

Spokane Transit Authority
1230 West Boone Avenue
Spokane, Washington 99201-2686
(509) 325-6000

OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE

Draft Minutes of the November 4, 2009, Meeting
Northside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Richard Munson, City of Spokane Valley*
Nancy McLaughlin, City of Spokane
Mike Brewer, Citizen
Ann Campeau, Citizen
Rick Jacks, Citizen
David Driscoll, Citizen
Andrew Rolwes, Citizen
Barbara Richardson, Citizen
Nancy Kelly, Citizen
Jim Fitzgerald, ATU 1015
Phil Ridenour, AFSCME 3939

STAFF PRESENT

Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Jim Plaster, Director of Finance and Administration
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning
Molly Myers, Manager, Communications
Don Reimer, Manager, Maintenance & Facilities
Frank Bezemer, Assistant Transportation Manager

GUESTS

None

MEMBERS ABSENT

Dan Murphy, Citizen
Mitch Bright, ATU 1598

*Chair

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Munson called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

2. **INTRODUCTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

Introductions were made. There was no correspondence requiring the Committee's attention.

3. **MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 7, 2009, COMMITTEE MEETING – CORRECTIONS OR APPROVAL**

Mr. Fitzgerald moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

4. **PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**

None.

5. **AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR HOSES AND FITTINGS SERVICE – DISCUSSION**

Mr. Blaska explained that the current contract for hoses and fittings service will expire on December 31, 2009. A request for proposals (RFP) was released to obtain competitive pricing and quality products, and three proposals were received from responsible bidders. Evaluation of the proposals was based on the following criteria: contract cost, qualifications and experience, ability to meet specifications, references, and compliance to RFP requirements. The evaluation committee recommended Spokane House of Hose be awarded a contract to provide these services.

Mr. Fitzgerald moved to recommend the Board award a contract to Spokane House of Hose to provide hose and fitting supplies and services to Spokane Transit, effective January 1, 2010. Price adjustments for years four and five will be tied to the percentage of change in the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U.S. City Average. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

6. **AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR FASTENERS AND FITTINGS SERVICE – DISCUSSION**

Mr. Blaska said the current contract for fasteners and fittings service will expire on December 31, 2009, and while researching vendors for this service, staff learned that these services are available through the Washington State Cooperative Purchasing Contract. Staff conducted price comparison evaluations on the most commonly used fasteners and fittings and found that pricing off the state contract offered an estimated savings of 23%.

Ms. McLaughlin arrived at 1:37 p.m.

Mr. Fitzgerald moved to recommend the Board provide authority for STA's CEO to enter into contract with Fastenal through the Washington State Cooperative Purchasing Contract to supply fastener and fitting products and services to STA effective January 1, 2010. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

7. EMERGENCY SNOW PLAN – INFORMATION

Mr. Blaska explained that normally staff presents all discussion items first, then the informational items; however, because of the detailed level of discussion anticipated for Mr. Otterstrom's presentation, Mr. Blaska asked the Committee to allow him to present this informational piece first. There was no objection.

Mr. Blaska said that following last year's record snowfall, staff has prepared a booklet for distribution to riders, the media, and for posting on the website, which details STA's plan for providing service in extreme weather conditions when detours may be necessary. He credited Assistant Transportation Manager Frank Bezemer with being the lead architect in compiling the snow detour routes.

Mr. Blaska noted that communication of the plan is the biggest challenge, and the idea is to keep it simple. In the past, STA has tried to institute detours as different portions of routes were closed down, but that becomes confusing and is difficult to communicate to riders. Planning for standing detours makes it easier for riders to understand when and where the bus will be traveling during extreme conditions. In some instances, if roadways become impassible, discontinuing service on certain routes may be the only option. Staff has met with representatives of local jurisdictions to determine snow clearing priorities and identify any problem areas. In some instances, STA will perform minor snow removal operations in a few select areas within the City of Spokane where snow must be removed so riders can access the buses.

Mr. Blaska commented that key issues also being addressed include 1) phone capacity, steering people to STA's website, communicating with the media, and new capabilities such as RSS, Twitter, and Social Media; 2) using chains on vehicles, or not; and 3) the challenge of providing service to the downtown core during extreme conditions which affect operations at The Plaza.

Mr. Blaska reviewed internal procedures to be used including dispatch augmentation, Plaza operations, phone messages, Paratransit notifications, support from Geiger (using work crews to help clear snow from bus stops), and making sure vehicles have the best tires available for weather conditions.

He added that the Snow Plan booklet will be published and disseminated to riders and the media very soon.

Mr. Munson asked if there were any questions. None were forthcoming.

8. APPROVAL OF SCOPE OF WORK FOR DOWNTOWN TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS – DISCUSSION

Mr. Otterstrom referred the group to the Scope of Work for Downtown Transit Alternatives Analysis, which was included with the Committee packet. He said that staff is soliciting proposals from qualified consultants to assist with the development of a High Performance Alternatives Analysis and a subsequent locally preferred alternative for the purpose of implementing high performance transit for downtown Spokane and adjoining neighborhoods, subject to funding opportunities. \$367.5 is available for this effort, which includes a federal appropriation of \$294K (80%), and a state appropriation assigned to STA by the City of Spokane which will comprise the local 20% match. STA will provide staff time, but no local revenues, toward the proposed consultant contract.

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the project organization which will consist of a project Executive Team (STA CEO and the Mayor of Spokane), core stakeholders (including the Downtown Spokane Partnership, Washington State University, Avista Corporation, the Public Facilities District, the City of Spokane, and the Spokane Regional Transportation Council), a project manager (STA's Planning Director), a Technical Advisory Group (comprised of a technical staff of core stakeholder agencies and organizations), and a Sounding Board (including a broad range of interest groups and stakeholders) which is yet to be organized.

Steps necessary to achieve the desired outcome include: identify the purpose and needs, alternatives development, public involvement, alternatives assessment, develop a locally preferred alternative, perform environmental assessment, develop a funding strategy, and identify the next steps.

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the timeline from approval of the Scope of Work to the proposed Award of Contract by the STA Board of Directors.

Mr. Munson asked if this was on the Board agenda for their next meeting. Mr. Blaska explained that the Committee has the authority to release a scope of work as part of a request for proposals, and that this would not come before the Board until there is a request to award a contract. He added that this could be presented to the Board as an informational item, if the Committee so desires. Mr. Munson said he felt it was important that the Board be prepared to discuss this when it comes before them as an award of contract.

Mr. Jacks moved to approve the Scope of Work for the Downtown Transit Alternatives Analysis as part of a Request for Proposals. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

9. DRAFT FIXED ROUTE SERVICE DESIGN GUIDANCE: PRINCIPLES, POLICIES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS – DISCUSSION

Mr. Otterstrom explained that the presentation objectives include review and discussion of service design policies P-1.0 through P-5.0, and consideration of implications of proposed Performance Standard No. 1. He reviewed the timeline covering discussion by the Committee through incorporation into the Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation for full Board review and discussion.

Mr. Otterstrom reiterated that 1) the Principles are unchanging, broad in scope, and they shape Policies and Performance Standards; the Policies may change, they are more specific, and they are shaped by Principles; the Performance Standards adjust with changes in the system over time, ensure service is effective and sustainable, and they are shaped by Principles and Policies.

He reviewed the Service Types definitions:

- HTPN – full time, high-frequency service with improved passenger amenities
- Basic Fixed Route – service intended to be sufficient enough to meet basic demand
- Commuter Peak Route – service focused on premium/express service on weekday periods that are considered peak for the destination
- Basic in Transition – service consists of basic routes that coincide with HPTN corridors and may be routes where improvements are made incrementally

Existing Service Types include: 1) Local (urban/suburban); 2) Intercity; and 3) Commuter. Proposed Service Types include the aforementioned: HPTN, Basic, Commuter Peak, and Basic in Transition. Mr. Otterstrom said the purpose is to incorporate HPTN and structure other service types on travel patterns served rather than geography served.

Mr. Blaska said it is important to step back and agree on what the service should look like and where STA is headed. This design provides a framework for service improvements in the future despite constrained resources. He added that these policies are important so staff has a blueprint to take necessary actions to ensure the community is served efficiently and effectively in the future.

Mr. Otterstrom said there is an existing standard that 90% of urban riders live within ¼ mile of bus routes and rural riders live within ½ mile of bus routes. The proposed standard would allow 85% of urban riders to live within ½ mile of bus routes, with increased frequency of service. Mr. Otterstrom added that providing ¼-mile service to urban riders cannot be done given STA's current resources, and he noted that 92.6% of the Public Transportation Benefit Area population residing in urbanized areas or urban clusters lives within ½ mile of basic service. Discussion ensued. There was concern among Committee members that the previous standards may not be relevant to the current planning and may inaccurately communicate that the new service will not be as comprehensive.

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed Service Type Allocation, noting that the purpose is to ensure that STA maintains a balanced network by service type which proposes Commuter Peak at ≤ 15%, HPTN at ≤ 50%, and Basic service at ≥ 35%. He said the proposed Geographic Allocation includes one commuter peak route per travel shed, and an HPTN corridor in each travel shed within ten years of the first corridor. The purpose is to eliminate arbitrary policy and replace it with measurable policy. No Service Partnerships currently exist; however, under the proposed Service Design, they would be permitted, providing a way could be found to balance STA's resources and costs with partnership needs. Partnership reimbursement requirements would depend on three factors: operational costs, capital requirements, and farebox recovery.

Mr. Driscoll left the meeting at 2:46 p.m.

Mr. Munson expressed concern about flexibility of the proposed Service Design and what the real costs would be. The cost of a service partnership may be a disincentive to developers. He said it was important to talk to the business community to get their input. Further discussion ensued. Mr. Blaska commented that this service architecture is meant to facilitate growth and mobility in the community, and it was important to communicate that service partnerships is an alternative to make exceptions to the normal service allocation. Mr. Jacks said that it is important that STA formulate a service design policy that hold us to this responsibility regarding Service Partnerships.

Ms. Kelly left the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Otterstrom explained that Service Span is the extent of each day in which the basic system is in operation and he reviewed the proposed changes to the current span. He said the purpose of the proposed design is to define service span based on service type and to ensure service is available to more users. Mr. Brewer expressed concern for those individuals who have shift work schedules, and felt STA should provide some type of service for those

individuals. Mr. Otterstrom responded that with the proposed service span, HPTN service on major routes would run until 1:00 a.m. on weekdays and weekends.

Mr. Otterstrom explained that Headway is the time between two vehicles passing the same point traveling in the same direction on a transit route. Under the proposed Service Design, headway times would depend on service type, span, and time of day to ensure that specific service types meet a usable standard for riders.

Mr. Fitzgerald left the meeting at 3:11 p.m.

Mr. Otterstrom said each service type has average, minimum, and maximum stop spacing. He reviewed the proposed stop spacing and said that the purpose of the proposed design is to determine the access to each service type and provide clearer standards.

In the interest of time, Mr. Munson said that this would be a good place to stop in the presentation. Staff could pick up from this point and cover Performance Standards at the next Committee meeting. There was no objection.

10. CEO REPORT – INFORMATION

None.

11. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- a. Third Quarter 2009 Performance Measures – as presented.
- b. 2009 Operating Indicators Through Third Quarter – as presented.
- c. September 2009 Operating Indicators – as presented.
- d. Community Outreach and Involvement – as presented.
- e. STA Holiday Service and Office Hours – as presented.

12. OLD OR NEW BUSINESS

- a. Ms. McLaughlin said the City Council did pass, by close margin, the bus bench contract. She said they wished the request for proposals had included a provision for bus shelters and not just bus benches, and another request for proposals is expected to be forthcoming for bus shelters. Mr. Blaska commented that unlike benches, shelters are considered a transit amenity, and more dialogue was needed regarding their purchase and future maintenance.

13. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

None.

14. NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2009, 1:30 P.M., SOUTHSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM, 1230 WEST BOONE AVENUE

Mr. Munson suggested that it would be nice to have some Christmas goodies at the next meeting.

15. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Chairman Munson adjourned the meeting at 3:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Van Dort, Executive Assistant