

2012 – 2014 Service Implementation Plan

Three Year Service Plan

Prepared for:
Planning & Development Committee

Draft

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Introduction

The adopted 2010 Comprehensive Plan contains a section titled “Fixed-Route Service Design Policies” which articulates policies that define transit network architecture, extent and service levels for fixed-route transit service. These policies are intended to ensure consistency of existing service and to illustrate planned service modifications, enhancements, and reductions. Within this section, FR-7.0 Service Implementation Plan states that by April of each year, STA shall prepare a draft Service Implementation Plan (SIP) to cover a three-year period beginning with the September service change. This document should be prepared by April and adopted no later than July 1 of each year to guide the delivery of Fixed-Route Service. Developed in close coordination with the agency’s six-year financial projections based in the Transit Development Plan, the SIP describes general and conceptual service additions and revisions proposed for the coming September service change and the preliminary proposal for changes in the following two years. Furthermore, FR-7.0 states that the Route Performance Report, which details bus route productivity objectives, required in the Monitoring and Improvement Element of the Comprehensive Plan will be incorporated into this document.

The remainder of this report is organized into the following sections:

Fixed-Route Service Implementation Plan

The Fixed-Route Service Implementation Plan is organized in the following sub-sections:

- 1) A summary of the upcoming service change dates.
- 2) A review of the current existing conditions, actions that have been implemented in the 2011 plan, and actions that are yet to be addressed.
- 3) An explanation of changes subsequent to the last approved plan, including the cancellation of the third phase of service reductions previously scheduled for September 2013.
- 4) The programming of major service improvement and revision actions during the planning period.
- 5) An explanation of how STA will adjust for ridership growth while restraining service growth to 2012 levels.

Route Performance Report

The Route Performance Report summarizes current route performance standards and lists the performance of each route in relation to each standard.

I. Fixed-Route Service Implementation Plan

Executive Summary

This Service Implementation Plan (SIP) is designed to inform the public of possible bus service improvements over a three-year period beginning with the September service change, provided that resources are available. This covers the remainder of 2012 and all of years 2013 and 2014.

The performance standards listed under Section II are resourceful for the planning and operation of fixed-route transit service as it provides the foundation for route design and resource management. Spokane Transit recognizes the importance of evaluating its services in order to evaluate numerous requests and proposals for service modifications that are received from a variety of sources including customers, employees, and employers throughout the region. To help improve effectiveness and efficiency, it is prudent to provide cost effective transit service that supports both existing and emergent origin-destination patterns.

The adopted Transit Development Plan covering the years 2011 through 2016 contemplated a 7% reduction in Fixed Route Service in September 2012. The 2011 SIP stated that STA would defer this 7% reduction, the last in a series of three board approved reductions, until 2013. This updated 2012 plan confirms that STA will cancel the final planned reduction outright based favorable budget variances.

Members from the Planning, Operations, Customer Service, Communications, and Training Department, who make up STA's Service Improvement Committee, will meet bi-monthly in order to discuss ideas and review proposed changes to the bus system over the next few years. The anticipated magnitude of any proposed change will determine the level of public involvement and board action. Please refer to the Communications and Public Input Element of the Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation for more information.

Service Change Dates

Performance standards help influence which and when service modifications will take effect. For example, a poor performing route could be subject to modifications such as frequency changes and or segment re-route changes in order to increase productivity. Generally, major changes take place in September of each year. Service modifications can take place three times a year, the third Sunday in January, May, and September of each year. This coincides with the

selection and assignment of coach operator runs. Below is a table summarizing 2013 and 2014 service change dates following the September 16, 2012 service change.

2012	2013	2014
	January 20, 2013	January 19, 2014
	May 19, 2013	May 18, 2014
September 16, 2012	September 15, 2013	September 21, 2014

Existing Conditions

There are existing conditions which are identified because of one or more of the following:

- 1) Conditions represent service deficiencies per the principles and policies of the adopted Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation;
- 2) Current service fails all three route performance standards; and
- 3) High Performance Transit (HPT) Network related modifications that may be feasible within the three-year planning horizon of this document.

For example, Route 23 mid-day frequency is 60 minutes, and Routes 26 and 28 do not extend past Francis Ave on Saturday nights and Sundays. It would be a priority to address these issues over the next few years. Another example, although not a deficiency, would be to increase frequency on weekends on highly used corridors like Wellesley Ave and Monroe St. Overall, the main goal would be to re-allocate current resources in order to provide more efficient public transportation, improve mobility throughout the region to population and employment centers, and potentially solve current safety issues. Below is a table summarizing the 2012 SIP existing conditions. Spokane Transit will continue to evaluate for possible solutions. See the following section for the changes subsequent to the last approved plan.

Route	2012 SIP Existing Conditions	Action / Opportunity
21 West Broadway	The West Central neighborhood lacks direct trip connectivity to area activity centers north of the neighborhood	Continue to evaluate opportunity to extend route to Shadle Park, but likely cannot be addressed during the planning horizon
23 Maple/Ash	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weekday 60 minute mid-day headway violates maximum base headway of 30 minutes for Basic Urban service 2. Mid-day and weekends, the route does not travel to the Indian Trail weekday peak terminal 	Continue to evaluate, but likely cannot be addressed during the planning horizon

Route	2012 SIP Existing Conditions	Action / Opportunity
24 Monroe	Although not a policy deficiency, Monroe St is a designated green HPT Service corridor with just 60 minute service on Sunday/holidays; interlined with routes 26 and 28	Continue to consider opportunities to implement HPT strategies
26 Addison	Route does not operate to the end of the line on Saturday nights and Sunday/holidays thereby violating the Basic System Hours of Service to the route terminal in the Northpointe Shopping Center area, a key activity center	Continue to evaluate opportunity to provide continuity in service span and routing during late nights and weekends, but likely cannot be addressed during the planning horizon
28 Nevada	Route does not operate to the end of the line on Saturday nights and Sunday/holidays thereby violating the Basic System Hours of Service to the route terminal in the Whitworth University/Northpointe Shopping Center area, a key activity center	Continue to evaluate opportunity to provide continuity in service span and routing during late nights and weekends, but likely cannot be addressed during the planning horizon
33 Wellesley	Although not a policy deficiency, Wellesley Ave is a designated red HPT Service corridor with just 60 minute service on Saturdays; current route segment from South Hill Park & Ride north to Spokane Community College does not justify 15 minute weekday frequency	Continue to consider opportunities to implement HPT strategies; reductions in frequency on low ridership segment of route between South Hill and Spokane Community College likely cannot be addressed during the planning horizon
44 29th Ave	Although not a policy deficiency, 29 th Ave and Regal St are designated green HPT Service corridors with just 60 minute service on Saturdays and Sunday/holidays; no service on Bernard St nights and weekends	Continue to consider opportunities to implement HPT strategies; increased service on Bernard St likely cannot be addressed during the planning horizon

See the 2011 Route Performance Report for recommended changes to underperforming routes that may be subject to changes which may not be listed above.

Changes Subsequent to the Last Approved Plan

The service reductions in 2010 and 2011 were required in order to bring the level of service in alignment with the severe revenue shortfall caused by the economic recession. A third planned reduction was to take place in 2012. This was deferred by the board until 2013. Now, the third service reduction is no longer inevitable due to higher than expected sales tax revenues, savings in employee benefit plans, and more funding from grants.

Ridership was expected to decline by 5-7% as a result of the service reductions. However, STA is not experiencing the anticipated drop in ridership. This is partially due to growth in EWU ridership and rising gas prices. Although it is too early to come to a definite conclusion that the positive ridership trend will be sustained, STA is in a much better position than anticipated.

The September 2011 Service Change modified all fixed routes in STA's system. The general conclusion is that the strategy of surgically cutting non-performing routes and route segments while sustaining and reinforcing productive routes achieved the goal to minimize the service reduction's adverse impact on our community. Below is a table summarizing the changes subsequent to the last approved plan.

Route	2011 SIP Existing Conditions	Status
1 Plaza/Arena Shuttle	There is currently no evening, Saturday, and Sunday/holiday service	The main demand generator is the Arena parking lot during weekdays only. Removed from 2012 list.
2 Southside Medical Shuttle	There is currently no evening, Saturday, and Sunday/holiday service	Solved in the 2011 Service Implementation Plan. Removed from 2012 list.
21 West Broadway	The West Central neighborhood lacks direct trip connectivity to area activity centers north of the neighborhood	Continue as existing condition for 2012 SIP.
23 Maple/Ash	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weekday 60 minute mid-day headway violates maximum base headway of 30 minutes for Basic Urban service 2. There is currently no weekday night and Sunday/holiday service 3. Mid-day and weekends, the route does not travel to the Indian Trail weekday peak terminal 	Solved #2 Sunday and evening service in the 2011 Service Implementation Plan; Continue other issues # 1 and # 3 as existing conditions.

Route	2011 SIP Existing Conditions	Status
24 Monroe	Although not a policy deficiency, Monroe St is a designated green HPT Service corridor with just 60 minute service on Sunday/holidays; interlined with routes 26 and 28	Continue as existing condition for 2012 SIP.
26 Addison	Route does not operate to the end of the line on Saturday nights and Sunday/holidays thereby violating the Basic System Hours of Service to the route terminal in the Northpointe Shopping Center area, a key activity center	Continue as existing condition for 2012 SIP.
28 Nevada	Route does not operate to the end of the line on Saturday nights and Sunday/holidays thereby violating the Basic System Hours of Service to the route terminal in the Whitworth University/Northpointe Shopping Center area, a key activity center	Continue as existing condition for 2012 SIP.
33 Wellesley	Although not a policy deficiency, Wellesley Ave is a designated red HPT Service corridor with just 60 minute service on Saturdays; current route segment from South Hill Park & Ride north to Spokane Community College does not justify 15 minute weekday frequency	Continue as existing condition for 2012 SIP.
41 Latah	Current select trips only service violates maximum headway of 30 minutes for Basic Urban service and fails all three route performance standards	Solved in the 2011 Service Implementation Plan as route was discontinued. Removed from 2012 list.
44 29th Ave	Although not a policy deficiency, 29 th Ave and Regal St are designated green HPT Service corridors with just 60 minute service on Saturdays and Sunday/holidays	Continue as existing condition for 2012 SIP.
46 Altamont	Current peak and base headway violates maximum headway of 30 minutes for Basic Urban service; fails all three route performance standards	Solved in the 2011 Service Implementation Plan as route was discontinued. Removed from 2012 list.

Route	2011 SIP Existing Conditions	Status
62 Medical Lake Hospitals	Current peak and base headway exceeds maximum headway of 60 minutes for Basic Interurban service	This is a board endorsed exception to the policy headway. Removed from 2012 list.
66 EWU	Route does not operate weekday nights thereby violating the Basic System Hours of Service and does not operate on weekends	Solved in the 2011 Service Implementation Plan. Removed from 2012 list.
67 Medical Lake/Geiger	Current peak and base headway violates maximum headway of 60 minutes for Basic Interurban service	Solved in the 2011 Service Implementation Plan as route was discontinued. Removed from 2012 list.
91 Mission	Current 60 minute peak and base headway violates maximum base headway of 30 minutes for Basic Urban service	Solved in the 2011 Service Implementation Plan. Route was renumbered to #39. Removed from 2012 list.
96 Millwood	There is currently no Sunday/holiday service	Solved in the 2011 Service Implementation Plan. Removed from 2012 list.

Programming of Major Service Improvements and Revisions

The table below represents the possible changes that could take place over the next few years. It is not designed to be a final list in order of importance, but to show the public and Spokane Transit's Board of Directors the potential conceptual service changes that current riders could expect or mobility improvements that Spokane Transit strives to implement. Some changes may not be possible due to current financial constraints; however, savings will be explored through the reconfiguration of interlines and through frequency reductions on corridors where ridership does not justify the current frequency. It should be noted that the proposals contained in these tables could be influenced by customer requests and/or safety related requirements not listed in the previous Existing Conditions section.

2012	Description of Service Changes
September	Re-assess Cheney service with the goal to utilize one coach on Route 68 on weekdays; Route 2 routing change based on Wall St changes; Route 94 routing change based on relocation of end of the line layover; Route adjustments based on results of Route

2013	Description of Service Changes
January	Minor routing and schedule adjustments as needed
May	Minor routing and schedule adjustments as needed
September	Schedule adjustments based on a network connections analysis that will evaluate route schedules, passenger demands and transfer wait times for connections throughout the fixed-route system; Improve northside connectivity on Wellesley on Saturdays

2014	Description of Service Changes
January	Minor routing and schedule adjustments as needed
May	Minor routing and schedule adjustments as needed
September	Begin to implement HPT Network (based on future funding)

Adjustments for Ridership Growth

High gas prices can best be described as a catalyst that encourages the public to consider other transportation choices. The increase in gas prices from 2005 to 2008 paralleled a 45% increase in STA Fixed-Route ridership. To plan for current spikes in gas prices, STA will strive to work with area employers and higher education institutions regarding staggered shift times and class times in order to take pressure off the peak demand periods of the day. This also includes evaluating how current overload tripper buses are being used to make sure resources are effectively deployed. Furthermore, passenger load standards will be adopted to adjust for further ridership growth, discussed in further detail below.

Ideally, a seat should be available for every STA passenger during all periods of operation. However, this is not always possible because of funding constraints or limited vehicle or driver availability. From the passenger’s perspective, passenger loads reflect the comfort level of the on-board vehicle portion of a transit trip. The purpose of load guidelines is to ensure that most passengers will have a seat for at least the majority of their trip.

Load standards are thresholds of the ratio of passengers on board to seats available. Historically, STA's standards have been categorized based on Local Service and Express Commuter service with the most recent standard being 150% of seating capacity during weekday peak/off-peak and 110% of seating capacity at all times for Express Commuter service. For example, a bus that has 40 seats would have no more than 20 standees for a total of 60 passengers.

Today, depending on the type of bus, STA will attempt to address any load where passenger loads exceed 150% of seating capacity or the legal weight limit of the bus during all periods of the day for local service. This translates into 20 standees for a total of 60 passengers. For Express Commuter service, STA will attempt to address any load where passenger loads exceed 125% of seating capacity. It would be lower compared to local service due to high speed travel on I-90. This translates into 10 standees on a 40-foot coach and 16 standing on a 60-foot articulated coach. Load standards will be addressed periodically as the economic outlook improves and more funding resources become available.