

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

PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the February 3, 2016, Meeting

Southside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chuck Hafner, City of Spokane Valley*
Tom Trulove, City of Cheney
Keith Kopelson, City of Liberty Lake
John Higgins, City of Medical Lake (Ex-Officio)
Rhonda Bowers, Labor Representative
E. Susan Meyer, CEO (Ex-Officio)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Steve Lawrence, City of Airway Heights

* Chair

STAFF PRESENT

Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning
Lynda Warren, Director of Finance & Information Systems
Beth Bousley, Director of Communications & Customer Svc.
Steve Doolittle, Director of Human Resources
Susan Millbank, Community Ombudsman &
Accessibility Officer
Don Skillingstad, Project Manager HPT
Patty Talbot, Paratransit Contract Manager
Chris Tohm, Sr. Communications Specialist
Brandon Ropez-Betty, Sr. Communications Specialist
Merilee Robar, Exec. Asst., Finance & Information Systems

GUESTS

Fran Papeleur, Citizen Advisory Committee Member

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

Chair Hafner called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Introductions were made.

2. **PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**

None.

3. **COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT**

None.

4. **COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

A. **MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2015, COMMITTEE MEETING**

Mr. Kopelson moved to recommend approval of the December 2, 2015, Committee meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Trulove and passed unanimously.

B. **APPROVAL OF SCOPE OF WORK FOR MOBILITY TRAINING, VOLUNTEER MOBILITY MENTOR COORDINATION, AND SERVICES TO CONDUCT ADA ELIGIBILITY IN-PERSON ASSESSMENTS**

Mr. Blaska explained that STA has funded mobility training since 2005 with successful results. The current contract for this service will expire at the end of July 2016, and approval of a scope of work is needed to solicit proposals for a new contract. Program goals include:

- contract for services for a mobility training program coordinator to collaborate with the community and Social Service providers to identify needs and obtain training referrals;
- promote independent travel among individuals who are seniors and/or disabled;
- provide cost savings to STA by reducing demand for costly door-to-door transportation; and
- provide a valuable service to the community.

Included in the scope of work is service to provide Paratransit ADA eligibility in-person assessments (IPA's). Implemented in October 2012, IPA's are a tool to aid Paratransit staff in making more individualized and accurate Paratransit eligibility determinations, as well as to better control the high costs of Paratransit. Mr. Blaska noted that the estimated savings (cost avoidance) to STA for this program is \$1.08M.

In addition, the scope of work includes a Volunteer Mobility Mentor Coordination service. STA was recently awarded \$366,393 in FTA Section 5310 funding (for two years) with an 80/20 local match to implement this program.

Mr. Kopelson moved to approve the scope of work for contracted mobility training services, volunteer mobility mentor coordination, and Paratransit ADA eligibility in-person assessments, services. The motion was seconded by Mr. Trulove and passed unanimously.

5. REPORTS TO COMMITTEE

A. FARE ANALYSIS

Ms. Warren explained that STA evaluates its fares on a periodic basis. The last major review was conducted in 2009, which resulted in a phase in of fare changes in 2010, 2011, and 2012. Since that time, farebox recovery has fallen below the Board policy of 20%, so staff is again evaluating STA's fares and fare structure. Objectives include: convenience, reasonable pricing, bring a minimum farebox return of 20%, minimized complexity, and increased use of pre-payment cards/reduced use of cash.

Ms. Warren reviewed the current distribution of fare types and ridership, and presented a preliminary proposed fare structure for the Committee to review and discuss. She also reviewed the fare analysis timeline noting that following public outreach on the preliminary proposal, a final recommendation for Board decision will be presented at the July 2016 Board meeting. If approved, the anticipated date of implementation of any changes would be July 2017.

B. PREPARATON FOR FIXED ROUTE FLEET REPLACEMENT PROGRAM – SUMMARY

Mr. Blaska reminded Committee members that for the last several months, staff has provided information and received input from the Committee on the basis for STA's fixed route coach replacement strategy. His presentation summarized those elements which comprise the basis for seeking the individual awards of contract for fixed route coach purchases, with the first recommended award of contract anticipated to be presented to the Board in March or April 2016.

Mr. Blaska gave an overview of the information previously provided, since some Committee members were new:

1. The fleet replacement challenge and funding requirements for STA's current fleet (the need to pre-plan the maintenance, replacement cycle, and funding for the fleet replacement program over the next ten years).
2. An analysis of the alternate fuel possibilities during this replacement cycle (the most viable near-term vehicle remains a diesel/biodiesel powered vehicle but STA should plan for integration of battery powered vehicles in this replacement cycle).
3. An evaluation of the various procurement mechanisms which are available (justification as to why the best procurement option was to purchase coaches using the Washington State's procurement contract).
4. Four alternative scenarios as to the timing of purchases led to staff's conclusion that replacing vehicles on their 15th year of service at approximately 750,000 miles was the most prudent strategy (which provides for flexibility over the next five years, is fully funded through the Transit Development Plan 7-year horizon, and optimizes the value of the capital and maintenance investment of each individual vehicle).

Mr. Blaska added that this strategy validates the current long-range capital programming to meet STA's fleet replacement requirement without incurring debt. He said that it is important that the Board understands the basis for this plan because it is a significant element of STA's financial capacity to sustain service in accordance with the approved financial projections and Capital Improvement Plan/Transit Development Plan.

C. HIGH PERFORMANCE TRANSIT (HPT) FACILITY DESIGN AND SERVICE COMMUNICATION STANDARDS UPDATE

Mr. Otterstrom explained that the HPT network envisions a series of transportation corridors offering high-frequency, reliable service allowing customers greater access to the public transportation system and the

ability to reach more destinations. This new service features improved amenities for the passengers, helping to make the transit experience attractive, safe, comfortable and more enjoyable.

In 2012, STA was awarded a \$495,000 federal grant for the project. The STA Board approved \$123,750 in matching funds and the project was approved in the 2014-2019 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). After a competitive request for qualifications, IBI Group, Inc. was awarded the design and engineering contract in October 2014 and work began on the project.

The consultant team was tasked with preparing two manuals, a facilities design manual and communications/branding manual. The facilities design manual will include plans and specifications for all stop and station amenities, including a “kit-of-parts.” This kit-of-parts will identify what amenities will be provided at future HPT stop and station locations, which may include lighting and furniture types, shelters, real-time signage, ticket vending machines, kiosks, etc. The communications/branding manual will include color schemes, material types and font/type applications, logos, route map layout, signage and other HPT specific branding features.

Mr. Otterstrom said that the consultant and STA staff have held a number of internal workshops to review and discuss concepts for this new service. The team has conducted extensive research on best practices and provided STA with various design and branding options for consideration that have been successful with other agencies. One tool that has been used throughout the project is an online information gathering website called *mySidewalk*. Questions and design options were presented to the public through this website asking for input from visitors.

Preliminary design concepts for future station amenities and branding schemes have been prepared that will be presented to the public to gather input prior to preparing the final draft manuals. Mr. Otterstrom’s gave a presentation which provided samples of several design concepts.

Upcoming events include:

- Focus Group testing (January 26 & 27)
- Posting to *mySidewalk* (February 1)
- Central City Line Steering Committee (February 1)
- East Downtown/U-District Open House (February 2)
- Brown Bag Luncheons in February (dates TBD)
- Neighborhood meetings (January – March)
- West Downtown/Browne’s Addition Open House (March 1 - tentative)

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the project timeline, noting that the anticipated completion date for this project is March 31, 2016. The Central City Line is anticipated to be the first implementation of these new standards.

6. COMMITTEE ACTION

A. Board Consent Agenda

1. REQUEST FOR SPECIAL 2016 COMMUNITY EVENTS FARE STRUCTURE FOR VALLEYFEST

Ms. Bousley explained that the decision regarding the Special Event Fare Structure for Valleyfest in 2016 was held in abeyance at the September 2015 Performance Monitoring and External Relations Committee meeting to allow staff to assess the impact of the additional measures taken to promote 2015 Valleyfest shuttle ridership. Fare structure for these types of events has previously been based on a logical connection to STA’s standard base fare; however, the change for fares for First Night and Valleyfest were precipitated by the fact that STA no longer has a standard fare that is \$0.75.

In an effort to increase ridership to the 2015 event, STA teamed up with Coats4Kids to “stuff the bus” with coats for children in need. Because ridership remained flat, staff is asking the Board to consider a fare rate and structure that is consistent with other STA rates, and affordable for Valleyfest users, as a way of increasing ridership on the Valleyfest shuttle. Staff is proposing to offer Valleyfest shuttle service at 10-minute intervals at no charge to riders. Instead, riders will use a Valleyfest Universal Transit Access Pass paid for by Valleyfest or the event sponsor(s), which would include a “not to exceed” fee of \$1,000, based on a fare of \$0.85 per customer.

Mr. Kopelson moved to recommend the Board approve a Valleyfest Universal Transit Access Pass (UTAP) program through which Valleyfest, or Valleyfest's designated sponsor, would commit to paying a Not to Exceed (NTE) fee of \$1,000, based on an \$0.85 fare per customer. The motion was seconded by Mr. Trulove and passed unanimously.

2. 2016 COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Ms. Bousley gave a presentation on the 2016 Communications Plan. She introduced several of the Communications Department staff members and noted that two new advertising agencies were hired in September 2015 to assist with marketing.

Ms. Bousley said that growth trends show a decline in households with children, and an increase in households without children and two workers households, and denser regional development. 58% of STA riders are between the age of 16-34, and 37% are students, indicating that STA should focus on establishing loyalty among younger audiences. She noted that Spokane is expected to grow to a population of 592.9K people by 2040. Trends also indicate that Spokane County is growing as a destination for visitors, with \$893M in visitor spending in 2014.

Ms. Bousley defined the objectives and tactics of the 2016 Communications Plan, which included:

- increasing STA brand awareness and affinity awareness and affinity;
- improving internal communications;
- enhancing user education and information services;
- improving communication and engagement with priority audiences;
- improving and controlling image of STA;
- improving the customer experience;
- improving online access to information; and
- communicating financial information to demonstrate transparency and accountability.

Ms. Bousley added that these objectives are aligned with STA's Priorities with the ultimate goal of increasing ridership and improving community perception. She gave an overview on the strategies, tactics, and metrics the Communications Department will use to achieve STA's goals. Next steps include a request for Board approval of the 2016 Communications Plan, prioritization of 2016 strategies, and the monitoring/tracking/reporting of programs.

Mr. Trulove moved to recommend the Board approve the 2016 Communications Plan, which supports the STA Priorities and the ultimate goal of increasing ridership and improving community perception. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kopelson, and passed unanimously.

B. Board Discussion Agenda

1. FARE ANALYSIS PUBLIC OUTREACH PLAN

Ms. Bousley reiterated that STA's sustainable plan for the next six years requires a minimum farebox recovery of 20%. The last major review of the fare structure was conducted in 2009, resulting in a phase-in of fare changes in 2010, 2011, and 2012. Subject to Board approval, STA plans to implement a fare increase in July 2017.

Ms. Bousley explained the outreach plan which will be conducted to ensure stakeholder participation. In-person outreach will be conducted with 25 local organizations, through regional open houses, and through the media (press releases and radio spots). Ms. Bousley also covered the outreach timeline, noting that a final recommendation to the Board is anticipated at the July 2016 Board meeting.

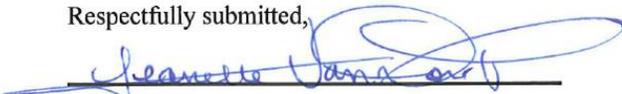
Mr. Kopelson moved to recommend the Board approve the Fare Analysis Public Outreach Plan. The motion was seconded by Mr. Trulove and passed unanimously.

7. CEO REPORT

- A. Ms. Meyer gave a State Legislative update, noting that the 60 day session is scheduled to end on March 10th. Staff is currently following about 30 bills that potentially could impact STA. Three of interest include:

- HB 2574 – preserves the ability for public transit operators to communicate with dispatch;
 - HB 2757– requires state transportation projects to include impacts to public transportation as part of a SEPA review; and
 - HB 2864 – allows Intercity Transit in Olympia to raise the 0.9% sales tax maximum to 1.2%.
- B. Ms. Meyer said that on January 21-22, Mr. Otterstrom attended the Joint Chambers’ Olympia GSI fly-in. Ms. Amber Waldref, Ms. Kathleen Collins (STA Government Relations Consultant), and Mr. Otterstrom met with representatives Marcus Riccelli, Matt Shea, Jeff Holy, and Judy Clibborn. Mr. Otterstrom also met with senators Cyrus Habib and Andy Billig. The focus of the meetings was to provide an update about Spokane Transit, STA Moving Forward, the Central City Line, and the West Plains Transit Center, with an emphasis on preserving the funding for STA that is included in Connecting Washington.
- C. Governor Inslee visited Spokane on Friday, January 29th, to celebrate the four projects in Eastern Washington that are included in the Connecting Washington revenue package (Central City Line, North Spokane Corridor, U-District Pedestrian Bridge, and the Palouse-Coulee City Railroad). The Governor and his staff rode a bus along with other advocates of those programs.
8. COMMITTEE INFORMATION
- A. January 2016 Sales Tax Revenue Information – *as presented*.
 - B. November 2015 Operating Indicators – *as presented*.
 - C. December 2015 Operating Indicators – *as presented*.
 - D. Fourth Quarter 2015 Safety and Loss Summary Report – *as presented*.
 - E. Fourth Quarter 2015 Service Planning Public Input Report – *as presented*.
 - F. Community Outreach and Involvement – *as presented*.
 - G. 2016 Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting Dates – *as presented*.
9. MARCH 2016 COMMITTEE PACKET AGENDA REVIEW
- Chair Hafner 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 Hafner adjourned the meeting at 3:04 p.m.
13. NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2016, 1:30 P.M., STA SOUTHSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM, 1230 WEST BOONE AVENUE

Respectfully submitted,



Jeanette Van Dort, Executive Assistant