

**CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the February 8, 2023, Committee Meeting  
 Via Video Conference  
 w/optional in-person attendance

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>MEMBERS PRESENT</u></b></p> <p>Dan Brown —Chair          Brian Kamp          Dr. Linda Carroll          Chris Fortensky          Susan Gray          Michelle Rasmussen          JT Ramsey          Konrad Capeller          Tino Andrade</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>STAFF PRESENT</u></b></p> <p>Brandon Ropez-Betty, Chief Operations Officer          Karl Otterstrom, Chief Planning &amp; Development Officer          Carly Cortright, Chief Communications &amp; Customer Service Officer          Kate Kelly, Executive Assistant to the Chief Human Resources Officer          Dianne Peach, Executive Assistant to the Chief Communications &amp; Customer Service Officer</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>MEMBERS ABSENT</u></b></p> <p>Steve Faust          Caleb McDougall          Kinzie Michael</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>GUESTS</u></b></p>

1. Call To Order and Roll Call

Mr. Brown, Committee Chair experienced technical difficulties, and Dr. Cortright, Chief Communications and Customer Service Officer, called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. Roll call was conducted.

2. Committee Chair Report

Mr. Dan Brown introduced the two new CAC members, Mr. Tino Andrade and Mr. Konrad Capeller. He also introduced Dianne Peach, the new Executive Assistant to the Chief Communication and Customer Service Officer and welcomed them all aboard.

3. Public Expressions

There were no expressions.

4. Committee Action

A. Minutes of November 9, 2022, Meeting

**Ms. Carroll moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Kamp seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

B. Reappointment of Caleb McDougall

Dr. Cortright indicated Mr. Caleb McDougall has finished his first 3-year term as a CAC member and is eligible for a second term. Mr. McDougall stated he is interested in renewing his membership. Dr. Cortright recommended that the CAC approve the confirmation of Caleb’s second 3-year term. **Mr. Kamp moved to approve the reappointment and Ms. Carroll seconded the motion, and the motion was passed unanimously.** This recommendation will be made to the PMER Committee for approval.

C. CAC Charter Review

Dr. Cortright reported that the Citizen's Advisory Committee's Charter is required to be reviewed every three years. The last review was completed in October 2019. STA staff made some recommendations on the structure of the Charter as well as some language changes which were included in the CAC packet. Mr. Ramsey, Mr. Capeller, and Mr. Kamp offered additional recommendations which will be reviewed by the legal department and brought back to the CAC meeting for review, then taken to the PMER meeting for approval.

5. Committee Reports

A. Sprague High Performance Transit Line Update

Mr. Otterstrom presented a report on the Sprague High Performance Transit Line (HPT) which is a reformulation of the existing Route 90 that runs between the STA Plaza and Spokane Valley Transit Center. This route is being renamed Route 9 and will offer 15-minute service frequency on weekdays and 30-minute frequency on weekends and holidays. Mr. Otterstrom reported on the STA project schedule planned for 2023. In Phase I there will be five stations and nine enhanced stops added as well as a bus only entrance that saves in turns and traffic light wait times. In Phase II there will be eight stations and ten enhanced stops added as well as HPT platform improvements. Spokane Valley Couplet-Business Access and Transit lanes, Improved Pedestrian Crossings, and Transit Signal Priorities are also being analyzed for implementation in phase II. Mr. Kamp asked if there has been an uptick in ridership due to the improvements that have been made. Mr. Otterstrom confirmed that with all the enhancements ridership has improved. Ms. Rasmussen stated that the reduction of lanes was placed on a ballot measure and was voted down in Spokane Valley. She asked what barriers there are for getting this passed. Mr. Otterstrom stated that the Spokane Valley City Council is supportive of this initiative and that it might be other commercial developers that have issues with moving this forward. Mr. Ramsey about changes in frequency or extension in times the buses will run into the night. Mr. Otterstrom reported the current levels of service will be maintained.

B. City Line Implementation Update

Mr. Otterstrom gave an update on the City Line implementation. This service launches on July 15, 2023 and the project is currently 90% complete. Mr. Otterstrom also presented the financial update stating that he expects the project will come in under budget. He noted projects currently underway and said work on the Browne's Addition shelters will begin this spring. The launch of City Line begins 15-minute frequency most hours of operation with the opportunity to increase frequency based on workforce availability. Mr. Kapeller asked what the CAC members can do to promote City Line and asked to have a "field trip" to see and ride the new coaches especially the City Line. Dr. Cortright will call on all the CAC members to be the first riders of City Line. Mr. Fortensky asked if scooters/wheelchairs have been on the new buses? Mr. Rapez-Betty stated that the training is complete for all the City Line coach operators regarding wheelchairs but regarding scooters, he will investigate this and report back. Mr. Andrade asked if the train going down mission would affect the City Line route. Mr. Otterstrom stated that the train schedule will have a relatively minor impact on the City Line. Mr. Rapez-Betty thanked the committee for their commitment and dedication to Spokane Transit Authority.

C. Fleet Transition Plan Update

Mr. Rapez-Betty reported STA has been investigating alternative fuel options for more than a decade and has committed to a zero emissions footprint and have been exploring new technologies, buses and

charging infrastructures. STA hired The Center for Transportation and the Environment Consulting (CTE) to conduct a follow up study that builds on the initial Fleet Transition Plan conducted in 2020. Mr. Rapez-Betty reported that by the end of 2024 STA will have 40 battery electric buses which will account for about 20% of the fleet. New buses will arrive this year. STA was awarded a Green Transportation Grant from the state which is an 80/20 match with the state providing 80% of the funds and STA providing 20% local match. Staff will be looking at updates and technology to determine if there is more range per bus and if we are able to apply zero emissions to more routes in the system. Discussion ensued.

D. Connect Fare System Update

Dr. Cortright provided an update on the Connect Fare system that went live in October 2022. Dr. Cortright reported that by January 2023 the adoption rate was 48.5%. She also provided a breakdown of use by fare category and stated about 11% of Connect users were using the virtual Connect on their phone. Starting in March 2023, STA will begin charging \$5 for a physical card. Once the card is registered, a one-time \$5 credit will be applied to the card-holder account and lost cards will be charged \$5 replacement fee. Safeway and Albertsons are currently selling Connect cards with other retailers coming online in the 2nd quarter 2023. Contactless credit cards and Apple and Google Pay will also be coming online in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. Rear Door Validator installation is underway on coaches, while STA is not switching to all-door boarding at this time, this capability will be ready in the future. City Line coaches all have the validators and will incorporate all door boarding. Station validators are being installed on some City Line platforms. Dr. Cortright stated that overall, the Connect Program has had a very successful launch with a few refinements needed. She stated that The Connect Fare Collection System project won the WTS Project of Year award. Discussion ensued. Dr. Cortright stated that there will be a booth set up for the City Line launch to help instruct people on how to use the all-door boarding, app usage and set up.

E. New Customer Notification System

Dr. Cortright provided a report on the update to STA Linked, the STA customer notification system. An updated system is currently in beta testing and is almost seamless to customers, with very little change to the sign-up process. CAC members can test at [www.spokanetransit.com/notifications](http://www.spokanetransit.com/notifications). This new functionality enhances customer service as the commuter can sign up to receive news and special event notifications in addition to regular service alerts, and they can customize the time of day to receive the alerts. The next steps are to work with Zipline, STA's vendor, conducting internal testing, migrate to the new system, and then release public announcements of the change.

F. Ridership Demographic

Dr. Cortright reported that Mr. Kamp requested the CAC get an update on what STA is doing to attract a higher income level demographic of riders. She reported our rider demographics from the most recent customer satisfaction survey completed through the American Bus Benchmarking Group (ABBG), where only 14% of riders had an annual income of \$50,000 or higher. This is comparable to STA's benchmarking group; out of 16 participating agencies, 11 reported that most riders made less than \$50,000 per year. Spokane has a slightly higher population of riders making \$15,000 per year and are living below the poverty level. Dr. Cortright explained the various techniques used to attract higher income rides, including the Universal Transit Access Pass (UTAP) which serves local higher education institutions, both students and staff, as well as Spokane City and County in addition to the Employee Sponsored Bus Pass program, which does include legal and engineering firms. STA is mindful of marketing to all demographics, for example: the Connect advertisements were developed to target young professionals, youth, Honored

Riders, and Stars and Stripes reduced fare customers. Dr. Cortright stated that the introduction of zero-fare for youth is normalizing public transit in Spokane and the next generation of adult riders. As City Line launches and Transit-Oriented Development projects are completed within the region, the demographics will evolve. Mr. Kamp stated that nationwide on average, public transit riders make approximately \$2,000 more per year than single car drivers. Washington Statewide, riders make on average \$9,000 more per year than single car drivers. However, in Spokane County the single car driver makes on average \$14,000 per year more than the transit rider. This is a huge flip in demographics. Ms. Gray stated that the retired population is a demographic that would benefit from having a person to help them use the public transit system to plan trips. Mr. Fortensky stated that he calls STA bus line, dials 0 and the operator helps plan your trip. Mr. Capeller stated that the demographics will not change overnight but targeting the future higher income earners such as college students will be effective long term. Ms. Rasmussen stated that she would like to see advertisements that show customers talking to the STA Operator to show that there is help for riders to maneuver the transit system as people sometimes think that riding the bus is too complicated.

6. Committee Information – *no action or discussion*

- A. Q4 2022 STA Moving Forward
- B. July 2023 Service Revisions

7. Committee Member Expressions

Chair Brown stated that he would like to have hybrid meetings in the future. Mr. Ramsey asked when the Performance Report 2022 will be available. Ms. Kelly stated that the Performance Measures report for the 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. is an agenda item at the April meeting. Mr. Kamp thanked STA for all it's hard work and forward thinking and expressed what a pleasure it has been for him to serve as a CAC member for the last six years. Dr. Cortright and Chair Brown expressed their thanks and appreciation for the years served by Mr. Kamp. Mr. Capeller asked if there is a centralized social calendar available so the CAC members can attend and be the eyes and ears for leadership at community functions. Dr. Cortright stated that on the website, all Board meetings are posted and that she will check to see if these meetings can be posted in calendar format. Dr. Cortright also stated that if the CAC members would like to present to PMER and ask for a calendar of events then they are more than welcome to do so.

8. Review Agenda Items for April 12, 2023, Meeting

Chair Brown motioned for adjournment.

9. Adjourn

With no further business, Chair Brown adjourned the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Executive Assistant to the Chief Communication and Customer Service Officer