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WhidbeyHealth

The Whidbey Island community is invited to a

Town Hall Talk

6 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 22

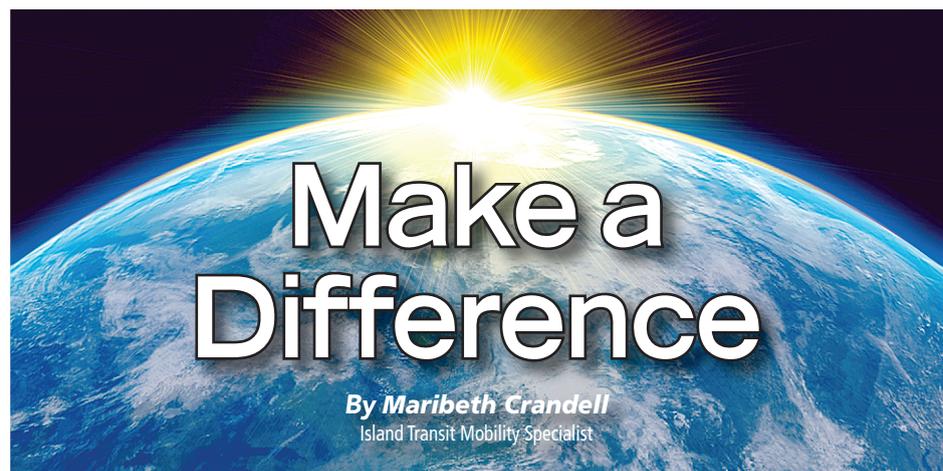
Robert and June Sebo Health Education Center (A/B)
WhidbeyHealth Medical Center (lower level) in Coupeville



Join WhidbeyHealth CEO Ron Telles and
Hospital Commissioners for a short presentation
on WhidbeyHealth's financials,
a recruitment update and a quality report.

Ample time will be dedicated to a question and answer
period with community members.

(Take the Birch Street entrance and park in the back near the courtyard.)



Make a Difference

By Maribeth Crandell
Island Transit Mobility Specialist

A CARBON LESS LIFESTYLE

If you want to make a difference, plant a tree, change a light bulb, reduce, reuse and recycle. And if you REALLY want to make a difference and reduce your carbon footprint, because time is running out, focus on this first. Change the way you travel.

It's not that hard. It just takes a shift in thinking. Maybe you're someone who really needs that vehicle, a construction worker with a truck full of tools, or a delivery person, perhaps. But if your vehicle is only carrying you and your lunch box, it's time to consider some alternatives. (If you drive an electric vehicle, good for you. But you're not off the hook unless you charge your battery with renewable energy.)

Driving is addictive. Like any addiction, the short term effects might be pleasant, but the long term impacts are devastating when you multiply it by the number of drivers on the planet. I started taking the bus to work in 2007. Island Transit is fare-free, so I've saved a lot of money over the years. Sometimes in the summer I use a bike and bus combination but I retire my bike during the dark, winter months. Nearly 20 percent of traffic fatalities involve a cyclist or pedestrian, so I wear a reflective vest and carry a light when I'm walking along the roadside or waiting for the bus. We want you to be safe, so during the first week of November as part of our Can U C Me campaign, we'll be handing out reflective vests or wrist bands to bus riders.

Want to calculate your carbon travel footprint? Register at Rideshareonline.com. When I tracked my progress I found I'd saved \$136 and lost 314 pounds of CO2 in just one month. (That's almost \$20,000 and 14,000 pounds of carbon since I started 12 years ago.) Not only did I save money and reduce my carbon emissions, I made friends with my fellow commuters and I got more exercise walking to the bus stop every day. Rideshareonline tracks your travel by walking, bike, bus, carpool, vanpool or telecommuting. You just plug your mode of transportation into your online calendar and Rideshareonline will calculate the rest.

Island Transit will stop at almost any safe place along its routes to pick you up. If you want to catch it on the highway, find a place where the bus can pull completely out of the traffic lane. I use the Route Shout 2.0 app that tells me where my bus is in real time. Sometimes I wait at my mailbox and flag down the bus. But usually I walk 30 minutes to catch the bus at the highway, or 45 minutes to wait at the Park and Ride, or I walk into town, which takes almost an hour, and I climb three hills, which is a great aerobic workout. It helps me stay in shape and I sleep better.

I work for Island Transit now and guide

monthly tours for people on our regularly scheduled buses. We play Transit Trivia on the tours so people can get tips on Island Transit services. This month we'll do a Thrift Shop Tour in Oak Harbor. In November we'll have a Winery Tour and in December we'll go between Coupeville and Oak Harbor to see the holiday lights. You can find out more at our website www.IslandTransit.org. To RSVP call me at 360-678-9536 or email: Travel@IslandTransit.org.

Our website has a Trip Planner to help you figure out which route will get you where you need to go. Our Trip Planner will direct you to your destination even if it's outside Island County and involves ferries or other transit services. Give it a try at www.islandtransit.org. (You can also find a Trip Planner on Google Maps.) Or if you want to talk to a real person, call us at 360-678-7771. And we also offer one-on-one Travel Training for those needing help to get started. Just give us a call.

Initiative 976

People often tell me they'd like Island Transit to extend its service, running later Saturdays and offering Sunday service. If the bus service is extended, paratransit service will be extended, too. Commuters, disabled, veterans, low-income, seniors, students and others rely on Island Transit for transportation. Island Transit is poised to expand, but there's one thing that could force it to contract.

Tim Eyman's Initiative 976 is coming up for a vote Nov. 5. If it passes, it would reduce the annual vehicle license fees to \$30. However, it would also cut public transit services, road construction, overpass and bridge maintenance, light rail expansion, ferry improvements, state patrol and EMS services across the state. It would mean Island Transit bus, paratransit and vanpool services would be reduced. Island Transit's Todd Morrow will be giving public presentations at the Oak Harbor Senior Center at 11 a.m. and at Coupeville Library at noon Monday, Oct. 21 to educate and address concerns about this topic. More details can be found at islandtransit.org.

Just when we need to drive less and reduce our consumption of fossil fuels, just when we have a nation-wide obesity epidemic, just when a growing number of people suffer from isolation, our public transit dollars are at risk. So if you really want to make a difference, walk, bike, take the bus. Vote.

Make a Difference Column is coordinated by Whidbey Island Conservation District. For column archives please visit whidbeycd.org/publications.

The content of this article does not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Whidbey Island Conservation District.



Thank you for reading! Please recycle the Whidbey Weekly when you are finished with it.

