

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

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the September 6, 2023, Meeting
In Person at Spokane Transit Authority, 1230 W. Boone Avenue, Spokane, WA
w/Virtual Public Viewing Option

MEMBERS PRESENT

Al French, Spokane County – *Chair*
Karen Stratton, City of Spokane
Tim Hattenburg, City of Spokane Valley
Dan Dunne, Small Cities Representative
(Liberty Lake)
Dan Sander, Small Cities Representative
(Millwood) *Ex Officio*
E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer
Ex Officio

MEMBERS ABSENT

Chris Grover, Small Cities Representative
(Cheney), *Ex-Officio*

STAFF PRESENT

Karl Otterstrom, Chief Planning and Development
Officer
Monique Liard, Chief Financial Officer
Carly Cortright, Chief Communications and Customer
Service Officer
Nancy Williams, Chief Human Resources Officer
Vicki Clancy, Executive Assistant to the Chief
Planning & Development Officer

STAFF ABSENT

Brandon Rapez-Betty, Chief Operations Officer

PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL

Maija Druffel, Etter, McMahon, Lamberson, Van Wert
& Oreskovich, P.C.

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

Chair Al French called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and Ms. Vicki Clancy conducted roll call.

2. **COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT**

Chair French complimented STA's assistance with the evacuation efforts during the Gray Fire in August. Ms. Meyer added that this was a team effort of various personnel in multiple workgroups in Operations, under the leadership of Mr. Brandon Rapez-Betty.

3. **COMMITTEE ACTION**

A. **MINUTES OF THE JULY 5, 2023, COMMITTEE MEETING**

Mr. Tim Hattenburg moved to approve the July 5, 2023, Planning and Development Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Dan Dunne seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

4. **COMMITTEE ACTION**

A. **BOARD CONSENT AGENDA**

1. **DIVISION STREET BUS RAPID TRANSIT: TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STUDY INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT**

Mr. Karl Otterstrom gave a brief background on the purpose, need and past planning performed to advance Division Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). In 2022, STA was awarded a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Pilot Program for Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

Planning Grant for \$405,000. To be eligible the project must be along a fixed guideway BRT or rail corridor, with at least 50% in exclusive transit lanes, including Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes. Transit project sponsors must partner with entities with land use planning and zoning authority. The City of Spokane and Spokane County are the subrecipients and will be using the funds to co-develop a TOD corridor land use and infrastructure plan. STA will be the grant recipient and administrator tasked with reimbursing the subrecipients using the grant funds. The objective is to support revitalization and in-fill development along the future Division BRT project. This will support ridership in the area and benefit the community with more housing and jobs within easy reach of transportation. The draft interlocal agreement is a framework for future subrecipient agreements with both Spokane County and the City of Spokane. The agreement makes clear that there are federal requirements with regards to using the grant funds. It also identifies in-kind matches from each jurisdiction which will need to be tracked and reported to fulfill our obligations as direct recipient of the grant. The interlocal agreement formalizes roles with respect to the grant. This includes identifying the scope of work, the project budget and schedule, and project contacts.

Chair French provided clarification regarding his support for this project. He has voted in support of this project four times and will continue to support it, while also continuing to ensure that Division Street continues to service freight traffic as it delivers goods and services to retailers and businesses along the Division Street corridor.

Mr. Tim Hattenburg moved to recommend the Board authorize the CEO to execute the Division Street BRT TOD Study Interlocal Agreement with the City of Spokane and Spokane County. Ms. Stratton seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

B. BOARD DISCUSSION AGENDA

1. RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS GRANT APPLICATION APPROVAL

Mr. Karl Otterstrom presented. The U.S. Department of Transportation's (US DOT) new Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) grant program includes \$1.15 billion for construction projects addressing mitigation of a "burdening" facility, improving access, and building/improving "complete streets". The purpose of the grant is to improve access to daily needs such as jobs, education, healthcare, food, and recreation by removing, retrofitting, or mitigating highways or other transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity (i.e., mobility, access, or economic development). This program prioritizes disadvantaged communities with matching requirements waived for projects that primarily serve disadvantaged communities. Applications for this grant are due September 28, 2023. STA Planning and Development staff initiated a collaborative effort with planning and engineering staff from the cities of Spokane and Spokane Valley to explore the possibility of a joint application under this program. This partnership identified an opportunity for a capital construction project to reconnect and enhance the neighborhoods impacted by Interstate 90 between Liberty Park and Edgecliff Park along Park Road. The partnering staff prepared a concept for the "Liberty to Edgecliff Improvements to Accessibility" (LEIA) program to seek funding to achieve the goals of the RCN grant program. The proposed LEIA program will follow the segment of Route 94 East Central/Millwood between Liberty Park in the East Central Neighborhood to Edgecliff Park at 8th Avenue and Park Road in Spokane Valley. This

is an area that has been particularly impacted by the construction of I-90. These were areas that had established communities where houses were razed for the construction and expansion of I-90. Inside both the City of Spokane and the City of Spokane Valley there are census tracts that are designated as areas of persistent poverty based on factors that the US Department of Transportation (US DOT) has identified as priorities for investment in the grant, with a target of at least 40% of the grant proceeds going towards these communities. The LEIA program's purpose is to leverage grant funds to support multimodal improvements such as sidewalks, bus stops, crosswalks, bicycle facilities, and streetscape. Route 94 is a central focal point because it is a way that already reconnects these areas. The disruptive impacts of I-90 to the communities are widely known and the lack of measures to mitigate these impacts have fallen short of restoring community access and equity, posing a disadvantage to residences and businesses particularly in areas of the neighborhood south of I-90. The LEIA program seeks to leverage past and ongoing planning efforts to revitalize, reconnect and improve neighborhoods for current residents and drive a more equitable community. STA is currently conducting an online survey and has held outreach to garner feedback and support from organizations invested in the area. The preliminary scope will include bus stop improvements, east-west and north-south connectivity to provide better access to the freeway pedestrian/bike facilities crossings built by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), improved transit connectivity, and extending and enhancing bicycle facilities in the area. This scope will be redefined during outreach events and in partnership with the neighborhoods and community organizations. The current rough cost estimate is \$25M, which will be further refined and programmed prior to the submission of the application. Notably, the grant does not require local match for projects that will serve communities of persistent poverty.

Ms. Stratton expressed her appreciation for this effort and that she was grateful for the early outreach to the communities. Mr. Hattenburg added that he could not think of a better partnership or collaboration than STA and the City of Spokane Valley to make these improvements. Mr. Dunne wanted to recognize the outreach objective; it is a model for the community. Mr. Dunne inquired about the removal of the pedestrian overpasses. Mr. Otterstrom stated that all of the overpasses will be removed and WSDOT will replace as part of the new interchange I-90 will have with the North Spokane Corridor. The objective for the LEIA program is to extend the benefits of those new crossings built by WSDOT with pedestrian and bicycle improvements reaching into the neighborhoods. Chair French suggested there may be opportunities for additional partnerships.

Ms. Stratton moved to recommend that the Board of Directors authorize submittal of a Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods grant application for the Liberty to Edgecliff improvements to Accessibility (LEIA) program, for approximately \$25 million in federal funds, and authorize the CEO to execute on behalf of STA a letter of intent to set forth the preliminary interest and understanding of the Spokane Transit Authority (STA), the City of Spokane Valley and the City of Spokane relative to said program. Mr. Hattenburg seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

5. REPORTS TO COMMITTEE

A. CONNECT SPOKANE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: PHASE 2 UPDATE

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the background. *Connect Spokane* is STA's comprehensive plan, functioning as a key policy document for various decisions that affect the long-term direction of the agency. The plan was originally adopted in 2010, its major update was in 2017, and a minor update was adopted in 2019. In May 2022, Phase 1 of the current major update was adopted by the Board of Directors. Phase 1 helped inform the current strategic planning effort known as Connect 2035, and Phase 2 is informed by new goals developed in the early phase of Connect 2035, completed last year. Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the proposed scope of the *Connect Spokane* Phase 2 update and provided a timeline for the various elements, outreach, and the proposed Committee Calendar. Staff intend to begin working with the Committee in October on several elements of the plan to advance the update process.

B. CONNECT 2035 STRATEGIC PLAN: PHASE 2 UPDATE

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the agenda and related materials that will be discussed at Connect 2035's workshop occurring right after today's Planning and Development Committee meeting. Board engagement will be scheduled through a series of workshops. Target adoption of the final plan is scheduled for November – December, 2024. The next Board workshop is tentatively scheduled for November 1st, with the purpose of discussing financial scenarios and modeling, and to gather feedback on transit network alternatives.

6. CEO REPORT

Ms. E. Susan Meyer presented the CEO Report:

August 2023 Voter-Approved Sales Tax Revenue (June Sales) Update: Actual (\$10,624,848) compared to budget (\$10,291,837) for a 3.2% difference of \$333,011. Sales tax revenue is 2.6% YTD above budget (\$1.9M), 3.2% above August 2023 actual (\$0.1M) and 2.6% YTD above 2023 actual (\$1.1M).

City Line Ridership: Ms. Meyer reviewed City Line preliminary ridership July 16 - September 2, 2023 as compared to the other top three routes: 4 Monroe-Regal, 25 Division, and 90 Sprague. City Line ridership is trending upward, recently surpassing Route 90 Sprague. September 1, 2023 was likely the highest ridership day since the pandemic at 30,000 rides system wide. Mr. Otterstrom presented data on the City Line average weekday passenger activity at the top 10 locations along the line.

7. COMMITTEE INFORMATION – None

8. REVIEW OCTOBER 4, 2023, COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

9. NEW BUSINESS - None

10. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

Mr. Hattenburg complimented STA's assistance with the evacuation efforts during the Gray Fire in August. Mr. Otterstrom introduced Mr. Brian Jennings, STA's new Deputy Director for Community Development.

11. ADJOURN

With no further business to come before the Committee, Chair French adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING: WEDNESDAY, October 4, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vicki Clancy".

Vicki Clancy, Executive Assistant
Planning and Development Department