

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

OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE

Draft Minutes of the May 5, 2010, Meeting
Northside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Amber Waldref, City of Spokane *
Gary Schimmels, City of Spokane Valley
Ann Campeau, Citizen
David Driscoll, Citizen
Nan Kelly, Citizen
Barbara Richardson, Citizen
Andrew Rolwes, Citizen
Tim Dompier, ATU 1015
Phil Ridenour, AFSCME 3939

MEMBERS ABSENT

Patrick Rushing, City of Airway Heights
Wendy Van Orman, City of Liberty Lake
Rick Jacks, Citizen
Mike Brewer, Citizen
Dan Murphy, Citizen
Dennis Tonhofer, ATU 1598

* Chair

STAFF PRESENT

E. Susan Meyer, CEO
Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Jim Plaster, Director of Finance and Administration
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning
Molly Myers, Manager, Communications
Andrew Overhauser, Superintendent of Transportation
Jacque Tjards, Manager, Purchasing
Mark Curtis, Manager, Customer Service
Anne Irmer, Supervisor, Rideshare
Joel Soden, Transit Planner II

GUESTS

None

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Waldref called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

3. MINUTES OF THE APRIL 7, 2010, COMMITTEE MEETING – CORRECTIONS OR APPROVAL

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

4. PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS

None.

5. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR TEN 12-PASSENGER EXPANSION VANPOOL VEHICLES - ACTION REQUESTED

Mr. Blaska explained that ten additional/expansion vanpool vans are budgeted for purchase in 2010. This would increase the fleet from 107 to 117 vans. There is a funding and contract opportunity to purchase these vans through the Washington State General Administration Contract. Funding will come from a grant from the Washington State Department of Transportation. STA has exceeded the required local 25% match with the purchase of replacement vans in 2009. Mr. Blaska noted that the grant award was received at the end of March, but there wasn't enough time to meet the guaranteed deadline of the manufacture date for this year. Because of the economy and other factors, there may still be an opportunity to order by May 21st for delivery this year if the Board approves the purchase. However, if this is not possible, the vans will still be ordered for delivery in 2011. Staff wants to continue this expansion program to ensure vans are available when requested.

Mr. Ridenour asked if the vans are accessible for individuals using wheelchairs. Mr. Blaska responded that these vans are not equipped that way, but STA does have retired paratransit vehicles available for this program, should need arise.

Mr. Rolwes moved to recommend the Board approve the purchase of ten (10) additional 12-passenger vans for a total cost of \$258,050 utilizing the State of Washington General Administration Contract. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

6. APPROVAL OF SCOPE OF WORK FOR OPERATORS, PARATRANSIT DISPATCHERS, CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES, AND SUPERVISORS' UNIFORMS - ACTION REQUESTED

Mr. Blaska said that the current contract will expire on September 30, 2010. An employee committee reviewed the requirements and recommended a few minor changes to the materials and sizing of some items for the new contract, but the basic color and style remains constant. In addition, Customer Service uniforms will now be included in the contract. Staff is seeking to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) and asks for a Committee member to assist with the RFP evaluation process.

Mr. Schimmels moved to approve the specifications for Operators, Dispatchers, Customer Service Representatives, and Supervisory personnel uniforms and authorize staff to release a Request for Proposals. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Mr. Ridenour and Mr. Brewer (in absentia) volunteered to assist with the evaluation process.

7. PRELIMINARY HIGH PERFORMANCE TRANSIT NETWORK (HPTN) PROPOSAL - INFORMATION

Mr. Otterstrom explained that the HPTN is a critical element of STA's Comprehensive Plan. Staff presented three HPTN scenarios for analysis to the Board last year. The Spokane Regional Transportation Council's (SRTC) model was found to be deficient in determining transit mode choice and trip assignments. GSI analysis was used as an alternative tool to the SRTC model. Planners and engineers from the Washington State Department of Transportation, SRTC, Spokane County, the City of Liberty Lake, the City of Airway Heights, the City of Spokane, the City of Spokane Valley, the City of Cheney, and the City of Millwood reviewed data to ensure jurisdictional coordination and address technical concerns.

Ms. Kelly arrived at 1:51 p.m.

Mr. Otterstrom said that understanding fixed route service types is essential for understanding the connection between today and the future. Service types include:

- a. Basic Service - full time bus service sufficient to meet existing transit demand;
- b. Commuter Peak - limited-stop/express service to major employment and education centers during peak periods of travel;
- c. High Performance Transit - All-day, two-way premium service with improved performance for users above conventional bus service; and
- d. Basic Service "in transition" - Basic service with higher levels of frequency than is minimally required to support future High Performance Transit service.

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the three major types of HPT service and explained that HPT is a continuum of service types and modes. The preliminary proposal is based on local comprehensive plans and multiple rounds of technical analysis and input. It provides a framework for decision making on service reductions and investments and is integral to communicating the application of the draft Comprehensive Plan. He reviewed in detail a map indicating proposed HPT service and gave an overview of the Plan timeline. Request for Plan adoption is anticipated at the July Board meeting.

8. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - POLICY REVIEW – INFORMATION

Mr. Otterstrom explained at the start of the meeting that this item was pulled from the agenda and would be covered at the June 2, 2010, meeting.

9. SEPTEMBER 2010 SERVICE CHANGES: DRAFT RECOMMENDATION - INFORMATION

Mr. Otterstrom said that the 2010 Budget assumed a 2% reduction in fixed route service followed by additional cuts in 2011 and 2012. An updated report on the proposed service changes was distributed to the Committee members with their packets. Modifications to the original proposal were based on staff analysis and public input. Public outreach yielded 393 online survey responses, 15 surveys mailed in to STA, and 269 comments were received at the display located on the 2nd floor of The Plaza. Meetings were held with the Chief Garry and Minnehaha neighborhood councils, and also with the City of Cheney, Eastern Washington University, Washington State University Riverpoint Campus, Spokane Community College, and Spokane Neighborhood Action Program (SNAP) housing representatives.

In the updated draft proposal, nine route recommendations are the same as the preliminary proposal (Routes 2, 20, 33, 23, 25, 47, 44, and 74); three recommendations are modified from the preliminary proposal (Routes 27, 29, and 91), three recommendations are withdrawn or deferred (Routes 21, 65, and 66), and approximately 12, 180 annual

hours of savings are proposed. It is estimated that up to seventeen Paratransit van riders may lose service when these changes are implemented. Discussion ensued regarding the effect of sales tax revenues on the amount of service that can be provided.

There will be a Public Hearing at the May Board meeting, and final recommendations will be submitted to the Operations & Customer Service Committee in June for a recommendation for the Board's consideration. If the Board approves these recommendations, changes and reductions will go into effect in September 2010 and realignment of the Paratransit boundary will take effect in March 2011.

10. SEPTEMBER 2010 PERFORMANCE MEASURES - RESULTS - INFORMATION

Mr. Blaska said he would highlight only selected Performance Measures but would answer any questions on others he was not covering [which were distributed with the Committee packets]. Fixed Route ridership remains close to 2009 figures, and we may meet our goal for 2010 of sustaining our record 2008 and 2009 ridership levels. Nationally, ridership is down approximately 5%, so these numbers are very good for STA. Paratransit ridership is up 4.1% year to date, and virtually all of this growth is attributed to the Special Use van program. Rideshare ridership is down 11.9% year to date, but more vanpool groups are anticipated and staff hopes to meet its goal of 21% growth by year end 2010. Mr. Blaska noted that Ms. Irmer has secured over \$2M in vanpool grants/assets over the past few years.

Fixed Route Cost per Revenue Hour is approximately 84.9% of the Washington State Average for Urban Systems at \$104.40, which is below our objective of no more than 94% of the statewide average. Paratransit Cost per Revenue Hour is the lowest in the state at \$67.44 and is 80.7% of the Urban Average. For Rideshare, the goal is to recover 109% of Operating/Administrative costs; recovery at this time is approximately 93%. As more vans are placed in service, this number will improve.

Fixed Route Passengers per Revenue Hour is at 27.4, which exceeds the Washington State Average for Urban Systems (26.81) and the goal that was set of 22 passengers per revenue hour. Paratransit Passengers per Revenue Hour is 2.93, which exceeds the Urban Average (2.42) and is very close to meeting the goal of 3 passengers per revenue hour.

Cost per Passenger for Fixed Route is the lowest in the state at \$3.81, which is 80.8% of the Urban Average of 4.72 and meets the goal of no more than 94% of the statewide average. Paratransit Cost per Passenger is 22.40, which is 63.8% of the Urban Average and also the lowest cost in the state.

Mr. Blaska briefly reviewed the new method of reporting Call Center activity, noting that call volume has grown significantly, but with no increase in staffing, the call abandon rates are not meeting our objective. Paratransit Reservations rates are within our goal of 4% mainly because drivers have assisted.

With the new Quality Counts! Program, data collected indicates that Fixed Route and Paratransit drivers are exceeding the 4.5 goal set for professional and courteous interaction with the public. Additional efforts are being made to concentrate on Coach Operator ADA stop announcements and Van Operator introductions. Bus cleanliness has exceeded the goal of 90% for Fixed Route at 96.8%, and is near the goal at 85.7% for Paratransit vans. Staff continues to seek input from the public, so the rate of comments is increasing. In regard to Safety, we are below the standard of less than 2 accidents per 100K miles at 1.73 for Fixed Route. Preventable accidents is below the standard of less than 0.5 per 100K miles at 0.31. Paratransit accidents is slightly higher than the 2 per 100K miles goal at 2.44, mainly because Paratransit vans operate in parking lots, garages, and areas where there are overhead carports and there is more risk of coming into contact with external objects. Paratransit preventable accidents is below the standard of less than 1 per 100K miles at .21. Mr. Blaska added that it is difficult to compare accident rates to other properties because there are different measures used at different properties. However, recent comparative data with Denver RTD indicates our standards are good "reach" goals.

11. CEO REPORT – INFORMATION

- a. Ms. Meyer said the sales tax was up 0.5% for the distribution STA received in April, which reflected spending in February. It was down 10.5% the month before. The City experienced a 5.9% increase, but this was because certain jurisdictions received credits which otherwise masked negative numbers.
- b. Senator Murray has applied for an appropriation for STA of \$2.36M for paratransit vans. The full amount went into the appropriations budget and will go to a conference committee between the Senate and the House. The possibility exists that this amount may be reduced. However, the fact that the full amount was submitted is very encouraging. This will offset \$2M in local funding.

- c. STA transported approximately 10,000 round-trip Bloomsday riders on Fixed Route, which is about 20% of all the people who raced in the event. This is up 13% over 2009 ridership. Half of the riders originated their trip from the Valley Mall. Ms. Meyer credited Mr. Overhauser and the Fixed Route supervisors for their efforts toward this success. Paratransit carried approximately 600 riders, and Mr. Blaska said STA also offers service for those people who are unable to finish the race. Cheney service is also provided using Paratransit vans. Ms. Meyer also noted that Mr. Curtis and his Customer Service staff and volunteers were selling passes at the Convention Center non-stop. She said it was exciting and fun for everyone. The cost for providing the additional Bloomsday service was approximately \$60K, and staff hoped the Bloomsday organizers would recognize STA as a contributing sponsor to the event. Ms. Meyer added that with upcoming service reductions, discussions may be necessary regarding what level of service, if any, STA can provide to the event in 2010.

12. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- a. First Quarter 2010 Operating Indicators - as presented.
- b. First Quarter 2010 Safety & Loss Summary Report - as presented.
- c. March 2010 Operating Indicators - as presented.
- d. Community Outreach and Involvement – as presented.

13. OLD OR NEW BUSINESS

None.

14. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

None.

15. NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 2010, 1:30 P.M., SOUTHSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM,
1230 WEST BOONE AVENUE

16. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Waldref adjourned the meeting at 2:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Van Dort, Executive Assistant