

Spokane Transit Authority  
1230 West Boone Avenue  
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(509) 325-6000

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Draft Minutes of the April 14, 2010, Board Workshop  
Southside Conference Room, Spokane Transit  
1229 West Boone Avenue, Spokane, Washington

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Wendy Van Orman, City of Liberty Lake, Chair  
Patrick Rushing, City of Airway Heights  
Amber Waldref, City of Spokane  
Jon Snyder, City of Spokane  
Richard Rush, City of Spokane

### **STAFF PRESENT**

E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer  
Jim Plaster, Director of Finance & Administration  
Steve Blaska, Director of Operations  
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Bonnie Mager, Spokane County  
Mark Richard, Spokane County  
Dean Grafos, City of Spokane Valley  
Gary Schimmels, City of Spokane Valley

### **PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL**

Laura McAloon, K & L Gates LLP

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#### 1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Van Orman called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

#### 2. **HIGH PERFORMANCE TRANSIT NETWORK (HPTN) AND CRITERIA FOR SERVICE REDUCTIONS**

##### A. **High Performance Transit Network (HPTN)**

Mr. Otterstrom explained that the workshop will present a preliminary proposal for the HPT network and staff requests the Board's concurrence on this proposal as a basis for finalizing the Comprehensive Plan and concurrence on the criteria for a sustainable service plan and service restructures. He added that STA is at the point between decisions of the past and goals of the future. Planning for the HPTN establishes priorities for future investments and establishes a basis for preserving service in times of service reduction. Mr. Rush asked if a Comprehensive Plan is required by law. Mr. Otterstrom confirmed that it is. It will cover a period of twenty years and staff will ask the Board to adopt it in July following a public hearing. STA will bring the Comprehensive Plan to the Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) to be included in their Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Ms. McAloon said STA's plan must be consistent with other plans, such as those submitted by cities and the County. SRTC will evaluate all the plans. Ms. Meyer said SRTC is evaluated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). When last reviewed it was determined that the Metropolitan Transportation Plan should include a transit element.

Major types of fixed route service include:

- Basic service (full time bus service that meets existing demand)
- Commuter Peak (express service to major employment/education centers during peak times)
- High Performance Transit (all day improved service above conventional bus service)
- Basic service in transition (basic service with higher levels of frequency)

There are three kinds of High Performance Transit service:

- Blue Line (longer distance, 15-30 minute frequency)
- Red Line (direct service to major destinations in metropolitan areas, 10-15 minute frequency)
- Green Line (short distance, 6-15 minute frequency)

Blue lines can be effectively served by modes such as commuter rail, motor bus and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

Red lines can be served by modes such as BRT, light rail and electric trolley bus.

Green lines can be served by modes such as electric trolley bus, trolley bus and streetcar.

SRTC's Travel Demand Model was to be used for the analysis but it was found to be deficient in determining transit mode choice and trip assignments, so a GIS analysis was used as an alternative. This tool showed 2030 land use projections; population, employment, retail and trip densities along corridors; trip demands along corridors; trip pairings; and, terminal options. Using two corridors on the north side of Spokane – Division Street and the new North Spokane Corridor, the analysis showed Division Street to have a much higher density in 2030 with many people living within a half mile of the transit route. The North Spokane Corridor showed far less density of people despite the expectation of higher vehicular traffic. Ms. Van Orman commented that as the North Spokane Corridor progresses there may be development at off ramps such as Wellesley which may include retail and housing. Currently the land surrounding that corridor is sparse. Ms. Meyer said the corridor has space for future light rail but it will be a long time before that transit mode would be considered. Mr. Rush added that light rail and bicycle lanes were added to the planning to make the corridor more marketable. Mr. Plaster said there is space between lanes for light rail but no infrastructure, such as concrete, to put the rails on. A discussion ensued about whether development or transit comes first. It is a “chicken and egg” situation. Mr. Blaska noted that the system in Portland, Oregon, has worked well. A commitment was made by developers on the zoning which resulted in condominiums being built on the river before the streetcar was extended to that area. He said it was impressive how it was all planned together. Ms. Meyer said the Portland State University put several million dollars into the project and made parking sparse around the campus to encourage transit ridership. Ms. Meyer said the North Spokane Corridor will be a prominent route for freight and plans do not call for a lot of development around the corridor.

Mr. Otterstrom said the green lines in a north/south direction would include North Monroe to Southgate via downtown, the medical centers, and Lincoln Heights and Manito shopping centers. East/West would include Spokane Community College to Browne's Addition and East Sprague to the Valley Transit Center. Northwest/Southeast would include Kendall Yards, Shadle, Indian Trail to Southeast Boulevard and Lincoln Heights. Hillyard to Cannon Addition including the Logan Neighborhood, Hamilton and Crestline. Also served would be the University District and Hamilton, Five Mile, Lidgerwood, Holy Family, Mission, Spokane Community College and Spokane Falls Community College. Longer term service would include Argonne, Pines and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

Red line service would include Division which already has 15 minute service consistent with high density. It is proposed to interline with Airway Heights in the longer term. A red line would also connect downtown with Liberty Lake; Wellesley, Market and Trent; and, Northpointe to Lincoln Heights via Hillyard.

Mr. Otterstrom said blue line service would start with peak service with higher speed and limited stops. Examples of these routes would be Cheney to Wandermere via downtown and the North Spokane Corridor; airport to Coeur d'Alene. Ms. Meyer commented that she used the light rail service from the airport to downtown Seattle. It was slow and stopped frequently. It appears to have been faster to ride

the express bus but that has been discontinued. Mr. Otterstrom said there would be a limited number of people going from downtown Spokane to the airport. The airport route currently has approximately 450 passengers per day which is less than 20% of the people who go to the airport. Mr. Otterstrom asked for a Board consensus on the HPTN proposal as a basis for the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Rushing said he thought it looked very good and enhances what STA already has. It needs to be modified for new growth, however. Mr. Otterstrom said it is a “living document” which will be revised when needed. Mr. Snyder said it was a very impressive document and he is excited to see the new HPTN routes. It was agreed that City and County Comprehensive Plans need to include transit supportive zoning. A bus-only lane for Electric Rapid Transit (ERT) or streetcar would be very effective.

**The Board concurred with the preliminary HPTN proposal as the basis for Comprehensive Plan finalization and that implementation of preliminary HPTN proposal depends on additional funding.**

B. Criteria for Sustainable Service Plan

Mr. Otterstrom said the 2010 budget outlined a three year service reduction strategy: 2% cut in 2010 and 7% cut in both 2011 and 2012 for an estimated total reduction of 16%. He added that sales tax receipts for the first quarter of 2010 are 4.9% below the same period in 2009. The 2010 budget has allowed for a sales tax reduction of -1.0% for the year. Staff requests Board concurrence with the proposed criteria for developing service reduction plans:

- Consistency with preliminary HPTN proposal
- Consistency with principles and policies of service design guidelines
- Minimize ridership impacts as much as possible

The criteria imply that some areas that lose funding will not get it back even with new funding. Mr. Rushing said it is good that the Comprehensive Plan is a living document that can be amended since it is not apparent what will happen in the future with development in areas where service will be cut. Ms. Waldref asked how ridership impacts would be minimized. Ms. Meyer said there would be a significant impact with a 16% reduction. If, for example, Sunday service were to be cut it would affect 9,000 as opposed to 40,000 on a weekday. Mr. Snyder said unfortunately those affected by a Sunday service cut would be those that need it the most. Mr. Blaska said it is important not to destroy the solid architecture of a transit system when funding drops. STA needs to be able to see future growth and investments. Pierce Transit is going through a similar situation, only worse. They are going to the ballot for another 3/10ths of one percent in sales tax which would bring them up to the 0.9% maximum level or they will cut service dramatically. Their website shows the available service with and without the extra sales tax funding and shows that there would be little increased service for the increased funding. It appears, however, that they are planning to strengthen service in their system’s core. Mr. Rush thanked Mr. Blaska for this clarification.

**The Board concurred with the proposed criteria for developing service reduction plans.**

3. ADJOURN

Chair Van Orman adjourned the meeting at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Watson  
Executive Assistant to the CEO

& Clerk of the Authority