

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

PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the March 4, 2015, Meeting

Southside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Amber Waldref, City of Spokane *
Karen Stratton, City of Spokane
Patrick Rushing, City of Airway Heights
Rhonda Bowers, Labor Representative

MEMBERS ABSENT

E. Susan Meyer, CEO (Ex-officio)
Chuck Hafner, City of Spokane Valley

* Chair

STAFF PRESENT

Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning
Lynda Warren, Director of Finance and Information Svcs.
Beth Bousley, Director of Communications and Customer Svc.
Steve Doolittle, Director of Human Resources
Susan Millbank, Community Ombudsman &
Accessibility Officer
Merilee Robar, Exec. Assistant, Finance and Information Svcs.

GUESTS

None

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Waldref called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. Introductions were made. There was no correspondence requiring the Committee's attention.

2. **PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**

None.

3. **COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT**

None.

4. **COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

A. **MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 4, 2014, COMMITTEE MEETING**

Mr. Rushing moved to recommend approval of the February 4, 2014, Committee meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Stratton and passed unanimously.

5. **COMMITTEE ACTION**

A. **Board Consent Agenda**

(No items were presented this month.)

B. **Board Discussion Agenda**

(No items were presented this month.)

6. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

A. **PLAZA OPERATING TACTICS EVALUATION**

Mr. Blaska explained that the Plaza renovation project represents a significant enhancement to the functionality of that facility. Part of the community outreach for the project included recommendations from an Ad Hoc Committee led by the Downtown Spokane Partnership. The Ad Hoc Committee suggested five strategies and tactics related to facility operations and customer relations. Staff assessed the recommendations for the five strategies/tactics and Mr. Blaska provided feedback on each:

1. ***Conduct a courtesy campaign which communicates and encourages appropriate public behavior.***

An initiative is underway to update messaging on transit vehicles and expand the program to include facilities such as the Plaza. Messaging supporting the Rules of Conduct will be deployed on stanchions, signage, and electronic media.

Several of the techniques employed may serve as examples of how this campaign could be conducted community-wide in concert with other organizations. Staff is recommending continuing implementation of this initiative to encourage positive behavior of the general public in and around the Plaza. No Board action is requested for implementation.

2. *Investigate alternatives for queuing passengers who are preparing to board buses. The objective is to manage the sidewalk space in order to better accommodate both those individuals who are waiting for the bus and pedestrians passing by.*

The concept will be to establish a demarcation line away from the curb. Passengers waiting for a bus will be instructed to wait behind that line. This could achieve three purposes: it encourages passengers who choose to wait outside to gather under cover, closer to the Plaza; it creates a pathway between the curb and the demarcation line which is available for pedestrians passing through; it enables space for passengers to get off buses as they arrive.

The experiment will be conducted using temporary markings on the sidewalk, instructional signage, and a focused effort by Plaza staff and Security personnel to educate pedestrians and transit customers.

Measures of success include: whether there is an increase of pedestrian activity using the pathway that has been created; how well people respond to these voluntary control measures as they learn the rules; and an assessment that the new techniques do not impose any barriers to individuals with mobility challenges. Staff proposes starting this test is in early May. Board support for this experiment will be requested.

3. *Explore alternatives for individuals who are trespassed from STA services and the Plaza to have meaningful ways to mitigate their exclusions by doing constructive things rather than being excluded - similar to what the Community Court does.*

Mr. Blaska thanked Ms. Millbank for her input on this item. He said that the Plaza is the site of over 23,000 passenger boardings a day in addition to other uses by the general public. A full range of security measures are employed to provide a safe environment. Even if mitigation actions were desirable, Spokane Transit does not have the legal authority like Community Court does to impose alternative sanctions. Most people are verbally warned numerous times to control their behavior. But, when a person constantly refuses to follow the Rules of Conduct, the time comes when, for the sake of the people who are behaving civilly, STA must finally exclude the person for a longer length of time. As a public transportation service, it is beyond STA's expertise to know what actions or community services might be engaged that would entice changes in behavior for each of these individuals.

Staff recommends that STA sustains its current relationship with the Spokane Police Department and Community Court. No action is required from the Board at this time.

4. *Increase security presence at the Plaza.*

STA currently has ten limited-commission and nine contract security personnel on duty at the Plaza during weekdays. In addition, there is comprehensive video camera coverage. Mr. Blaska said that the last survey of Plaza users found that those who use the Plaza feel safe. A downtown-wide survey conducted by the Mayor's Task Force on Urban Environment resulted in similar feedback. It is the presence of obnoxious behavior, not illegal acts, that is most bothersome across downtown and at the Plaza. Increased visibility of security personnel may provide an additional deterrent to obnoxious behavior. This would be achieved with more security personnel assigned to the Plaza. Staff will determine an appropriate staff increase between contract security and limited commissioned officers in order to increase the visibility of a security presence. No Board action is requested at this time; resources will be reallocated within the overall budget to fund an increased security presence.

5. *Expand limited commission area to enable STA security to expand their area of coverage.*

To implement this tactic, provisions for the limited commissions and geographic authority of STA security personnel would need to be fundamentally changed. Their authority comes from the State RCW 9.91.025 - *Unlawful Transit Conduct*. To apply, the conduct must occur while on or in a transit vehicle or in or at a transit station. It is this concept that justifies the use of transit funding for security purposes.

SPD has granted STA security officers a limited commission to enforce some limited provisions of the Spokane Municipal Code. However, the limitation is these infractions must occur under the terms of the RCW. This constraint is why a layered security presence exists in order to provide seamless security in the downtown core. STA's expectation is that the security presence in other parts of the downtown core is the jurisdiction of the SPD and DSP Security Ambassadors. Spokane Transit contributes to both of those efforts.

Mr. Blaska noted that STA began providing funds for an SPD officer in the downtown core in 2006. STA also provides seven parking spaces in the Plaza at no expense to the City or SPD. STA is

assessed a fee as a member of the Business Improvement District. Due to STA's own security and maintenance efforts, those services are not required on STA property, enabling those resources to be allocated in other locations. Staff does not recommend extending STA security authority beyond those areas defined by the RCW. No Board action is requested at this time.

B. FIXED ROUTE SYSTEM RIDERSHIP ANALYSIS – 2014 YEAR END SUMMARY

Mr. Blaska said that at 11,324,434 trips, 2014 represented the highest ridership year in STA history. This is a continuation of three consecutive years of ridership growth. In 2012, ridership increased by 1.9% compared to 2011. STA sustained this positive trend in 2013 with an additional 0.5% ridership growth, which is especially impressive in light of the fact that ridership increased in spite of the 2010/2011 service reductions. These reductions were required in order to bring the level of service into alignment with the severe revenue shortfall caused by the economic recession.

STA's strategy has been to use pass programs and targeted outreach to encourage more ridership on existing service. Using this same strategy, a goal of another 0.5% increase in ridership was set for 2015. In 2014, users of the Universal Transit Access Pass (UTAP) accounted for 20% of all revenue trips. Current members of the UTAP program include Eastern Washington University; City of Spokane; Spokane County; Washington State University – Spokane; and the Community Colleges of Spokane (SCC and SFCC). Mr. Blaska noted that further expansion of UTAP relationships with other large employers and organizations is a huge opportunity for STA. He concluded by highlighting changes to individual route-by-route weekday ridership comparing 2013 and 2014.

C. YEAR END 2014 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Mr. Blaska explained that ridership for both Fixed Route and Paratransit achieved their respective goals for 2014 (1% growth for Fixed Route and sustaining current service for Paratransit). Fixed Route's achieved a 2.1% growth which resulted in over 11.3 million rides – attributable to the success of the Universal Pass Program.

Paratransit ridership has largely remained stable due to the continuing effectiveness of mobility training, personalized eligibility programs, and the van donation program. Paratransit ridership in 2014 was 1.6% lower than in 2013 (475,169 vs. 483,038).

Vanpool failed to meet its 2014 objective (a 9% increase over 2013). The program ended 2014 with 2.1% growth (246,331 trips vs. 241,257 in 2013). The vanpool market is very dynamic and the number of new vanpool groups continues to outpace those that disband. The current marketing effort and incentive program enhance this positive relationship. These efforts will continue as a goal to achieve 7% growth was set for 2015. The company-wide average exceeded the goal of a 4.5 average (on a 5 point scale) from customer observations in our Quality Counts! survey program. At 99.4%, Fixed Route exceeded our goal of 95% of surveyed trips running on time. Paratransit was at 93.71%; these checks represent automated vehicle location information compiled for every trip.

Mr. Blaska said that both Fixed Route and Paratransit far surpassed the goal of keeping cost per passenger at least 95% of the average cost of the urban systems in Washington State. Fixed Route cost per passenger was \$4.02 in 2014 (68.9% of the urban systems' average). STA's cost per passenger increased just \$0.02 or 0.6% over 2013. Paratransit cost per passenger was \$26.40 (58.8% of the urban systems' average).

At 0.08, Fixed Route was slightly above the standard of 0.07 preventable accidents per 10,000 miles. In 2014, we began counting all accidents, even if there is no damage involved. This helped raise our rate as 19 of the 48 preventable accidents had "no damage." At 0.11, Paratransit was slightly above our standard of 0.10 preventable accidents per 10,000 miles.

D. YEAR END 2014 UNAUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT AND UPDATED FORECAST

Ms. Warren reviewed in detail the 2014 year-end financial results. Items highlighted included:

- Annual revenues exceeded budget by \$2.6 million. This reflects additional sales tax revenue of \$2.5 million above what was budgeted.
- Annual operating expenses were \$4.0 million below budget. Paratransit and Fixed Route combined for \$3.4 million of these savings.
- Due to the timing of projects, approximately \$11.1 million of the adopted capital budget remained unexpended in 2014. The majority of this was incorporated into the 2015 capital budget.

E. PROJECT UPDATE: MORAN PRAIRIE PARK & RIDE IMPLEMENTATION

Mr. Blaska explained that throughout the planning process for the High Performance Transit Network and subsequent Monroe-Regal corridor evaluation process, the need for a park and ride facility in the vicinity of 57th Ave. and Palouse Highway was identified as a near term high priority. This facility would serve the needs of increased ridership and demand for park and ride capacity, and also act as a needed layover facility for operators.

The site location study evaluated 33 sites, which were narrowed down to three which were more advantageous than the rest. Spokane County completed a traffic analysis for each site to ensure surrounding level of service standards were not significantly impacted and that access to each site was possible. A Phase I environmental site assessment was completed for each and no recognized environmental conditions were identified. A zoning and land development analysis was also completed to ensure the proposed use was allowed on each site. Staff is proposing to begin negotiations with the landowner of the highest ranking site. If those negotiations fail, staff proposes to begin negotiations with the second ranked site, and finally the third-ranked site.

Staff received a proposed scope of work from Coffman Engineers, Inc., for the first phase of the project (property acquisition) which includes all necessary surveys, exhibits, legal descriptions, appraisals, and coordination services required to meet all federal acquisition regulations. The consultant fee for this work is \$44,200. Estimated direct expenses and fees to be paid by STA (not included in the consultant fee) are approximately \$14,500. These fees would include costs for the title report, application fees, legal fees, taxes, closing/escrow services, etc. The total estimated cost for the acquisition process, excluding the cost of the property, is \$58,700, which is within CEO authorization.

7. CEO REPORT

A. In Ms. Meyer's absence, Ms. Millbank gave a brief Legislative update calling specific attention to ESSB 5990. This bill has passed the Senate. As it is currently written, it will exempt highway improvement projects that are administered by WSDOT from paying all sales tax including local sales tax.

8. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- A. January 2015 Financial Results Summary – *as presented.*
- B. February 2015 Sales Tax Revenue Information – *as presented.*
- C. 2014 State Audit – *as presented.*
- D. January 2014 Operating Indicators – *as presented.*
- E. Fourth Quarter 2014 Safety and Loss Summary – *as presented.*
- F. Year End Safety and Loss Summary – *as presented.*
- G. May 2015 Minor Service Change Update – *as presented.*
- H. Community Outreach and Involvement – *as presented.*
- I. STA Proposition 1 Public Education Update – *as presented.*

9. DRAFT APRIL 2015 COMMITTEE PACKET AGENDA REVIEW

Chair Waldref asked if there were any comments about the draft agenda for the next Committee meeting. None were forthcoming.

10. NEW BUSINESS

None.

11. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

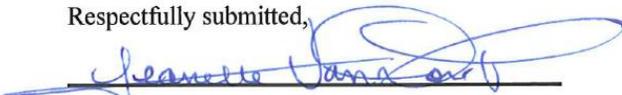
None.

12. ADJOURN

Chair Waldref adjourned the meeting at 3:22 p.m.

13. NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2015, 1:30 P.M., STA SOUTHSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM, 1230 WEST BOONE AVENUE

Respectfully submitted,



Jeanette Van Dort, Executive Assistant