

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

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the March 5, 2025, Meeting

Northside Conference Room
Spokane Transit Authority, 1230 W. Boone Avenue, Spokane, WA
w/Virtual Public Viewing Option

MEMBERS PRESENT

Tim Hattenburg, City of Spokane Valley – *Chair*
Lili Navarrete, City of Spokane
Kitty Klitzke, City of Spokane
Chris Grover, Small Cities Representative (Cheney)
Ex-Officio
Rhonda Bowers, Labor Representative
(Non-voting)
Brandon Rapez-Betty, Interim Co-Chief Executive Officer
Karl Otterstrom, Interim Co-Chief Executive Officer

MEMBERS ABSENT

Al French, Spokane County
Dan Dunne, Small Cities Representative (Liberty Lake)

STAFF PRESENT

Nancy Williams, Chief Human Resources Officer
Carly Cortright, Chief Communications &
Customer Service Officer
Kade Peterson, Chief Information Officer
Tammy Johnston, Interim Senior Financial
Services Manager
Vicki Clancy, Executive Assistant to the Chief
Planning & Development Officer

PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL

Megan Clark, Etter, McMahon, Lamberson, Van
Wert & Oreskovich, P.C.

GUESTS PRESENT

Jessica Kelch, Senior Project Manager
Christian Bigger, Zero-Emission Fleet & Facilities
Manager
Emily Poole, Principal Transit Planner

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Tim Hattenburg called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and Ms. Vicki Clancy conducted roll call.

2. COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT

Chair Hattenburg had no updates for the Planning & Development Committee.

3. COMMITTEE ACTION

A. MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 5, 2025, COMMITTEE MEETING

Ms. Lili Navarrete moved to approve the February 5, 2025, Planning & Development Committee meeting minutes. Chair Hattenburg seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. COMMITTEE ACTION

- A. BOARD CONSENT AGENDA - none
- B. BOARD DISCUSSION AGENDA - none

5. REPORTS TO COMMITTEE

A. DIVISION STREET BUS RAPID TRANSIT: DESIGN AND PUBLIC OUTREACH UPDATE

Mr. Karl Otterstrom presented an overview of the Division Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project which is part of *Connect 2035*. The project is working toward 30% completion of design. Mr. Otterstrom reviewed other recent activities, including environmental documentation, traffic studies, public outreach, and coordination with partner agencies.

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the project schedule, with project completion set for 2030, and reviewed some potential risks to the schedule timeline, most notably the completion of the North Spokane Corridor (NSC). Mr. Otterstrom presented a conceptual mitigation strategy; this is intended to be a multi-month discussion to maintain the comprehensive multimodal vision of *DivisionConnects*. Staff would like to explore the feasibility of completing the project in phases, develop a schedule and funding strategy for completion of all phases of the current project, and update the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) as needed.

Councilmember Klitzke joined the meeting at 10:13.

Chair Hattenburg drew a parallel with City of Spokane Valley using phasing to allow local projects to continue moving forward during times of uncertainty. Mr. Otterstrom agreed that this was a great example that demonstrates the importance of phasing and of maintaining momentum on a project. Mr. Otterstrom reviewed next steps. Mr. Hattenburg inquired as to how grant money will be affected through all of this. Mr. Otterstrom responded that part of the intention of working to deliver BRT by 2030 is to avoid losing the funds; this topic will be touched on more in a later report.

B. CONNECT 2035 STRATEGIC PLAN: DRAFT INITIATIVE SEQUENCING

The Connect Strategic Plan is the roadmap for investments and initiatives to maintain and improve public transportation infrastructure and services for the region through 2035. Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the vision, mission statement, and board-developed goals for *Connect 2035*. Mr. Otterstrom shared the March 20, 2025, Board Workshop Agenda and objectives. Mr. Otterstrom presented the proposed outcomes, and the *Connect 2035* timeline. There are three major eras over the next decade. The current era represents activities undertaken before a ballot measure is presented to voters to renew STA's 2/10 of 1% sales tax approved in 2016. Mr. Otterstrom noted that STA's ability to obligate federal funds for the project relies in part on demonstrating to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that Spokane Transit is financially sustainable and able to maintain current service levels. A renewal of the sales tax is key to STA's ability to maintain service. The second era was focused on major capital projects, to include constructing and launching Division Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the Clean Energy Campus which are complementary to efforts with initiatives that have longer lead times. The final era involves future planning of projects related to high-capacity transit. Success in the first two eras could place STA in a position to pursue further system growth. Next steps include a Board Workshop on March 20, 2025, to review the sequencing timeline in anticipation of finalizing the materials for a Committee recommendation for Board action on April 2, 2025.

C. FACILITIES MASTER PLAN: PHASE I UPDATE

Mr. Brandon Rapez-Betty provided an update on Phase 1 of the Facilities Master Plan (FMP), which was last reported to the Planning & Development Committee on September 4, 2024. Mr. Rapez-Betty reviewed the guiding principles, and a list of identified needs. Ms. Jessica Kelch

provided an update on the FMP. STA continues to use programming and site analysis to identify the need for both a training facility and clean energy base between now and 2030. Due Diligence has revealed potential new properties to analyze, and Due Diligence continues for existing STA properties. Ms. Kelch provided a list of proposed sites, and the principal criteria used in evaluating the sites. Ms. Kelch presented diagrammatic sketches of the different facility elements, helping to understand the size of potential sites and the opportunity for flexibility in building a new facility in phases. Staff created a conceptual view of how the FMP timing and sequencing relates to other STA plans and initiatives.

Mr. Rapez-Betty presented how the FMP relates to the fleet transition. The FMP is meant to progress the Board-approved Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) transition plan. Mr. Rapez-Betty reviewed fleet composition scenarios which gradually phase out the use of diesel buses over the next 20 years. The first scenario transitions from diesel to Battery Electric Buses (BEB), the second and third scenarios consider the potential for hydrogen fuel cells. Building clean energy facilities is deeply tied to the transitioning of buses. It is important to have dual propulsion opportunities, a facility would need enough power for the BEB charging but also include the possible implementation of a hydrogen fuel cell infrastructure.

Ms. Kelch presented the Phase 1 program schedule. Next steps include design and construction (with board approval) which may run concurrently. Mr. Rapez-Betty added that like Division Street BRT, moving forward with the clean energy campus would also rely on the renewal of the 2/10 of a cent tax.

D. 2026-2031 TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN: TACTICAL FRAMEWORK AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

The Committee was offered an opportunity to review existing guidance statements and consider revisions for the 2026-2031 Transit Development Plan (TDP). Mr. Otterstrom presented the planned stakeholder approach. The plan will not be adopted until after the *Connect 2035* sequencing discussion has finished. Mr. Otterstrom explained how the TDP will align with the tactical framework of Washington State's transportation goals, and reviewed the proposed timeline and outreach approach.

Mr. Hattenburg asked about the type of feedback being received on the Kootenai County pilot route. Mr. Otterstrom responded that there is demonstrated interest from some stakeholders in Kootenai County. Employers have asked about connecting to Spokane. However, Kootenai County elected officials do not have any interest in enabling the connection.

Mr. Otterstrom concluded his report by reviewing the final milestones of the preparing the TDP, including a public hearing at the June 26, 2025, STA Board meeting, with adoption taking place at the July 24, 2025, Board meeting.

6. CEO REPORT

Interim Co-CEOs Karl Otterstrom and Brandon Rapez-Betty, presented the CEO Report:

UZBEKISTAN DELEGATION VISIT: Mr. Rapez-Betty reported. STA met with Uzbekistan delegates and local representatives on February 24, 2025. Mr. Rapez-Betty and Ms. Carly Cortright shared specifics on the visit which was sponsored by the Congressional Office for International Leadership and hosted by Friendship Force Eastern Washington/North Idaho. STA staff presented on a variety of transportation topics, and provided a tour of the Boone Northwest Garage. This group was very interested in zero-emission technology. Mr. Rapez-Betty noted that staff presentations were well done and well received.

RECENT PRESENTATIONS AND MEETINGS: Mr. Ropez-Betty reported. Recent presentations and meetings attended by STA staff: March 4, 2025 – Good Roads Association Meeting – attended by Mr. Ropez-Betty and Mr. Otterstrom. Presentations garnered positive reception and understanding of STA’s financial stewardship and the importance of renewing the two-tenths of a cent sales tax to implement *Connect 2035*. February 24 – 25, 2025 – WSTA Board meeting – attended by Mr. Ropez-Betty and Mr. Otterstrom. Meeting included a discussion with Megan Cotton, the Governor’s policy advisor; Julie Meredith, the WSDOT Secretary; Jake Fey, the House Transportation Chair Representative, and Senator Marko Liias, the Senate Transportation Chair. Following the board meeting there were visits with Representatives Mary Dye and Bernbaum.

STATE TRANSPORTATION BUDGET UPDATE: Mr. Otterstrom reported. The House Transportation Committee is drafting different scenarios to understand the impacts and alternatives associated with revenue and budget cuts. There will likely be multiple impacts to Spokane Transit, which could include schedule impacts to the North Spokane Corridor (NSC) which will affect Division Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), and possible suspension or contraction of public transportation grants. Mr. Otterstrom shared a slide from the February 27, 2025, Senate Transportation Committee staff presentation, which shows how the state budget has arrived at its current situation.

MARCH 5, 2025, CAPITAL INVESTMENT GRANT FLY-IN: Mr. Otterstrom reported. This conference was organized by Cardinal Infrastructure. Commissioner Al French attended along with board members of transit agencies from across the country. Several representatives from private businesses serving the transit industry were also present. There were meetings with members of Congress, Trump political appointees, and congressional committee staff. Transportation is an important federal investment which can contribute to economic development and provide access to jobs. Board and committee members attending the conference have this in common. Transportation is a community effort that can be positively received by both parties.

7. COMMITTEE INFORMATION - *none*
8. REVIEW APRIL 2, 2025, COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA
9. NEW BUSINESS – *none*
10. COMMITTEE MEMBERS’ EXPRESSIONS

Chair Hattenburg noted that there will be challenges, however, the Board and committee members of STA are experienced, and the agency will get through the upcoming challenges with a lot of hard work.

11. ADJOURN

With no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Hattenburg adjourned the meeting at 11:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Vicki Clancy, Executive Assistant
Planning & Development Department