

## **KITSAP TRANSIT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES OF February 20, 2024**

### **Board of Commissioners Present:**

Driskell, Robert, Teamsters Local No. 589, *non-voting member*  
Erickson, Becky, Mayor, City of Poulsbo – *Remote Attendance*  
Garrido, Charlotte, Kitsap County Commissioner – *Remote Attendance*  
Mockler, Anna, Councilmember, City of Bremerton  
Moriwaki, Clarence, Councilmember, City of Bainbridge Island  
Putansuu, Robert, Mayor, City of Port Orchard, **Vice Chair**  
Rolfes, Christine, Kitsap County Commissioner  
Stern, Ed, Councilmember, City of Poulsbo  
Walters, Katie, Kitsap County Commissioner  
Wheeler, Greg, Mayor, City of Bremerton, **Chair**

### **Staff Present:**

Jackie Bidon, Interim 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; 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

Prior to the meeting being called to order, Executive Director Clauson presented the Board members with a gift from ORCA to introduce the next generation of ORCA. He also shared that, to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Kitsap Transit, Operations had a jigsaw puzzle of the Bremerton Transportation Center made.

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Wheeler called the meeting of the Kitsap Transit Board of Commissioners to order at 8:36 AM.

### **2. AGENDA REVIEW**

Upon review by the Board, the agenda remained unchanged.

### **3. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS**

No Chair comments.

### **4. FULL DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS**

- a. Service Review/Expansion

Executive Director Clauson shared that Service Review and Expansion is a topic that the Board agreed deserves more in-depth conversation. He stated that he and Commissioner Rolfes have

had conversations regarding the park and ride project on Bond Road and Hwy 104. Clauson shared that he would like to dedicate time to discussing this project and whether Kitsap Transit should continue to move forward or table it and give an update on the status and process. He stated that this topic is an ongoing one with communities requesting more service in urban and rural areas and elected officials are challenged with this when meeting face to face with the community.

Executive Director Clauson shared that the course they are following is based on the Long-Range Plan. He stated that Edward Coviello, Transportation and Land Use Planner, will share how Kitsap Transit got to where it is today.

Edward Coviello shared that he will be reviewing the progress Kitsap Transit has made since COVID-19, recovery efforts and how that links up with the Long-Range Transit Plan, and scenarios that were presented to the Board in December 2022.

He stated that the ridership is starting to grow again but looks very different than the pre-COVID period. The commuter market has changed as well, due to changes in Washington State Ferry service and remote work by commuters. Coviello shared that the ridership is healthier today, noting that there are not big peaks in the morning or evening commute compared to pre-COVID levels. He shared that the revenue model of today will allow Kitsap Transit to resource service to pre-COVID levels and continue with the roll out of Sunday service. Ridership levels are at 91% of pre-COVID vehicle revenue hours and there are a few routes that need to be added back into the schedule, but Kitsap Transit has made efficiencies in route scheduling. Coviello stated that 30-minute service has been added to routes 212 and 217 that connect Bremerton to Silverdale, route 221 East Bremerton and route 226 to Bay Vista in the afternoon. Routes 220 and 228 were adjusted to bring 30-minute frequency along Burwell Avenue from Charleston to the Bremerton Transportation Center. He shared that route 390, Poulsbo to Bainbridge Island, increased frequency from 1-hour to 45-minutes.

Councilmember Mockler asked for clarification that routes 212, 217, 221, 226, 220, and 228 are on 30-minute service all day.

Coviello stated that routes 221 and 226 have 30-minute service from noon to 7:00 PM; the remainder of routes are at 30-minute service all day, which is from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM

Coviello continued, listing services that Kitsap Transit would like to restore in the coming months.

- Restore late PM trip for all Bainbridge Island routes (hour) and splitting combined routes.
- Restore half-hour bus service on Routes 344 and 390
- Restore Route 91 to all day service, replacing Route 92
- Restore Route 338
- Midday Bainbridge Island circulator call out in the Long-Range Plan, based on BI Ride data.

Councilmember Moriwaki asked what the midday Bainbridge Island route would be and what does "long range" mean?

Executive Director Clauson shared that the midday Bainbridge Island route would be difficult to describe because BI Ride only operates when there is a demand. Historically, operations were during the commute hours, and that's when patterns were able to be seen. Clauson stated that the question of what "long range" means is a good question. He shared that one of the challenges with doing these types of things is always based on the operators. Kitsap Transit does not have enough operators to perform the number of hours needed to provide the additional services. Clauson stated that Kitsap Transit is in a major recruitment phase to get the operators needed to continue the current services and add more. He shared that the job market is changing. They are starting to see more applicants going through the training program and are hopeful that they can get moving quickly on the new routes. He stated that he is not able to give a date to start service, but we are at least a couple of years away from adding the service.

Councilmember Moriwaki asked if a circular route has timed stops or is it just going around and picking up people as they appear?

Executive Director Clauson stated that the circular route would be more like a fixed route or commuter route with timed stops.

Commissioner Rolfes stated that she remembers taking bus 30, a small bus that was crowded. She shared that Bainbridge Island eventually got a big bus with only five people on it. Rolfes asked if Kitsap Transit has a plan to go back to smaller buses in areas that don't have ridership?

Edward Coviello stated that his understanding is that this is done depending on the availability of what Kitsap Transit's vehicle inventory is.

Executive Director Clauson stated that Kitsap Transit did set up the system to do that with acquisitions of equipment based on the demand. He shared that the world has changed but keeping up with the changes is not a quick process for purchasing buses, so Kitsap Transit is running with what they currently have. He stated that as employers start requiring employees to come back into the office, they will see an increase in ridership.

Mayor Erickson asked how much the ridership is down on the major routes like the 390.

Executive Director Clauson stated that ridership is down overall. It is starting to come back but is different. He shared that until the implementation of the new technology is finished, it would be hard to give an accurate accounting of the numbers.

Mayor Erickson stated that it is difficult to talk about replacing, restoring, and moving forward without knowing how many people are riding the buses. She asked when the technology would be fully installed to get accurate numbers on ridership.

Executive Director Clauson stated that Kitsap Transit is in the very early stages of testing the system. He shared that when they envisioned this project, it would be a 12-month process and

they are currently 2 to 3 months into it.

Councilmember Mockler asked where the BI Ride data comes from.

Executive Director Clauson stated that the on-demand service is a little different than the routed service, in that people are requesting every ride, so they have that data. He shared that the company that provides the ride scheduling app technology has changed. We are starting to see the data coming in and will be able to give the Board an update on the current Sunday service. The Sunday service Kitsap Transit runs in Bremerton is a combination of fixed route as well as on demand service.

Councilmember Mockler stated that she is thrilled to see that the Dial-a-Ride or on-demand in the cities that have enjoyed this service is leading to an active circulator bus. She asked if there has been discussion of drivers using clickers to record ridership during the 10 months before the new system is implemented.

Executive Director Clauson shared that, in the past, Kitsap Transit did use counters but had removed that infrastructure when we went to the technology systems. Concentration has been getting the technology underway to gain the data needed for placing routes, and ORCA is a source of data they are using. Clauson stated that the preferred plan is to stay on schedule, implementing the new technology that will be more accurate and less onerous for the operators.

Mayor Erickson stated that the conversation has been about capacity and routes and asked if the park & rides are being utilized and whether they are at capacity or not.

Executive Director Clauson stated that usage varies depending on the community. The Park and Ride in South Kitsap at Mullinex and Highway 16 is at capacity on a regular basis. The Park and Ride locations in more remote areas are not at capacity but are being utilized.

Mayor Wheeler asked about North Kitsap and the list of projects. How many of the routes will promote more walk-on passengers for the Bainbridge Island Ferry.

Executive Director Clauson stated that other than route 390, improving route 91 would hopefully take more cars off the road. He shared that the midday circular would be more about getting local people around town versus commuters. Clauson added that the terminal might be a point that the circular route would serve, encouraging people to leave their car and walk around town.

Mayor Wheeler stated that one of the challenges in the North End isn't the infrequent routes or less boats but queuing up the cars to get onto the ferry. If it's not in the front-end focus, is there a plan for later in the year for that type of analysis?

Executive Director Clauson stated that they'll need to sit down and discuss the specifics. He shared that there are seats available for commute hours and Kitsap Transit would absorb a certain amount of the increasing demand as people start shifting from cars back to buses. Clauson noted that this

is something that they are constantly watching on all their routes. Kitsap Transit would use the same process that was used on Bainbridge Island when developing the service, which would be to operate a smaller bus and, when the bus was full, split the route in two so passengers would spend less time riding. This process made the quality of service better. It added to Kitsap Transit's expenses, but the passengers had a higher quality of service. He stated that, as Edward shared, commuters were a large portion of the ridership, with big peaks in the morning and the afternoon. The commute peaks are not there now, and we are starting to see the midday build more. This is good, meaning that the locals are taking advantage of the services and the riders are not just commuters. Clauson stated that for Kitsap Transit to respond to the commuter issue would be expensive because they would need more buses, operators, and service for a limited period.

Councilmember Stern stated, with respect to Mayor Erickson's comment about route 390 and the Edward Rose Corporation Development that will be getting underway with 500 units, it will change the whole aspect of route 309. It is intended as a Transit Oriented Development because it's walkable to the transfer station and with 500 units, it will be dramatic for route 390 and probably the most heavily used route.

Executive Director Clauson stated that in Kitsap Transit's history, the 390 has been the most heavily used route. During some WSF sailings they would have four or five coaches taking people to the same departure in the mornings and afternoons. He shared discussions of high-capacity vehicles in their future and analysis coming back with double decker buses. Clauson stated that they are in the design process of a new facility in North Kitsap County, applying for public funding. He shared that some of the buckets they are applying for would include the acquisition of double decker electric buses that would primarily be intended for route 390. He briefed the newer Board members on the discussions regarding high-capacity vehicles and the differences, logistically, between articulated and double decker coaches.

Councilmember Moriwaki stated that he was able to ride Sound Transit and Community Transit's double decker bus; they are lower in head room but still fun to ride up top. He shared that he read the Bainbridge Island Sunday service would be starting in February 2025, asking if that was still correct.

Executive Director Clauson stated that the Sunday service would be starting in 2025. He shared that they are in Phase 2, which would be South Kitsap, Central Kitsap, and Poulsbo in March 2024 and will be planning out the next phase of Sunday service, which would be Bainbridge Island.

Commissioner Rolfes asked, since Bainbridge Island has never had Sunday service, why a new service would be put in place rather than restore cut service.

Executive Director Clauson stated that Kitsap Transit is planning on restoring some of the cut items prior to adding the Sunday service on Bainbridge Island.

Councilmember Moriwaki asked if there was a projection of how Kitsap Transit would recover from COVID, if there were projections at different levels, and if they are on target for recovery?

Executive Director Clauson stated that during COVID, Kitsap Transit did not lay off any operators, but did cut back service where it was not needed, shifting in order to keep a certain level of service on the road so when people were ready to come back, there would be buses and services available.

Mayor Erickson stated that the completion of Johnson Road connecting to Highway 305 created an easy walking pathway to the bus stops. She asked if Marketing has a vision for getting this and the service increase information out to the public.

Executive Director Clauson shared that their Marketing Team is relatively small and is focusing on smaller projects while continuing to work on the bigger projects of operator recruitments, BI Ride, and Sunday service. Kitsap Transit is utilizing staff to the extent they are available and using consultants to supplement where needed.

Edward Coviello confirmed with the presentation, stating that once Kitsap Transit implements Sunday service and the changes, they are challenged in terms of financial revenue and deciding between increasing service frequency to every fifteen minutes or running service to midnight. He explained that COVID caused a shift in workplace demographics, with people in the service industry working later. Kitsap Transit is not able to provide later service, especially in Central and South Kitsap, where the concentration of these employees are. Thus, the desire for later service.

Councilmember Mockler asked where Kitsap Transit is getting the information that tells them when extra capacity trips are needed.

Edward Coviello stated that as they see buses fill up and based on anecdotal data right now, they will know which trips are full and which ones are empty. He added that when the new ridership counting system comes into place, it will take that accuracy and make it more precise, and we will be able to add service as needed.

Executive Director Clauson explained Kitsap Transit's Run Committee, which is made up of selected operators, customer service staff, and the service planner. The committee meets once a month and reviews moving bus stops, adjustments in schedules, full buses, and other issues they are seeing. He shared that Kitsap Transit is not ignoring what is happening and understands that the numbers are not accurate but that they are dedicated to following through with the implementation of the APC system and the accurate data it will produce.

Executive Director Clauson stated that the ORCA data helps bring all the pieces together to figure out where they're at today.

Councilmember Mockler asked if Kitsap Transit has a feel for what percentage of the ridership uses ORCA?

Executive Director Clauson stated that a large percentage of the ridership uses ORCA.

Service and Capital Development Director Steffani Lillie stated that the ORCA data that Executive Director Clauson is speaking of is good data; they're able to see the buses, but the missing data is the exact location of boardings and locations of alighting.

Executive Director Clauson added that ORCA records the boardings but not the alightings.

Councilmember Mockler stated that she would like to have a higher level of attention in Central Kitsap, similar to the level of detail that North Kitsap gets. She shared that the goals for North Kitsap are very granular but not so for Central Kitsap.

Edward Coveillo stated that much of the focus for COVID recovery has been in Central and South Kitsap due to population density and the type of ridership. He shared that it does look a little lopsided but that the service levels in Central Kitsap are far greater and have already been restored.

Commissioner Walters stated that she has been meeting with the hospital staff and believes that they are looking at Worker/Driver routes and their shifts. She asked if there was anything going on with that.

Executive Director Clauson shared that he has met with the hospital and a team of Kitsap Transit staff met with employees to share options available to hospital staff. The hospital gave addresses of all their employees and Kitsap Transit was able to plot out where employees would be coming from, by their various shifts, and lay out the options to them. He shared that the hospital is looking at subsidizing their employees to ride transit.

Councilmember Stern requested an update on the dedication of the new transit facility.

Executive Director Clauson stated that May 2024 is the target for the dedication. He shared that they are working on coordinating calendars and that he spoke with the FTA Administrator, Nuria Fernandez, who is retiring and will not attend the dedication. Veronica Vanterpool is the Acting FTA Administrator and anticipates attending.

Commissioner Rolfes asked if Kitsap Transit has done any in depth work with the restaurant employers regarding the routes for those employees. She shared that when she worked at the mall, there were three buses at 10:00 PM and employees rushed to get their duties done to catch the bus. She stated that this may be something the Board members could help work on with the Chamber and employers.

Executive Director Clauson stated that it would be helpful, and coordinating with the Chamber may be the better way to start the conversation. There is also the Commute Trip Reduction Law, targeted at larger employers, that would give them the opportunity with their staff to do the same coordinated effort that was done with the hospital. He shared that they are doing targeted events and have spoken with mall employers in the past but capturing that smaller market is much harder than the larger market like the hospital.

Councilmember Mockler stated that in Central Kitsap there is no consideration in the Long-Range Plan for introducing Dial-a-Ride to the City of Bremerton.

Edward Coviello continuing with the presentation, shared that when they did the Long-Range Plan, they performed a couple of surveys for the public: one survey had 14,000 responses but the survey he is focusing on was completed later in the process and had 4,300 responses. The survey was sent by mail to all the residential addresses within Kitsap County and 30 percent of the responses were not Kitsap Transit riders. He shared that Kitsap Transit presented four scenarios:

- Sustain - continue doing what they're doing and get service back to pre-COVID and establish Sunday service with the current revenue model.
- Focus - using sales tax at one tenth of a penny increase.
- Connect - services and routes.
- Enhance - using sales tax at three tenths of a penny increase.

He stated that Focus, Connect, and Enhance had a different menu of options that could be chosen; respondents could choose frequency of service, expand ride service areas, or higher capacity. The survey was done after participants saw what the costs would be. A majority of respondents stated that they want more service; and that 70 percent of respondents using transit, there is a bias.

Edward shared that the survey respondents chose from a menu of options. Based on priority, frequency of routes was the first choice, followed by new ferry routes, high-capacity transit, expanded RIDE service, and circulator service. The next slide categorized the four scenarios by cost, based on current revenue in 2020 dollars.

- Sustain: No new revenue needed.
- Focus: 1/10 of one cent needed.
- Connect: 2/10 of one cent needed.
- Enhance: 3/10 of one cent needed.

Commissioner Walters asked if the ferry service fell under the high-capacity transit or elsewhere.

Coviello stated that what came out of the Long-Range Transit Plan is that Kitsap Transit needs to conduct a study of the ferry service, both within Kitsap County and outside of the county.

Executive Director Clauson stated that the ferry service is funded separately from transit; one-tenth presumably would be to support the buses.

On the slide detailing LRTP service investment, Mayor Erickson asked what Kitsap Transit's definition of high capacity is and if that includes double decker buses and rail?

Coviello stated that during the study, the mode for high capacity was defined as bus rapid transit. He shared that the Growth Management Act is helping, along with more development along the transit lines. Kitsap Transit is working hard on the connectivity to transit services. He added that Kitsap County is ready for the densities required for a rail service under the typical American financial modes.



Mayor Erickson asked if Kitsap Transit is doing a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), would they be considering the 305 corridor for something like that.

Executive Director Clauson stated that would be one of the corridors for Bus Rapid Transit, along with Bremerton to Silverdale on Hwy 303.

Coviello added that it would include the Port Orchard corridor to the ferry terminal and laying out the land use going forward.

Councilmember Mockler asked if the \$20 million per year is broken down in more detail?

Edward Coviello shared that the information is in the Long-Range Transit Plan, in the appendices. He stated that at the bottom right of the Kitsap Transit website is the Planning web page; when selected, the 2023-2028 Transit Development Plan is available for viewing.

Mayor Wheeler stated that many of the questions being asked may come later in the presentation and would like to get through the presentation.

Edward Coviello shared that in order to make the service improvements happen, if the Board chooses, a lot of capital investment is needed. He stated that Charleston Base, which is at capacity and a dated facility, is one example of the need for more operating base capacity. They are well on their way with the transit centers, Silverdale, Wheaton Way, and North Viking, but need to look at South Kitsap, the Port Orchard Transit Center, and South Base. He outlined where capital investment is needed:

- New and upgraded operating facilities to support growth.
- Fleet expansion to support new service investments.
- New transit centers to improve network connectivity.
- Infrastructure upgrades on future high-capacity corridors.
- Bus-stop upgrades for improved access, safety, and comfort.
- Speed and reliability upgrades to make buses a better option.
- Multimodal hubs to improve network connectivity.
- Technology improvements to enhance the overall experience.
- Park-and-ride investments based on future demand.

Commissioner Rolfes stated that the Port Gamble Casino has very limited bus service; employees need to have a vehicle to be able to work there but it's not that far north of Georges Corner and doesn't seem to be too much of a stretch to include the service. Rolfes added that the Suquamish Tribal Clinic is open, but with no vehicle, individuals are not able to get there. The Director of the clinic asked her if there had been any conversation about transit service for that area. The Commissioner stated that there is no bus service to the courthouse from anywhere, so people are not able to get to their court dates either. She shared that people must go to Bremerton, catch the fast ferry, and then walk to the courthouse.

Edward Coviello stated that the Kingston Ride may be going to the casino but will check to make sure. He shared that maybe opening the Ruby Creek Park-and-Ride, on Sedgwick and Sidney, could have a direct route to the courthouse.

Commissioner Rolfes stated that if a person lives anywhere else in the community, there is not a direct route to the courthouse.

Executive Director Clauson shared that they must look at the entire Kitsap Transit system and the way it was constructed; they do not run from one city to a specific destination. He stated that they had to build the system with regard to the time transfer. Kitsap Transit has a lot of buses in the community that go to a central point and make connections to buses that either go to other parts of that community or to a different community. Kitsap Transit just doesn't have the numbers to support a direct route from an area to a destination. He stated that this is how Kitsap Transit's system is constructed and why they have the transfer centers.

Commissioner Rolfes stated that she understands the system and is raising the topic as an equity problem. She shared that she is working with Poulsbo and North Kitsap to see if they should have a court facility in Poulsbo.

Edward Coviello shared that Kitsap Transit route 301 may be more convenient and without all the transfers, it operates from Poulsbo to Bremerton Transportation Center.

Executive Director Clauson shared that route 301 is a one-hour turn-around and that they tried to reduce the number of transfers on that route so passengers wouldn't need to get off one bus and into another one several times. This is what is called an interline the bus that comes in on route A would change its head sign and become route B, and people would stay on the same bus even though it's moving to another route. Clauson shared that they have a bus that leaves downtown Port Orchard every 30 minutes, goes to the courthouse, and ferry from Bremerton to Port Orchard. He stated that the routes are coordinated and that it may not be convenient, but Kitsap Transit is able to get riders to the courthouse.

Commissioner Rolfes stated that a Dial-a-Ride with the courthouse might be a program to look into.

General discussion on access to court services and the Kitsap County judicial system.

Councilmember Mockler asked if now was the time to discuss instituting a Dial-a-Ride in the City of Bremerton?

Edward Coviello stated that the Long-Range Transit Plan calls for the Board to discuss service expansion. If they want to expand service, how they are going to do that, and are they going to fund it. He shared the need to mention the possible repeal of the Climate Commitment Act, coming up in the fall.

Executive Director Clauson stated that they will need to have a discussion on the possible loss of Climate Commitment Act funding, and that Kitsap Transit receives roughly \$5 million a year that will go away if the act is repealed.

Mayor Putaansuu asked about the staffing levels and if the levels are up to the pre-COVID levels.

Executive Director Clauson stated that they are getting close to the pre-COVID levels. He shared that they are making good progress but are not quite there yet. Kitsap Transit is comfortable with adding Sunday service in March because of the recruitments. He stated that there are a lot of folks in training now, so the numbers are going up but not at 100 percent.

Councilmember Mockler asked if her question about instituting a Dial-a-Ring in the City of Bremerton will be addressed? She stated that a response that she has been given is that this service is extremely expensive and asked if the cost has been measured in any way in the Long-Range Transit Plan.

Edward Coviello shared that some of the Dial-a-Rides are broken out in the plan and will pull that information out for her.

Councilmember Mockler asked if the \$20 million will be broken out in more detail.

Coviello stated yes, that the \$20 million is from the 2020 dollars and could be broken down in more detail for her. It would include inflation and the rise of labor costs.

Councilmember Mockler asked if there are projected costs in the Long-Range Transit Plan for instituting Dial-a-Ride in the City of Bremerton.

Coviello stated that he would need to review it and get back to her with the information.

Executive Director Clauson stated that the Dial-a-Rides in the Long-Range Transit Plan are for certain areas and not what Councilmember Mockler is advocating for. Clauson shared definitions of services: *ACCESS*, also referred to as paratransit, is dial-a-ride for the disabled community. General public Dial-a-Ride is in specific geographic and anyone living in these areas can call during specific times of the day and request a ride. These are SK Ride, Kingston Ride, and BI Ride. In these areas, Dial-a-Ride is the only service available to those communities.

Where Kitsap Transit operates fixed route programs, they don't offer Dial-a-Ride services. There is either the fixed route program or the Dial-a-Ride program. Clauson shared that Bremerton has a fixed route operation in the city. If the Board wants to add the Dial-a-Ride program to the existing program, the question is how to pay for it. To the extent of service today, it is either/or, but not both. If the Board would like the fixed route program removed in Bremerton and replaced with the Dial-a-Ride program, that can be done; he would not recommend that, but it can be done.

Executive Director Clauson continued noting that the Sunday service in Bremerton is a combination of fixed route service and Dial-a-Ride. He stated that the fixed route is a trunk route, not servicing neighborhoods. The neighborhood riders will need to call Dial-a-Ride directly to get a ride from their neighborhood in the city or to make connections with the fixed route. He shared that Dial-a-Ride will not pick somebody up in Bremerton and take them to Silverdale; it will take them to the fixed route, and they can ride that to Silverdale. Clauson stated that he wants people to understand that there is a difference between Dial-a-Ride and fixed routes. Adding Dial-a-Ride where routed service is would be duplicating services and is very expensive when you look at the cost per ride. Dial-a-Ride is significantly higher because there is usually only one passenger as opposed to the fixed route where the cost is spread between many passengers. After explaining why and how both services operate, he asked if the Board wants the addition of Dial-a-Ride service with the fixed routes. Clauson stated that he would support the Board decision and they would need to figure out how to pay for the additional service.

Mayor Wheeler stated that he assumes the Long-Range Transit Plan is based on the current financial formula and how taxes are collected but reflects some of the growth management acts and growth projections. He shared that looking at that plan gives a snapshot of what Kitsap Transit's future might look like and how it is prioritized. So, in the Long-Range Plan the Board is getting a policy perspective. He stated that what was presented today was a snapshot of today, or if the Board wanted more of today, there are different levels of what it might take to there, as far as financially.

He agreed that the services are two different things and encouraged a conversation between Councilmember Mockler and Executive Director Clauson. Mayor Wheeler asked Executive Director Clauson where they go from here.

Executive Director Clauson stated that he is requesting direction from the Board. He shared that how Kitsap Transit got to this point is what Edward Coviello presented. Kitsap Transit has done a lot of outreaches to the communities, working with the Board's jurisdictions on their Long-Range plans and comp plan development so that they're all in sync. He stated that there are two things he has heard throughout this process; to increase frequencies and increase the length of the day, starting earlier, and running later. These are the guiding principles Kitsap Transit has been following based on the direction of the Board. Clauson stated that the one issue is growth management and where to provide the service. He shared that the premise of the Long-Range Plan is to do what Kitsap Transit has been doing with the funds available: concentrate the limited resources to the urban areas of the community, versus doing a little bit of service everywhere. He stated that if the Board wants to do more, then there will need to be a discussion on how that will be paid for. Clauson shared that the Board has seen the 5-year projections by Finance Director Paul Shinnars. On average over the last 25 years, the cost increase of operating Kitsap Transit is about 5 percent a year. The sales tax only increases at about 3.5 percent. The point that those two come together is where the challenge is, and Kitsap Transit has always tried to stay away from that. Clauson added that with the potential of the Climate Commitment Act being repealed, they are going to have discussions about what to change and what do they do.

Mayor Putaansuu stated that he is supportive of the direction they're going because he believes that the frequency and adding into the evenings to capture those service workers is going to increase ridership within the dollars available. He shared that South Kitsap has Dial-a-Ride. With the residential and commercial growth in South Kitsap, he stated that he can't wait to grow into the fixed route service. Mayor Putaansuu shared that he doesn't believe Kitsap Transit should be offering both services in one area and would not be comfortable asking the voters for more funding. He stated that the Carbon Tax conversation could be a game changer; potentially losing \$5 million a year out of operations would mean service cuts.

Executive Director Clauson stated that he would not want to suggest service cuts, but we may need to delay things. Sunday service is a good example, we are going to start this service in March; but maybe we can't expand it. He stated that this is going to be a challenge and there are multiple ways to deal with it. We need to be prudent and pay attention to why we're expanding.

Commissioner Rolfes formally proposed that they have a conversation about the climate initiative and a contingency plan so that they know what the impact would be if funding is withdrawn. She stated that the conversation should include what that means in terms of whether they should be expanding service, hiring people between April and December, and if they will need to take back the expansion. She shared that this has not been discussed from a business model perspective. The discussion was about longer hours, frequency, and Sunday service. Her preference would be to provide a service that increases ridership, serving more people and bringing in more revenue. That means extending hours on some routes because more people will ride. She shared that it is not good business to expand a route where it benefits 3 people late at night.

Executive Director Clauson stated that they are going to have internal discussions so that they can make recommendations on what Kitsap Transit will do with regard to the Climate Commitment Act. He shared that the second comment about more frequent and expanded hours was derived from community surveys. This started back when the ferry program was first approved and Kitsap Transit was spending \$1.5 million a year to run the Port Orchard ferry routes. He stated that they were able to move that expense under the new revenue source of ferries which freed up \$1.5 million on the bus side. Kitsap Transit went to the community and asked what they would like the agency to do it. Clauson shared that the existing riders wanted Sunday service, non-riders were asked what it would take for them to use Kitsap Transit. He explained that's where the more frequent and later/earlier ideas came from. He stated that things have changed since that survey. That is why the demand responsive type of service is used on Sunday, to see what the demand is. Clauson shared that they will be discussing internally recommendations and options that will be brought before the Board.

Councilmember Moriwaki shared that this is a chicken and egg thing. Kitsap Transit and the Board want to increase ridership and riders want frequency, reliability, and predictability. If you only have three riders to start, but you keep the service running, people get used to that service, more people try the service, it multiplies and it becomes a rollout thing where more people are riding. He stated that Sound Transit learned the hard way on some of the early routes they dropped. He shared that this is a tough thing, but it is smart to think ahead.

Executive Director Clauson shared that one condition of receiving some of the Climate Commitment Act funds was to eliminate fares for 18 and under and what will Kitsap Transit do if that goes away. He stated that this is something for everyone to start thinking about.

Mayor Erickson shared that if they are looking at dire situations with the Climate Commitment Act and the loss of substantial revenue, they also need to take a close look at the capital expansion program. She stated that transit comes up with huge amounts of money, internally, to meet the matches of the grant dollars. There needs to be a balance between service delivery and capital expansion. Mayor Erickson shared that she would like to see what the matching money will be from the existing capital improvement plan going forward and would like to have a conversation on that as well.

Councilmember Mockler repeated what was said earlier about the Dial-a-Ride being the way to determine if there is a need for fixed routes as was done in Bainbridge Island.

- b. Park and Rides (North Kitsap)

Not presented due to lack of time.

## **5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ITEMS**

Not presented due to lack of time.

## **6. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Moved to the beginning of the meeting 8:31 AM.

Commissioner Rolfes stated that Public Comment is later in the agenda and asked about the visitors in the room and what they are about.

Executive Director Clauson asked if Mayor Wheeler would like to move Public Comment up to address Commissioner Rolfes question.

Mayor Wheeler moved Public Comment up to address the seven visitors to the meeting.

Stephanie Binschus stated that they are in the meeting to let the Board know that their contract has expired.

## **7. FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

None, due to lack of time.

**8. ADJOURN:** At 10:05 AM, Chairperson Wheeler adjourned the regular meeting.

**ADOPTED** by the Board of Commissioners of Kitsap Transit at a regular meeting thereof, held on the 4th day of June, 2024.

Attest:

DocuSigned by:  
*Greg Wheeler*  
782D47B21D054B5...  
Greg Wheeler, Chairperson

DocuSigned by:  
*Jackie Bidon*  
2395D24B46804E7  
Jackie Bidon, Interim Clerk of the Board