

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

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the May 2, 2013, Meeting
Southside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Al French, Spokane County*
Shelly O'Quinn, Spokane County
Richard Schoen, City of Millwood
Amber Waldref, City of Spokane
E. Susan Meyer, CEO, Ex-Officio
Chuck Hafner, City of Spokane Valley (guest)

STAFF PRESENT

Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning
Lynda Warren, Director of Finance and Administration
Jessica Charlton, Project Manager
Molly Myers, Manager, Communications
Joel Soden, Transit Planner II

MEMBERS ABSENT

* Chair

GUESTS

Tom Arnold, Coffman Engineers
Bill Hockett, Critical Data, Inc.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair French called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m. Introductions were made.

2. PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS

None.

3. COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT

None.

4. COMMITTEE ACTION/DISCUSSION INFORMATION

A. MINUTES OF THE MARCH 7, 2013 COMMITTEE MEETING

Mr. Schoen moved to recommend approval of the March 7, 2013 Committee meeting minutes. Ms. Waldref seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

B. PLAZA INTERIOR RENOVATION ALTERNATIVES EVALUATION UPDATE

Mr. Otterstrom introduced the update to the Plaza evaluation for the space program that is underway. The project falls under the work program of the Planning & Development Committee. Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the phases of the project to date. Phase I of the project, Interior Concepts Development, is complete. Conceptual illustrations and space utilization layouts were created by ALSC Architects using existing conditions and current use, as well as incorporating elements from interviews conducted between ALSC and key Spokane Transit staff. Phase II, Market Assessment and Stakeholder Input, has been underway since the beginning of the year. Coffman Engineers, ALSC Architects and Critical Data, Inc. have been tasked with this portion of the work. Mr. Otterstrom introduced Mr. Bill Hockett, president of Critical Data, Inc., to present information on the analysis that has taken place building on the Board's previously recommended potentially highest and best uses for the Plaza.

Mr. Hockett presented an overview which addressed the research company's background and focused on the evaluation that is underway for the renovation of the Plaza. The scope of the study is meant to establish the highest and best use for the STA Plaza including: 1) financial return, 2) downtown Spokane business interests, 3) marketability, and 4) long-term project viability.

The evaluation is focusing on four areas of study: retail, food, office, and other. The retail, food and office areas of study were provided as guidance for the study by the Board of Directors in 2012. Critical Data requested to incorporate the "other" category in case there are other specialized uses that might be worth considering. The very preliminary information indicates that the food court and retail concepts would be very difficult for long-term success on the second floor. Second floor food court sales at the Spokane River Park Square Mall equate to approximately \$375.00 per square foot. The U.S. National average is \$341.00 per square foot. According to interviews with River Park Square management, retail on the upper levels of River Park Square is very difficult to fill. The two spaces between Gamestop and

Nordstrom have never been leased in the 14 years of River Park Square. Many vendors require street level space.

Data indicates that having a food court that serves as a successful destination is very much against the odds. Over half of new food service units fail in the first year and about two-thirds fail within two years (*National Restaurant Association*). Some national fast-food chains are leaving food courts for other locations outside of food courts. Food courts should be visible and highly accessible. Food courts placed in secondary positions have struggled.

Retailers and food people have said that there are four main site characteristics that are desired by the retailer (on the “must” list):

- High traffic volume
- Maximum street frontage, wide curb cuts, and safe access to traffic in both directions
- Parcel size, i.e. room for expansion
- Community population threshold and daytime population targeted

The next steps for review and considerations include:

- Ground floor food (if current tenants could be reconfigured to allow food on the first floor). The rotunda is likely the most valuable space in the building. One consideration is to add an exterior access door to the rotunda area. Would this addition attract vendors and customers and would the price per square foot increase?
- Office space – traditional and space for community or arts, municipal/government, education (can be wide-ranging), and tech/software.
- Other Potential Options – in order to be successful, a second floor space should be a destination of some sort. Ideas under consideration and analysis:
 - Family Entertainment (Aquarium, etc.)
 - Medical
 - Church
 - Specialized (Dave & Busters, etc.)

Critical Data will return and share its final recommendations for the first and second floor space program at the July 2013 Board meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding other opportunities, what is considered a “good fit” for the Plaza, and what sets Critical Data apart as a research company. Mr. Hockett said that there are many other ideas that have been considered but discarded because they do not offer long-term viability. Mr. French thanked Mr. Hockett for the detailed presentation.

C. STA MOVING FORWARD

1) PHASE II PROJECT EVALUATION RESULTS

STA Moving Forward is a planning process to identify specific projects that could be implemented to meet population and economic growth over the next 10-15 years. Mr. Otterstrom explained that the effort was initiated by the Planning and Development Committee in April 2012 and Phase II began in July 2012 following Board Resolution 697-12. The resolution included a list of 20 projects to evaluate and also identified public outreach efforts and a deadline for completing Phase II of the planning effort.

To date, technical work has been conducted throughout Phase II. STA Staff has met with technical staff at jurisdictions including: Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Spokane County, City of Spokane, Spokane Valley, Cheney, and Liberty Lake. On-call and project-specific consultants have provided assistance:

- JUB Engineers (Farwell Road Park and Ride; West Plains Transit Center)
- Coffman Engineers (Cheney HPT, multiple connection facilities)
- David Evans and Associates (Upriver Transit Center)
- CH2M Hill (Central City Line)

Phase II public outreach efforts have included:

- Presentations to city councils and board of county commissioners
- Fall 2012: Presentation to city councils and county commissioners on STA Moving Forward Phase II
- Twenty-four meetings with four Corridor Advisory Panels established by the Board of Directors
- Six public open houses
- Staffed information displays at the STA Plaza and EWU Kennedy Library
- Multiple news articles and media campaigns

The Planning & Development Committee has reviewed nearly all of the projects slated for review in Phase II of the effort.

September 2012 - West Plains Transit Center conceptual project

October 2012 - Moran Prairie Park and Ride / Terminal conceptual project

December 2012 - Farwell Park and Ride conceptual project

January 2013 - Basic Service Improvements conceptual project

February 2013 - Indian Trail Park & Ride, Argonne Road Park & Ride, Liberty Lake Park & Ride

March 2013 - HPT Corridors: Central City Line, Valley (Spokane Airport to Coeur d'Alene, East Sprague to Spokane Valley and Liberty Lake, Liberty Lake to downtown Spokane via Spokane Valley)

Projects that have not yet been reviewed by the Committee include: Upriver Transit Center, Basic Routes Transitioning to HPT Service, and Other System Requirements. Vanpool and Paratransit are yet to be completed.

Upriver Transit Center

Mr. Otterstrom provided an update on the Upriver Transit Center evaluation. STA has conducted a siting analysis in conjunction with WSDOT, City of Spokane and SCC staff to discuss replacement and expansion of the existing transit facility at SCC and in consideration of the impact that the North Spokane Corridor (NSC) could have on displacement of the current facility. Mr. Otterstrom referred the Committee to a map of the SCC facility which was distributed in the presentation packet and in the STA Moving Forward Phase II report. Among the options presented on the map, option C (locating on the south side of the campus and north of Mission Avenue) is preferred because it allows for uncertainty in the timing of NSC and it accommodates potential extension of the Central City Line.

Chair French asked if STA has purchased the parcel identified as "D" on the map. Ms. Meyer responded that STA has not yet purchased this parcel but is "penciled in" for the acquisition of it from WSDOT. STA is working to incorporate this project as part of mitigation of NSC. The cost estimate for this project will be finalized in May.

Another component of the STA Moving Forward effort is looking at routes that were not included in the HPT corridor project because they did not rank high enough to merit full evaluation but do still have justification for more service. These are classified as "Basic Routes transitioning to HPT Service:"

- Hamilton/Nevada
- Wellesley
- Northwest Spokane
- South Perry
- Northeast Spokane toward Hillyard

Mr. Otterstrom then reviewed the opportunities identified for improvements to frequency and span.

- **3-A (Wellesley):** Improve frequency of service of Route 33 to every 30 minutes on nights and weekends

- **G5-A (Foothills-Cannon):** Improve frequency of Route 27 to every 15 minutes during weekdays. Consider splitting route north of Empire Avenue.
- **G6-A (Hamilton):** Discontinue existing loop for night and weekend service and improve Routes 26 and 28 to meet frequency and hours of service standards for Basic Routes
- **G4 (South Perry/Indian Trail):** Improve frequency of the segment of Route 45 between downtown Spokane and the South Hill Park and Ride to every 30 minutes on nights and weekends. Bring Route 23 into compliance with the Basic Service standards outlined in STA's Connect Spokane: A Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation.

The operating cost for all of the improvements indicated for transitioning Basic Routes to HPT would be \$2.5 million annually.

A future package for Other System Requirements would require:

- Fleet replacement schedule and budget for projected fleet requirements
- Maintenance facilities sized for the operation
 - May include facilities for new modes
- Sustaining existing service

Mr. Otterstrom explained that the cost of Other System Requirements will depend on the scale of the entire plan. The next Steps for the STA Moving Forward effort will include:

- Recommend further screening criteria HPT Corridor Options (next agenda item)
- May 16 Board Meeting:
 - Provide the full Phase II report to the STA Board
 - CAP representatives present on panel perspective of process, outcomes and next steps
 - Board action on HPT Corridor Options criteria
- July 10 Board Workshop
 - Board Guidance for Phase III – project prioritization and scenario development

2) HIGH PERFORMANCE TRANSIT CORRIDORS REPORT & SCREENING

High Performance Transit (HPT) corridors and options were presented to the Committee for discussion of potential screening criteria with the intent of forwarding these to the STA Board at the May 16, 2013 meeting. The following corridors and options were reviewed:

Corridor	Option	Notes
Central City Line	Modern Electric Trolley (MET)	Locally Preferred Alternative adopted by STA Board and City of Spokane (July 2011)
North Monroe – South Regal	A – Bus route improvements + park and ride	Could precede any HPT option (CMAQ Grant application pending)
	B – HPT using enhanced buses	CAP supported moving forward with this option if Option C was not yet feasible
	C – HPT using MET vehicle	CAP favored this option
Division	A – Bus route facility and service improvements	Could precede any HPT option (CMAQ grant pending)
	B – HPT in the outside lanes	
	C – HPT with MET in median of the corridor	CAP favored this option but supported incremental investments
	D – HPT using Rapid Streetcar	
Cheney	A – Bus route service improvements and transit center	Could precede HPT Option B (CMAQ grant pending)
	B – HPT and West Plains Transit Center	CAP favored this option
Valley	A – Bus route service improvements	Could precede any HPT option
	B – HPT with MET along Sprague to University Road	
	C – HPT with Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to Liberty Lake, HPT line to Coeur d'Alene on I-90 using an enhanced bus	No consensus from CAP yet reached on preferences
	D – HPT with Light Rail to Liberty Lake, HPT line to Coeur d'Alene on I-90 using an enhanced bus	

Preparation for Phase III will include narrowing the 14 corridor options down; the large number of options creates significant complexity:

- Costs vary and produces too many scenarios
- Political feasibility needs to be considered

Option A for each corridor can be considered “basic improvements” since it precedes full HPT implementation and is therefore exempt from the screening process

The Committee was asked to review and consider proposed criterion to limit the number of HPT implementation options that may be incorporated into implementation scenarios during STA Moving Forward Phase III:

Proposed Criterion # 1:

- An HPT project should have support from jurisdictions with land use planning responsibilities. To be considered for Phase III prioritization and scenario development, at least 50% of a project must be located in a jurisdiction which officially endorses continued study of the project; and indicates that current land use plans are supportive of the particular HPT Option or expresses a commitment to modify land use plans to be supportive of the HPT Option should the project be selected for implementation.
- This endorsement and demonstration of land use planning support should be provided through a legislative action and should be received no later than the July 10, 2013 STA Board Workshop.

Ms. O’Quinn asked if staff has presented to the each of the different councils. Ms. Meyer said that staff plans to visit each city council/jurisdiction after the Committee and Board gives guidance regarding narrowing the list. Mr. Otterstrom responded that staff would be happy to attend and present at council meetings at the invitation of a council member and could provide the tools to draft a resolution. Mr. Otterstrom said that the elected officials must be involved to make sure this effort is on a firm foundation.

There was discussion about population density and the feasibility of projects such as light rail given that the density expected in the next 10 – 15 years may not support it. Mr. Hafner suggested that staff should contact each council to be placed on their agendas. Mr. Otterstrom responded that ideally it should be an invitation from each council or jurisdiction and that staff is requesting Committee members to initiate the invitation. Ms. Waldref asked if any other routes are 50% within the City of Spokane or if the focus to address with the Spokane City Council is Division Street and Monroe to South Regal. Mr. Otterstrom responded that the Valley would also be important due to some of the alignments. Mr. Otterstrom said that he will provide a break-out of the percentages and miles at the May 16, 2013 Board meeting. Ms. Waldref said that she would try for an early June presentation to the Council. Ms. Waldref asked if there are any land use issues that will need to be addressed that are not already identified in the City’s comprehensive plan. Mr. Otterstrom replied that it will depend on the mode chosen. For instance, the east/west light rail corridor has land constraints. A jurisdiction can state its support of more than one option as long as it can also state that its land use plans are supportive of the favored options. Mr. Hafner suggested that staff meet with each city’s planning commission regarding which options would fit into the land use plans prior to making a formal presentation to the city councils. Ms. Meyer said this was good advice. Mr. French suggested that Mr. Otterstrom could create some visual images of the kind of development that would be needed to support each one of the alternatives to assist people in determining which options are feasible. Discussion ensued regarding whether the language in the proposed criteria #1 should be left a little flexible. Chair French stated that any kind of “commitment” would be subject to change each time a new official is elected. Ms. Waldref mentioned that it is good timing for the City of Spokane because it is updating its comprehensive plan in the next year and looking at land uses. Mr. Blaska referred the group back to the funnel concept and winnowing the list of projects. Mr. Blaska stated that this is not the last screening, it is a feasibility screen for acceptable risk. It is the opportunity to remove the projects that do not exhibit “acceptable risk” in order to create a strong package of projects and menu of feasible options. The next criteria screen will get to affordability and will be another opportunity to remove

projects that are not feasibly affordable. There was discussion about the unknown element of ballot measures and decision making for the future and the weight of project costs. Mr. Otterstrom explained that from a technical standpoint, and in order to have a firm foundation for phase III, it is important to be able to clearly state the projects that are not moving ahead. Ms. Meyer asked if STA staff should review the comprehensive plans and narrow the options prior to asking councils and commissions to further narrow the options. Mr. Schoen suggested that it could be helpful if options that would require modifications to a jurisdiction's comprehensive plan were identified and explained as to how the plan would need to change to support each option. Mr. Otterstrom asked if the Committee members thought their councils/commissions would want to have a voice in what stays on the list. The members agreed that they would. Ms. O'Quinn brought up the point that the Criteria #1 provides jurisdictions with some flexibility regarding project endorsement by stating that the endorsement is for "continued study of the project" and that if it came to light that the project was no longer relevant, due to costs or other significant issues, the endorsement could change. There was much discussion regarding the fact that by eliminating a project from the 10 – 15 year horizon because it is not feasible based upon criteria 1 and 2 does not mean that the project is eliminated forever. There was much discussion regarding how the information could be presented to make it easier for jurisdictions to narrow the projects. The ideal resolution would be a positive statement of the projects each jurisdiction feels comfortable with stating support for from a planning standpoint.

Mr. Otterstrom directed the attention of the Committee to proposed criterion #2:

- An HPT project should not unduly consume the latent financial capacity of Spokane Transit;
- Should provide reasonable assumptions of state and federal grant funding for the project;
- Should report the annual net operating cost requirement and capital costs (amortized over 20 years) less grant assumptions;
- Should provide a ranking of annualized costs at the June Planning and Development Committee meeting for review against this criterion.

Mr. Otterstrom stated that staff is requesting a consensus from the Committee to put the criteria before the Board for support at the May 16 Board meeting. There was no opposition to this request by the Planning & Development Committee members. Ms. Waldref asked that the language in Criterion # 1 be refined to include: "support for continued study of a project should be provided through legislative action."

D. TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN (TDP) – PRELIMINARY DRAFT

Due to lack of time, Chair French asked if there would be any objections to by-passing the TDP presentation and having Committee members review the TDP outside of the meeting. There were no objections.

5. CEO REPORT

Ms. Meyer congratulated Mr. Otterstrom and Ms. Myers for their enormous work and outstanding job on the STA Moving Forward effort. Ms. Meyer expressed appreciation for them and their teams for representing STA in the community. Ms. Meyer reported that the state transportation budget has not yet been signed by the governor but it has been passed by legislature. Ms. Meyer reported on the measures that are helping to reduce the loitering issue on Post Street. Ms. Waldref held a Council Connections forum that Ms. Meyer and Commander Brad Arleth participated in. Ms. Waldref said that paring Ms. Meyer with the police department gave them an opportunity to talk about changes and activities in Downtown. Ms. Meyer has been invited to present regarding the Plaza at the Downtown Spokane Partnership Board meeting in May. Ms. Meyer mentioned that STA has issued comment to the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) that has been submitted for the West Plains Casino project. The letter refers to errors in the FEIS regarding the calculations of the impact of the project on transit. The letter states that STA will require remuneration for the increased service that the project will require given increases in ridership. Next steps will be to discuss the issue further with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and come to an agreement for mitigation that is acceptable to the organization and, if that is not the case, the Board will contemplate an appeal.

6. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS
None.
7. REVIEW JUNE 6, 2013 COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA
As presented in the May 2, 2013 Committee packet.
8. NEXT MEETING – THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 2013, 12:00 P.M., STA SOUTHSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM, 1230 W BOONE AVENUE.
9. ADJOURN
Chair French adjourned the meeting at 1:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Angela Stephens, Executive Assistant