

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

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MEETING 10:00 A.M.

Minutes of the February 3, 2016, Meeting
Southside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Amber Waldref, City of Spokane*
Candace Mumm, City of Spokane
Shelly O'Quinn, Spokane County
Ed Pace, City of Spokane Valley
Kevin Freeman, Small Cities Representative
(Millwood), Ex-Officio
E. Susan Meyer, CEO, Ex-Officio

MEMBERS ABSENT

*Chair

STAFF PRESENT

Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Beth Bousley, Director of Communications
& Customer Service
Steve Doolittle, Director of Human Resources
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning
Lynda Warren, Director of Finance & Information Services
Brandon Rapez-Betty, Sr. Communications Specialist
Merilee Robar, Executive Assistant, Finance & Information Systems
Kathleen Weinand, Transit Planner II

Guests

Al French, Spokane County

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Waldref called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Roll was called.

2. PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS

None.

3. COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT

Chair Waldref expressed her appreciation to be returning to serve on the Planning & Development Committee. Chair Waldref said she is looking forward to good discussion.

4. COMMITTEE ACTION

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

Mr. Pace moved to recommend approval of the December 2, 2015, Planning & Development Committee meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mumm. Motion passed unanimously.

5. BOARD ACTION – COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AGENDA

A. BOARD CONSENT AGENDA

No items being presented this month.

B. BOARD ACTION AGENDA

No items being presented this month.

C. BOARD DISCUSSION AGENDA

1. STA MOVING FORWARD PLAN & FUNDING DISCUSSION

Mr. Otterstrom explained that this item is a continuation of the STA Moving Forward discussion that has been taking place at Committee and Board meetings over the past few months. Mr. Otterstrom explained that the goal at the Committee level discussion is to present information that is planned to be discussed at the Board meeting. Staff is requesting feedback from the Committee regarding how to shape the conversation for presentation to the Board by suggesting addition information or other ways to frame the presentation. Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the background of the STA Moving Forward plan which was adopted by the Board in December 2014 as a ten-year plan for sustaining and improving transit service to meet the needs of the communities and the region. Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the Board's guidance in in 2015. In October the Board agreed to new financial assumptions and an approach to forecasting revenues and expenditures that fully fund the Capital Improvement Program and current levels of service through 2021. Board members agreed by consensus that *STA Moving Forward* should be retained as the appropriate starting point for discussing future service growth

In December 2015 the majority of Board members agreed that staff should prepare scenarios that implement part or all of STA Moving Forward beginning as early as 2017. Some Board members requested a scenario that provided additional funding beyond STA Moving Forward including three options: complete, complemented and constrained. Board members requested this information be provided at the January 2016 Board meeting. Mr. Otterstrom reminded the Committee of the sequencing principle for current and projected revenues and expenses:

- A plan that maximizes early construction resources will inherently reduce how much is available for new routes and services
- Quickly adding new routes and service reduces how much is available for construction and other capital projects and reduces flexibility
- STA Moving Forward balances new capital projects with new routes and services, allowing for a more resilient implementation timeline

In January the three requested scenarios were presented to the Board along with demonstrating how the scenarios implement three policy building blocks of the STA Moving Forward plan, which are to:

- Connect the community with essential services
- Improve travel flow by connecting jobs and workers
- Partner in advancing regional economic development

In February Board members requested an opportunity to conduct the following review and discussion

- Review ridership, travel demand and future growth information
- Review a new implementation scenario that assumes 1/10 scenario and implements projects, insofar as feasible, for which grant funding has already been secured
- Document and discuss the scenario wherein no additional tax funding is levied
- Discuss feedback from other elected officials on the suitable timing of a ballot measure and the priority of projects

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed notable points regarding ridership and commuting patterns for the region. By state law, services are intended to benefit a region called a Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA). As of 2015, the Spokane County PTBA had a population of 413,045 representing 84.5% of the population of Spokane County. Over 80% of the urbanized population within the PTBA is within ½ mile of a bus route.

Slides of maps were reviewed that demonstrated that 96% of all jobs in Spokane County are within the PTBA and the employment inflow and outflow (based on 2013 data).

Ms. O'Quinn arrived at 10:13 a.m.

Out of approximately 187,000 people *working* within the PTBA, approximately 125,142 also live within the PTBA and approximately 61,871 are coming in from outside of the PTBA. Approximately 25,494 people leave the PTBA to go to work elsewhere in the region. Another slide was presented which demonstrated where the civilian jobs are within the PTBA. Approximately 30% of all jobs in the PTBA are within 1.5 miles of the STA Plaza but less than half of those jobs are filled by Spokane City residents. Mr. Otterstrom said that he hopes to provide a "heat map" showing where ridership is occurring in the system currently at the February Board meeting. In addition to jobs, people use transit to connect to education. Ms. Mumm asked what kinds of percentages make up the major uses of transit. Mr. Otterstrom said he was unable to provide the percentages at this time but the major uses are to connect to: work, education, social and health services and retail. Further down the list would be entertainment and recreation. Chair Waldref suggested calling the major uses out within the three STA Moving Forward building blocks.

Mr. Otterstrom asked if there were any other slides that should be added to the presentation for the Board meeting. Ms. O'Quinn requested that Mr. Otterstrom provide additional bullet points and data, such as what he had verbally provided in the presentation, to assist in explaining what the maps illustrate. Mr. Pace said it would be helpful to know how many people from anywhere east of Havana travel on the bus west across Havana for work and reverse, as well. Mr. Otterstrom responded that he would include that data for the Board meeting. Mr. Blaska mentioned that it is interesting to note from the City of Spokane bus pass program data how many city employees ride the Liberty Lake/Mirabeau Express. It is a highly used route by City of Spokane employees. Mr. Blaska said STA provides express service originating at the Valley Transit Center going to Cheney (Route #166) and these buses are full. Mr. Pace said he is up against the observation that the buses only have a few people on them and he would like to have data to point to when these opinions are expressed. Mr. Pace said that Mr. Hafner will be presenting to the City of Spokane Valley Council the following week to discuss this information.

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the additional scenarios handout that was distributed to the Committee in advance of the meeting and which included the 0/10th and grant funded 1/10th percent scenarios. For the 0/10 of a percent, all projects for STA Moving Forward are eliminated except for two projects: 1) sustained service through 2021; 2) Replace the existing bus fleet in line with growth and life-cycle requirements through 2021 (however, does not expand the fleet).

Mr. Pace said that the scenarios are very helpful but he would like to see the table divided into "swaths." Ms. O'Quinn asked for a reminder of how items got crossed off the lists and suggested that the slide and scenario entitled "STA Moving Forward Cancelled" be renamed to "STA Moving Forward Not Funded" to alleviate confusion. There was discussion regarding how to lay out the scenarios into swaths or geographical locations.

In answer to Ms. O'Quinn's question about how were projects identified for elimination in the added scenarios, Mr. Otterstrom walked through the handout that reflected the 0/10th and 1/10th constrained with grant funded projects identified.

New constrained 1/10th scenario implements, insofar as possible, projects and dependent services that have grant funding using the following approach:

- Prioritize inclusion of projects based on the approximate share of costs covered by grants
- Include necessary dependencies
- Implement other services by priority of the original sequential order if there is a remainder

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the grant funded projects from STA Moving Forward:

STA Moving Forward Project	Grant Status	Scenario Status
Division Street Bus Stop Improvements and larger buses	Construction is fully funded (\$1.5M). Larger buses are not yet funded	Included in Scenario
West Plains Transit Center near Exit 272	Nearly \$10 million secured in state/federal grant funding of the overall project cost	Included in Scenario
Central City Line	\$18.575 million in grant funds with plan for securing all \$72 million for the project	Included in Scenario
Monroe-Regal Corridor Improvements	Construction for bus stop infrastructure on corridor segment in 2018	Not included in the scenario. The funded segment is relatively small share of overall costs.
Mirabeau Transit Center	Early design work is funded in 2021	Not included in the scenario. Grant funds cover small share of costs.
Liberty Lake Park and Ride Expansion/Relocation	Early design work is funded in 2021	Not included in the scenario. Grant funds cover small share of costs.

Mr. Otterstrom stated that this scenario is not something staff is necessarily recommending but is in response to the Board’s request for provision of this scenario for discussion. Mr. Otterstrom asked for questions. Ms. Waldref asked if STA has construction grant money for the Monroe/Regal corridor. Mr. Otterstrom affirmed that there is grant money but only for a small segment for basic improvements (such as ADA accessible bus bulb-outs and concrete sidewalk infrastructure) but the additional operational expenses for STA Moving Forward service is not grant funded.

Project dependencies include:

- Expand and upgrade maintenance facilities to meet existing and projected growth requirements – required for any measurable increase in service levels
- Construct an expanded Upriver Transit Center at Spokane Community College to allow for additional service growth in Spokane and Spokane Valley to meet capacity demands of the service growth in the scenario
- Improve reliability for bus service on Division and Sprague – required to allow for larger buses on Division Street

Ms. Waldref asked what additional Spokane Valley routes would connect to the Upriver Transit Center at Spokane Community College (SCC). Mr. Otterstrom responded that the facility is a requirement or dependency for the Central City Line and it is important to note that it serves multiple cities. Mr. Blaska added that the North Spokane Corridor development will require changes to the current transit center and there is a difficulty with accessing the current site from the route that comes from the Valley. STA is coordinating with the Washington State Department of Transportation and SCC regarding this site. In relation to the requirement for larger buses on Division Street, Ms. O’Quinn asked if the current buses are full and if the requirement is for larger buses rather than increased frequency. Mr. Otterstrom said that

answering the increased capacity need by providing larger buses is less expensive than increasing frequency. Chair Waldref added that there is 15 minute frequency on Sprague and Division so these routes already have high frequency. Mr. Otterstrom said that on Sundays STA switches to using its larger 60 foot buses on Division because they are not required for service to Cheney; however, they take up additional zone space at the Plaza due to length. Currently they take up more than one loading zone at the Plaza. The Division loading zone would need to be modified to accommodate 60 foot buses if they were to be used on Division on a daily basis. Mr. Blaska agreed that in building out a route, increasing the frequency is usually the most expensive option. Increasing the capacity of the buses is an interim step. There are still additional buses built in due to frequency going down due to additional time loading buses. More buses would need to be put in service to maintain the 15 minute frequency. Mr. Otterstrom added that this would entail a layover downtown for the Sprague and Division buses so they can start on time even if they get behind on the inbound trip. This entails an additional operating cost but not to the same degree as increasing the routes to 10 minute frequency. The dependency in this case would be the increased operating expense to maintain schedules given that they are larger buses. Improving reliability is a separate distinct project in the plan that would come before the larger buses are implemented. Mr. Otterstrom commented that these were great questions! Mr. Otterstrom said that this is still in draft form and subject to further refinement based on Board direction.

Remaining new services in sequence of the plan include extending Saturday night service past 11 p.m. system-wide; add new Sunday service on North Nevada; Saturday service on Wellesley. Mr. Otterstrom remarked that this is not a judgement call to say these are the most important things to do, outside of the grant funded projects, these are just the projects that came first in the plan.

Discussion ensued regarding prioritization of the projects in the “Constrained 1/10th” with grant funded projects included scenario. Ms. Waldref suggested that the prioritization of the remaining projects should be based on fulfilling the basic service needs such as new Sunday service on North Nevada. Mr. Otterstrom agreed that this would be one approach to prioritizing the remaining projects. Chair Waldref said she felt that not having Sunday service on North Nevada or Saturday service on Wellesley are current deficiencies in the system which are important to address.

Ms. O’Quinn asked if the funding snapshot was a five or 10 year term. Mr. Otterstrom replied that it reflects all 10 years of funding, but it would not take the full 10 years to implement because there are fewer things that would have to be done. Mr. Otterstrom referred back to the sequencing slides and the stair-step approach. With a smaller sales tax revenue increment, the maximum threshold of funds for capital projects will be met sooner. With a 1/10th increment increase, that threshold is met around 2021 and then all funds go to paying for operating expenses. The 2/10th of a percent increase to fully fund STA Moving Forward scenario was substantially complete by 2024 with 2025 as a contingency. Fully funding the STA Moving Forward plan is a longer time horizon with more stair steps because there are more capital projects to complete with the previously assumed 2017 start date.

Ms. Meyer asked what was included and not included for the Central City Line in the 1/10th scenario. Also, what would be the impact on the Plaza operations? Mr. Otterstrom directed the Committee to the CCL project bullet in the 1/10th scenario: “Implement frequent and convenient HPT service on the Central City Line ~~and change how bus loading occurs at the STA Plaza.~~” There are several HPT projects that would not be possible to fund under the 1/10th that would be part of making the Plaza operate differently. In other words, none of the other HPT routes would be able to be funded because they do not have substantial grant funding. Discussion ensued regarding the scenarios.

Chair Waldref asked if there were any further questions about the scenarios presented or questions that should be posed to the Board and what other information the Board may need to move forward with a direction. Discussion ensued resulting in the following suggestions from the Committee:

- Polling the Board members about where they stand regarding timing of a ballot measure, or if they support a ballot measure at all, is an important question, but is it a separate conversation after the finance piece is vetted? This will question will be asked at the Board level.
- Remind the Board of timing deadlines for upcoming ballot measures
- Portray the new scenarios that have been developed during 2016 in three broad geographic sectors

Chair Waldref thanked staff for the presenting the requested scenarios. Ms. Mumm said she appreciated the “demand maps” and felt they were a real wake-up call.

6. REPORTS TO COMMITTEES

A. DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN: MID-RANGE PLANNING GUIDANCE

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the Transit Development Plan (TDP) requirement and the background of the six year plan. The TDP is Spokane Transit’s primary mid-range planning document and is required to be submitted to the Washington State Department of Transportation annually. The first step in developing the TDP is receiving the Board’s mid-range planning guidance. Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the TDP development timeline. The Board guidance for the 2015 TDP was as follows:

- **Foster and Sustain Quality.** Continue initiatives and projects that improve the quality and usefulness of STA’s service, facilities, information and customer service and sustain STA’s commitment to its organizational priorities.
- **Maintain a State of Good Repair.** Continue vehicle replacement and facility maintenance/improvement programs in order to avoid the problematic consequences of deferred action.
- **Expand Ridership.** Continue to foster ridership markets in line with the principles of *Connect Spokane* to meet growing demand. Ensure that maintenance and operations facilities are sized to accommodate cost effective growth plans.
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Ms. Mumm expressed her appreciation for the third bullet, “Expand Ridership...to meet growing demand.” She said that understanding and quantifying demand is required for good service and a part of STA’s principles.

Mr. Otterstrom posed the following discussion question to the Committee: **“Looking into the future to 2022, what would you want STA’s accomplishments to be for the last six years?”**

Ms. Mumm suggested goals relating to the new technology in clean energy and carbon footprint. Mr. Otterstrom replied that this could fit into the fleet replacement plan portion of the TDP. Chair Waldref said that STA had the highest ridership ever in 2014 and that came on the heels of having to cut service in a recession. Chair Waldref said it would be good to see a high ridership benchmark goal accomplished; however, she feels that the system, under current funding, is maximized. It may not be possible to reach another high benchmark ridership goal without an investment in transit unless there are an untapped populations still to be discovered. Ms. O’Quinn asked about what drives trends in ridership, such as possibly decreased ridership when fuel prices go down. Ms. Mumm agreed that there is a price sensitivity to fuel and that the economic piece should be included, including the positive economic impact that transit ridership can have on people’s quality of life and purchasing power. Ms. O’Quinn agreed that ridership should be included as part of the guidance but would like to know what drives demand locally in cities the size of Spokane? Mr. Otterstrom said that that data could be provided in the conversation about how to frame ridership and what the agency can control as opposed to outside forces and influences. Mr. Blaska mentioned that some of the trends that have an effect on ridership are fuel prices, automobile purchases, school/work migrations, and development of frequency and density of employment centers. For example, when frequency increased in the Valley, even though density did not increase, ridership demand tripled because transit became a more attractive option. Personal time is a big consideration. Frequency creates demand. It is likely that ridership

will increase as long as the major corridors like Sprague and Division remain active and do not atrophy. Ms. Meyer added that the college students have a major impact on ridership. Approximately half of the decline in current ridership is attributed to decreased ridership by college students (Eastern and Spokane Community Colleges) who choose to drive, likely due to lower fuel costs. Ms. Bousley said that STA is working on targeted marketing campaigns to increase ridership amongst those key groups like SCC and Eastern Washington University. STA is working hard to understand the unique demographics and characteristics of the colleges and what has changed in the past two years that has influenced pass purchase programs. Ms. Waldref said she would like ridership to continue to grow and would like to see that as part of STA's accomplishments. Ms. Mumm said she would like to save people money by providing affordable and convenient transportation.

Mr. Otterstrom posed the next question: **“How do you want people to see Spokane Transit and its role in the region’s transportation system? Any key terms for how STA is perceived in the future?”**

Ms. Mumm said she would like to see Spokane is perceived nationally and locally by major employers as a community with a solid transit system for workforce delivery. This is a major criterion for attracting companies.

Ms. O’Quinn asked if transit systems often get ahead of what the community can afford. Mr. Otterstrom responded that this could be a good discussion to include with regard to how the Board sees the scalability of the system and is STA supporting the comprehensive plans of the cities in terms of transit’s role. Ms. Waldref said she feels that transit needs to play a strong role in supporting and being well connected with the regional comprehensive plan, *Transit 2040*, as well as all of the cities’ comprehensive strategies. Spokane Transit needs to be seen as very connected and multi-modal. Discussion ensued regarding what rate the system should grow at and what can the community afford. Ms. O’Quinn said she believes the *Horizon 2040* plan estimates population growth at a significantly higher rate than what the county is allowed to use in its comprehensive plan. Ms. O’Quinn expressed the opinion that if planning is based on the population growth rate estimated in *Horizon 2040*, it would be difficult to tie it to reality in the county’s comprehensive plan. Ms. O’Quinn said she thought all are in agreement that there should be transit, but at what pace? Ms. Mumm said that population is important but another key factor is the number of users of the current pool. Ms. Mumm said that nationally, fifty percent of 18 year olds don’t have driver licenses and, in going forward, past practices cannot necessarily be relied upon. Ms. Mumm said she finds it important to look at what is going to be happening in the future, such as youths not placing high importance on automobile ownership. Mr. Freeman asked how much information STA has for projected ridership from students coming out of high school and going into college. Mr. Otterstrom said that STA has not previously surveyed high school students to find this information out. Mr. Freeman felt it would behoove STA to collect this Millennial generation information in high schools in order to project ridership and to determine what factors need to be accommodated to attract that future ridership, as well as to bring them on board now. Mr. Otterstrom agreed that this would be a good discussion item. Mr. Otterstrom said there are indicators that can be studied and there are several market segments to study. Mr. Otterstrom said that STA’s average ridership age is younger than the population at large. The key to ridership growth is looking to the younger generation. Ms. Bousley mentioned several ways that STA is marketing to the younger demographic. Mr. Freeman suggested that demonstrating to students in the “Running Start” program that public transit is a viable option for connecting them to the colleges would be one way to attract additional youths to transit. Mr. Blaska said the other part of the demographic is the aging population and the opportunity for people to return to transit. The Board also needs to consider that geographic service expansion comes with a paratransit expansion cost incurred. Ms. Mumm suggested looking at some current technology trends such as texting because youths value their time on the phone and riding the bus to college can provide extra time for this. Also, some universities are considering the policy that no freshman or sophomore can bring a car to school. Ms. Mumm mentioned another technology to consider is the availability of alternative cars (Zip Car, Uber, etc.) and connection to transit.

7. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

A. REVIEW 2016 P&D COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAM

As presented in packet.

B. REVIEW DRAFT CONTRIBUTION TO 2016/2017 SPOKANE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

As presented in packet.

8. CEO REPORT

Ms. Meyer reported that Governor Inslee was in Spokane January 29, 2016, for a briefing on several projects that were included in the 2015 transportation revenue package, including the Central City Line. It was an opportunity to keep the vision alive for the projects though it may be three to four years before funds for the projects are accessed. Governor Inslee took the bus from downtown to the site of the celebration. Governor Inslee said positive things about the four projects: Us 395 (North/South Freeway), University District Gateway Bridge, Central City Line, Palouse River and Coulee City Rail Line.

9. NEW BUSINESS

None.

10. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

None.

11. REVIEW OF MARCH 2, 2016, COMMITTEE MEETING DRAFT AGENDA

As presented in the packet.

12. NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2016, 10:00 A.M. STA SOUTHSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM, 1230 W BOONE AVENUE

13. ADJOURN

Chair Waldref adjourned the meeting at 11:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Angela Stephens, Executive Assistant