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING PUBLIC COMMENTS

0:16:50, Pete Brady of Bainbridge Island expressed concerns that the plan was incomplete and lacked sufficient justification. He specifically noted issues with outdated financial information and low bus ridership.

0:19:44, Chairperson Walters closed the Public Comment portion of the Public Hearing.

7. FULL DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS

- a. Resolution No. 26-41, Adopt 2026-2031 Transit Development Plan

0:20:08, **Mayor Putaansuu moved and Mayor Wheeler seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-41, adopting the 2026-2031 Transit Development Plan.**

Discussion:

0:20:29, Board discussion covered the “to be updated” and “Draft” markings in the Transit Development Plan (TDP); the need to distribute the updated plan and publish it on the website; PSNS low ridership figures; the amount of Federal Government funding; and Kitsap Transit’s ongoing efforts to increase ridership, including potential options involving Bangor Base. The Board also discussed Kitsap Transit’s Long-Range Transit Plan, community engagement on future transit needs, and the anticipated update in 2027.

Motion passed unanimously.

- b. Resolution No. 26-42, Approve 2026 3rd Quarter Procurements

0:36:16, Executive Director Clauson reported that the resolution seeks authorization to proceed with bidding for the Bremerton Dock Gangway Resurfacing Project, which is the only procurement project scheduled for the third quarter.

0:37:13, **Mayor Stern moved and Mayor Moriwaki seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-42, authorizing Kitsap Transit staff to go to bid for the item listed in the third quarter procurement list.**

Discussion:

None.

Motion passed unanimously.

- c. Resolution No. 26-43, Award Contract KT 26-031 WBTC P&R Redevelopment Design

0:38:05, Executive Director Clauson reported that the resolution awards the contract to the Transpo Group for the West Bremerton Transit Center redevelopment. He explained that the contract will provide 20 percent design work, which is required for the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process, and will support development of the demolition plan for the West Bremerton Bowling Alley.

Discussion:

0:40:56, Board discussion included the project cost, the potential to salvage materials, and the anticipated timeline for demolition.

0:42:22, Service and Capital Development Director Steffani Lillie explained that demolition is expected to be at least a year out due to NEPA requirements and the possibility of hazardous materials on site. She noted that the NEPA process begins after the 20 percent design is completed and submitted, which itself takes a minimum of six months.

0:43:09, Councilmember Rosapepe moved and Mayor Putaansuu seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-43, authorizing staff to award KT 26-031 WBTC Park and Ride Redevelopment Design in the amount of one million three hundred forty-four thousand two hundred thirty-nine dollars (\$1,344,239) to Transpo Group.

Motion passed unanimously.

d. Resolution No. 26-44, Award KT 26-040 Finest 2-Year USCG to NBBB

0:44:08, Executive Director Clauson reported that staff are requesting authorization to award a contract to Nichols Brothers Boat Builders to haul the Finest out of the water for its two-year United States Coast Guard (USCG) inspection.

Discussion:

0:45:21, Board discussion included the cost associated with the required two-year Coast Guard inspection and whether the inspection could be extended beyond the mandated interval.

0:46:12, Mayor Putaansuu moved and Mayor Stern seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-44, authorizing staff to award KT 26-040 M/V Finest two-year USCG Inspection to Nichols Brothers Boat Builders in the amount of three hundred forty-eight thousand five hundred eighty dollars (\$348,580).

Motion passed unanimously.

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ITEMS

0:47:00, Executive Director Clauson reminded the Board of the upcoming Board Retreat scheduled for Tuesday, July 21, 2026, from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM. Kelly Johnston of Clarity Consulting will be contacting Board members to gather topics for discussion at the retreat.

He also invited Board members to attend the Peninsula Cup Rodeo on Sunday, July 12, 2026, at South Kitsap High School, beginning at 9:00 AM.

Executive Director Clauson addressed actions taken by Kitsap Transit in response to two public comments included in the Board packet.

- A passenger expressed safety concerns regarding the increased step-to-ground distance of approximately two inches on the new *ACCESS* buses.
 - Staff contacted the passenger and offered the option of using the wheelchair lift for boarding and deboarding.
 - Staff are reviewing available options to improve boarding and deboarding to mitigate the concern.
- A public comment regarding overcrowding on the Kingston Fast Ferry on June 11 was also addressed.

- A Rider Alert was sent to subscribers of the Kingston Fast Ferry alert system.
- An explanation of the incident and internal review was provided to Board members, along with a summary of corrective actions to prevent recurrence.
- A response was sent to members of the public who contacted Executive Director Clauson directly.
- Customer Service issued direct responses to complaints.
- Additional questions submitted by a member of the public were answered by the Public Records Officer.
- Kitsap Transit has implemented new internal procedures to avoid similar issues in the future.
- A Rider Alert was sent to all subscribers outlining the situation and the new procedures established as a result.

Executive Director Clauson provided an update on World Cup support services, noting that preliminary ferry ridership numbers were strong, with some routes reaching capacity. The Bremerton–Seattle sailings performed particularly well, with ridership maxing out at 118 passengers on certain trips. In contrast, bus services including local boats and extended routes experienced low utilization, with most additional bus trips carrying minimal ridership. He expressed pride in Kitsap Transit staff efforts despite the overall performance.

He extended an invitation for a side trip to Indiana to tour a propane bus manufacturing facility. The opportunity is available in October to Board members attending the APTA conference as well as those not attending.

Executive Director Clauson reported positive results from the downtown shuttle service operating on Bainbridge Island on Saturdays through September 30. The service has been performing well and may serve as a model for similar opportunities in Port Orchard.

Executive Director Clauson announced that the state auditor’s review of Kitsap Transit’s National Transit Database (NTD) reporting found no issues, confirming that ridership data is being accurately reported to the federal government.

1:09:22, Board discussion included a review of the World Cup preparations, noting that although planning was thorough, the event did not draw the anticipated large crowds. Board members commended Kitsap Transit and its community partners for their extensive preparation and effective coordination, with specific recognition given to Sanjay Bhatt for his leadership role. The event was regarded as a valuable learning opportunity for future large-scale events such as the Super Bowl parade or World Series parade. Positive feedback was shared regarding the community collaboration and the successful implementation of new services, including contactless payment on transit.

9. STAFF RECOGNITION / PROGRESS REPORTS

- a. Recognizing Drivers of the Month for May 2026 (10:45am)

0:32:22, Thomas Gilbert, Routed Manager, recognized the Routed Driver of the Month for May 2026, Krystal Brown.

0:34:13, Cyndi Griffey, Worker/Driver Manager, recognized the Worker/Driver of the Month for May 2026, Ian Hathaway.

0:34:51, Jeff Vinecourt, ACCESS Manager recognized the ACCESS Driver of the Month for May 2026, Robert Floyd.

- b. July 2026 Report from KT Lobbyist
- c. Minutes of April 2026, Community Advisory Committee Meeting
- d. Minutes of May 2026, Community Advisory Committee Meeting
- e. Draft Financial Reports through May 2026
- f. Capital Work in Progress May 2026
- g. Fuel Costs Report through the end of June 2026

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

1:20:47, Pete Brady of Bainbridge Island commented on Kitsap Transit's spending in relation to demonstrated need, citing the Worker/Driver program as an example. He noted the program's low ridership despite the use of 40-seat buses and stated that he does not understand the program or feel that it makes sense.

11. FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:

1:22:10, Board members expressed appreciation for Kitsap Transit's bus operators and their focus on safety on the roadways. An update was provided on the Poulsbo Edward Rose Development, known as the Oslo Apartments, noting that 168 units, the first phase, are expected to be operable by year-end. The discussion concluded with updates on transit improvements, including new bus stop striping and signage, and a reminder that there will be no transit meetings held in August.

12. ADJOURN: At 11:55 AM, Chairperson Walters adjourned the regular meeting.

ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioners of Kitsap Transit at a regular meeting thereof, held on the 1st day of September, 2026.

Attest:

DocuSigned by:
Jackie Bidon
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Jackie Bidon, Clerk of the Board

Signed by:
Katherine T. Walters
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Katherine T. Walters, Chairperson

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Received by the Clerk of the Board

**Presented at the Kitsap Transit Board of
Commissioners Meeting September 1, 2026**

From: [Matt Austin](#)
To: [Jackie Bidon](#); greg.wheeler@ci.bremerton.wa.us; greg.nance@leg.wa.gov; tarra.simmons@leg.wa.gov; [John Clauson](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bremerton fast ferry schedule change
Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2026 11:07:19 PM

Good evening,

As a daily fast ferry commuter with literally thousands of rides on the route since 2017, the upcoming schedule changes planned for September will leave me with fewer commuting options and a need to consider leaving Kitsap County as a result of aggressive RTO workplace policies. In the hopes that someone may have a solution, I wanted to write to urge Kitsap Transit to preserve at least the 8:35am departure to Seattle, if not the entire current schedule. There are several basic reasons for this:

1. The claim that the reduced schedule is the "original" sailing schedule is false. Having used the fast ferry as the primary means of commuting to Seattle since it started service in 2017, I don't recall there ever being a time in the past that the final departure was at 8am. To my knowledge, there has always been at least one run in the 9am range and the 10:25 departure.
2. The *actual* original pitch to the public when seeking tax and debt authorization to fund the construction of two additional boats was to provide 20 daily departures and full weekday service to Seattle. This was **prior** to the additional WSF funding. Cutting the schedule to a dozen daily round-trips does not come close to meeting that commitment, massively reducing the ROI on that fleet investment.
3. The condensed morning commute will force runs that already regularly sell out to become even more capacity-constrained while removing options for those of us with a later morning arrival option. It is clear that overall demand for the fast ferry regularly exceeds actual seating capacity. Having to arrive 30 minutes prior to departure erases the time savings entirely and introduces significant uncertainty into commuting options.
4. Cutting sailings only on the later part of the morning schedule creates a **6-hour gap** in service during the middle of the day, with afternoon sailings spread over 6 hours and morning runs barely over 3 hours. This is a distinctly unbalanced schedule.
5. The WSF Bremerton schedule is still running at reduced frequency and reliability. Between 8:30 am and 2:30pm, there will only be TWO opportunities to use public transit to reach Seattle from Bremerton with the fast ferry cutback.

Though I understand budget decisions are difficult, the utility of the fast ferry depends on providing reliable access to Seattle. It feels like a dishonest bait and switch to build reliance on the fast ferry and then take it away because of an inability to arrive at a sustainable funding plan for service that Kitsap Transit pledged years ago. But if reductions are inevitable, it is particularly unfair to cut out over two hours of the schedule entirely while leaving the earlier morning runs completely unaffected. The 4:40 or 5:25 morning departure could easily be sacrificed in order to provide better balance to the morning commute options given that there is a 4:50 WSF departure arriving into Seattle before 6am. I hope there is a way to provide mid-

morning service in some capacity between 8 am and 10am to help relieve pressure on the peak commuting hours.

Thanks very much for your consideration,
Matt Austin