

**JAK Speech for Open the Paths 2024**  
*Check Against Delivery*

First, thank you for having me. Joe Kunzler, he-him-his-sir. I served on the Skagit Transit Community Advisory Committee between October 2015 and January 2022. I also take transit everywhere as I can't drive and if I could drive, I'd only drive an electric or alternative fuel vehicle. With that, let's talk about trips not taken.

Well, when the local Skagit Transit has a weekend span of service from 8 AM until 6 PM, and I also have to prepare for a big sortie in 12 days to defend a dear ally in Redmond, you can guess where I won't be, sadly. I hope you'll be able to go to the big Badassuchi Starter Line in Bellevue – The party starts at 10 AM at Bellevue City Hall, and yes, I've checked and rechecked; Mr. Go Sound Transit can't make it on time and would have to skedaddle early. So I won't go – plus I have to help one of your alumni defend new public comment defenses against hate speech. *Priorities.*

With that, what and how Sound Transit is doing transit is giving hope and optimism to so many, including I. Sound Transit, whether she likes this or not, has to be the moral center of the region, leading and coaching the region. Nobody else has the capacity to lead and unify and be the transit spine. The fact Sound Transit is committed to excellence and has a span of service of almost if not 24 hours when you combine buses with the light rail makes me want to say... GO SOUND TRANSIT!

Yes, span of service or the start and end time of what a transit runs is an issue. As I like to say: We are a big state with a small transit budget. I would also say on the campus of Heidi Wills, who led the 2019 charge to get this city of transit champs to oppose the worst Cougar ever, Tim Eyman, to get the lawyers the electoral mandate to litigate, that we now check six for insulated while males having a tantrum.

Span of service and coverage determine whether a differently abled person can have a life or hold down a job. Additionally, not having bus lanes and having to make connections means having to pad trip planning. See, when I plan my trips, I consider how I've had Belair Airporters, Amtrak trains, and public transportation get stuck in traffic, I've had to take out hotel rooms and AIRBNB – giving other communities tax money that should go to my Skagit. I've also sometimes had to decide to fly not just because I must be at this point in space-time or else. I cannot risk getting stuck in traffic and deprioritized because WSDOT transportation planners prioritize moving cars over humans. Or some transit planners who prefer nice corridors but either won't or can't work to improve housing opportunities with legislators and municipal planners – which creates a whole assortment of problems where the capital money and operators are invested in making a corridor frequent for some while denying service to many. Frequency should come after span of service and coverage, please.

Another thing that must change is frankly it's past time to put transit riders on transit boards. Too many times, I've got the door for transit board members who rudely drove to a transit board meeting – insulting transit riders, insulting their constituents paying regressive taxes for transit, and degrading themselves.

We also need transit rider representation to discuss who pays for transit. Staff cannot be an activist voice. See if the Climate Commitment Act is repealed, we are going to see retreat from the legacy that this university's UPass started by Heidi Wills' UPass birth and renovated by Madeline McKenna, and the Climate Commitment Act's kids ride free to help working families, not insulated millionaires and their spokespeople. Now if only we could fund our ferries first in transportation, with significant new fare relief for the most needy – ask me and I'll flesh this out.

Finally, very carefully, I cannot help but notice that this University has been the site of recent turmoil over Middle Eastern affairs – and I will get to my conclusion quickly. At least in January 1991 in Heidi Wills' day as Student Body President, there was no anti-Semitism, just noble concern for human life. In that spirit, I'm just asking for a pivot, please, to an understanding if we lose the Climate Commitment Act, we're going to see more harm to Washington's disability community and other minorities by another rich white guy and his insensitive ableist pals. The Climate Commitment Act began a new era for Skagit Transit with kids riding free when all I could get on the community advisory committee was a discount pass, more service, and starting to replace very old buses. For your King County Metro, that's new battery electric buses for starters. So, I encourage you Huskies to get out the vote to keep alight your school's proud legacy of climate action hero alumni like Heidi Wills, Madeline McKenna, Dow Constantine, and Vanessa Kritzer, who as Redmond Council President is fighting for her Redmond commons from real hate, with my help. Thanks.