

**MINUTES
LINK TRANSIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

August 18, 2026

3 pm

Columbia Station 3rd Floor, 300 S. Columbia Street, Wenatchee, WA

ATTENDANCE

Board members attending in person: Chair Erin McCardle, Marc Straub, Randy Agnew, Ettore Castellente, Jim Fletcher, Don Files, Travis Hornby, Carmen Andonaegui, Shon Smith, Kevin Overbay

Board members attending through ZOOM on-line internet program: Anne Hessburg

Board members excused/absent: Paul Parmley, Renee Swearingen

Members of the public: Ken Johannessen, Oscar Rodriguez (media), Austin Cooper (Zoom)

Link Transit staff: Don Billen, Ed Archer, Justin Brockwell, Samantha Miller, Selina Danko, Gabby Walker, Felicity Lape, Julie Shipman, Jennifer Dolge, Andy Farias, Josh Willey, Jason Sandberg, Paul Heffernan

Legal Counsel: Erin McCool, John Lee

1. CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Erin McCardle called the meeting to order at 3 p.m. A quorum was established with 10 board members present at that time.

Board Action:

Kevin Overbay moved to approve the agenda as presented.

Randy Agnew seconded the motion.

VOTE: All in favor with 10 voting board members present for this vote.

Motion Carried

2. EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Washington State Transit Association Operator and Maintenance Rodeo Competition

Operations Manager Gabby Walker reported on Link Transit's participation in the 2026 Washington State Transit Association Rodeo. Link employees competed in both the operator and maintenance rodeos. Competitors are scored based on technical knowledge, safety practices, operational skills, and professionalism. A highlight was Jason Sandberg's

third-place finish in the 40-foot coach category. Sandberg will represent Link Transit at the national rodeo competition in 2027.

3. PUBLIC HEARING: Link Transit's 2026-2031 Transit Development Plan, 2025 Annual Report and Strategic Plan

Carmen Andonaegui joined the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

Chair Erin McCardle opened the public hearing at 3:05 p.m.

Link Transit Planner Josh Willey presented Link Transit's draft Strategic Plan, which integrates the 2026-2031 Transit Development Plan and 2025 Annual report into a broader framework for guiding the agency's long-term priorities, service planning, capital investment, financial planning, and agency initiatives. The plan represents Link Transit's transition from Vision 2020 to a new integrated planning framework that incorporates the Board-adopted agency priorities into specific initiatives with established timelines, enhanced budget and cash-flow detail, and a 10-year alignment of planned activities. The presentation highlighted continued ridership growth in 2025, with total system boardings reaching 1,443,242, and reviewed current and planned initiatives related to expanded and more frequent service, rural and ADA transportation, bus stop improvements, facility and charging needs, connectivity, security, technology, and rider experience.

Two letters were submitted by citizens to Link Transit commenting on the draft planning document and Vice Chair Shon Smith read the letters into the record:

Al Lorenz of Manson wrote:

"Link cost for boarding was over 20 dollars in 2025. Average costs for rural transit systems are under 10 dollars per boarding for rural transit and under 5 dollars per boarding for urban systems. Link is a hybrid, with an urban system in Wenatchee and a typical rural system outside of the Wenatchee area. I do not know the ratio of the ridership, but if it is split between rural and Wenatchee ridership, the cost of boarding should be around 7.5 dollars per boarding or roughly one third of Links performance. Rather than being focused on expansion, Link should focus on becoming an efficient provider of transportation and use of funds."

Dean O'Daffer of Wenatchee wrote:

"I am a Wenatchee resident who is proud of our regional Link bus system. The draft TDP is detailed and looks to a good future for our bus riding community. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to our transportation system."

No members of the public offered additional comment.

Chair Erin McCardle closed the public hearing at 3:23 p.m.

4. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

4.1 Resolution 2026-16: Link Transit's 2026-2031 Transit Development Plan, 2025 Annual Report and Strategic Plan

Board Action:

Carmen Andonaegui moved to approve Resolution 2026-16, formally adopting Link Transit's 2026-2031 Transit Development Plan, 2025 Annual Report, and Strategic Plan.

Travis Hornby seconded the motion.

VOTE: All in favor with 11 voting board members present for this vote.

Motion Carried

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

East Wenatchee resident Ken Johannessen thank the Board and Link Transit staff for responding to his suggestion to adjust the rerouting of Route 12 to better accommodate the needs of guests.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

6.1. Minutes of the July 21, 2026 Board Meeting

6.2. Accounts Payable Vouchers from July 1-31 totaling \$1,077,018.61

6.3. Payroll Vouchers from July 1-31 totaling \$994,833.05

Board Action:

Marc Straub moved to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Jim Fletcher seconded the motion.

VOTE: All in favor with 11 voting board members present for this vote.

Motion Carried

7. BOARD ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

7.1. CEO Report

Don Billen reported to the Board on the following items:

Wildfire Smoke Service Impact: Billen explained to the Board that current smoky conditions caused by wildfires in the region has affected air quality throughout Link Transit's service area, requiring the agency to closely monitor conditions and adjust operations as needed to protect employees and riders. Link uses AirNow data from the Department of Ecology sensor at Wenatchee Valley College and Washington Labor and Industries air quality index (AQI) requirements to guide its response. When the AQI

reaches 700, riders are advised to prepare for possible service disruptions; and an AQI of 849, Link begins suspending service. During the recent smoke event, conditions briefly reached the suspension threshold, resulting in a short service interruption before the air quality improved and service resumed. Link has provided N95 masks to employees, implemented additional protective measures, and maintained ongoing communication with riders and staff as conditions change. Billen indicated that staff will use lessons learned from the smoke event to develop plans designed to lessen the impact on agency guests while ensuring employee safety.

Ecolane scheduling application guest-facing capabilities: Billen reported that staff reviewed Ecolane's guest-facing capabilities in response to Board member Shon Smith's question regarding whether guests can confirm that they still need a scheduled ride. While Ecolane allows guests to view upcoming trips, receive trip reminders and vehicle arrival information, and cancel a trip if it is no longer needed, it does not have a "confirm ride" function.

7.2. Board Composition Review

Legal Counsel Erin McCool reviewed the process for Link Transit's periodic Board composition review under RCW 36.57A.055. The review is conducted by designated representatives of Chelan County, Douglas County, and each of the eight member cities, rather than the sitting Link Transit Board. Link Transit's role is limited to providing the required 20-day notice and administrative support. Any change approved by the jurisdictional representatives must comply with statutory limits and would require a corresponding amendment to Link Transit's bylaws. Council also noted that changes to state law effective January 1, 2026 allow for the possible appointment of up to two transit-using voting members who meet specified eligibility and training requirements.

8. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

8.1. Resolution 2026-17: Rideshare Policy Update

Rideshare Coordinator Chris Clark presented an update to Link Transit's Rideshare Policy to align with the Washington State Transit Insurance Pool best practices for expanded telematics, including interior-facing and rear-facing cameras. The upgraded system is intended to improve safety, reduce risk, and support claims management. Clark reported that the 2026 upgrade is expected to increase costs by approximately \$4,000, with sufficient budget savings available to cover the expense.

Board Action:

Kevin Overbay moved to approve Resolution 2026-17, authorizing the updated Link Transit Rideshare Policy.

Marc Straub seconded the motion.

VOTE: All in favor with 11 voting board members present for this vote.

Motion Carried

8.2. Revised purchase of 5 ABB chargers from The Mobility House from Sourcewell Contract

Contract/Procurement Specialist Sam Miller presented a revised authorization for the purchase of five ABB chargers from The Mobility House to account for increases in local sales tax since the Board's original January approval. Miller recommended the Board authorize the purchase for an amount not to exceed \$997,930 plus applicable sales tax. The additional tax is estimated at approximately \$6,597, with up to 85 percent of the total purchase reimbursable through a Washington State Department of Transportation Green Transportation Grant.

Board Action:

Travis Hornby moved to authorize the purchase of 5 ABB chargers from Mobility House LLC, d/b/a The Mobility House in an amount not to exceed \$997,930, plus applicable sales taxes.

Jim Fletcher seconded the motion.

VOTE: All in favor with 11 voting board members present for this vote.

Motion Carried

9. STAFF REPORTS

9.1. Marketing Quarterly Report

Marketing Manager Jennifer Dolge presented the quarterly Marketing Update, reviewing the department's 2026 goals, recent campaigns, and outreach activities, and performance measures. The update highlights efforts to increase awareness of Link Transit services, educate riders, strengthen community partnerships, and support ridership growth and agency visibility.

9.2. Monthly Financial Report

**Monthly Financial Report July 2026
For the August 18, 2026 Board meeting**

Background Information:	\$	Amount
<u>2025 sales tax</u>		
♦ July 2026 sales tax (earned in the month of May 2026)	\$	2,925,405
♦ Over budgeted amount for the month by .1%	\$	2,006
♦ YTD sales tax collection	\$	12,580,757
♦ YTD budget amount	\$	12,271,621
♦ Over YTD budgeted amount by 2.5%	\$	309,136
♦ Last year's YTD sales tax amount	\$	11,530,795

♦ Over last year's YTD sales tax amount by 9.1%	\$ 1,049,961
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2026 Operating Budget-to-Actual

♦ Budget year elapsed = 58%	\$ 19,509,114
♦ Operating budget spent = 54%	<u>\$ 18,040,235</u>
♦ <Over> Under Budgeted Amount	\$ 1,465,160

2026 Capital

♦ 7 DART Cutaways – Turbo Images	\$ 34,475
♦ 7 DART Cutaways – Model 1	\$ (2,832)
♦ Bus Garage – Fig Title	\$ 327
♦ Bus Garage – RH2 Engineering	\$ 2,099
♦ WSP Training Lot – RH2 Engineering	\$ 8,580
♦ WSP Training Lot – Construction Special Inspections, LLC	\$ 1,172
♦ EV Chargers – RH2 Engineering	\$ 10,106
♦ EV Chargers Electrical – Beckstead Electric Inc	\$ 3,719

Cash Accounts

♦ Cash with Treasurer – 2026 under 2025	\$ (858,954)
♦ Investments – 2026 over 2025	\$ 1,754,690
♦ Contingencies Reserve – 2026 over 2025	\$ 458,333
♦ Vehicle Reserves – 2026 over 2025	\$ 2,122,552
♦ Facility/Equipment Reserves – 2026 over 2025	\$ 1,302,766
♦ Sales Tax Refund Reserve – 2026 under 2025	\$ (1,000,000)

9.3. Scorecards

Operations Manager Gabby Walker reviewed the Scorecards with the Board. This report provides an overview of how the system performed during the past month, which is reflective of how the agency is meeting the annual performance goals that were developed through the annual budgeting process and formally adopted by the Board.

10. MEETING ADJOURNMENT

All business listed on the agenda had been addressed and with no further business to conduct, Chair McCardle adjourned the meeting at 4:17 p.m.

11. CLOSED SESSION: Labor Matters RCW 42.30.140(4)

Following the regular meeting of the Link Transit Board of Directors, the Board convened in closed session to discuss labor matters. No action was taken.

Minutes Submitted By:


Selina Danko, Clerk of the Board