



# MONTHLY UPDATE



## News & Announcements



### First Double Deckers Arrive

The first two of seven double-decker buses arrived at STA on December 23, 2024 with five more expected by February 2025. The buses will serve Routes 6 and 66, connecting Spokane and Cheney, and are anticipated to be in service by September 2025. . .

[Read more](#)





## STA's New Interim Co-CEOs

In late November 2024, STA's Board of Directors appointed two internal executives as Interim Co-CEOs while the agency continues its national search for the next CEO. Karl Otterstrom and Brandon Rapez-Betty will serve as co-CEOs until the next CEO is selected and onboarded later this year. Their shared priority is to ensure a seamless operational transition while maintaining momentum on the many projects and plans already underway. Otterstrom will continue to serve in his capacity as STA's Chief Planning & Development Officer while Rapez-Betty will continue as Chief Operations Officer.

"We're excited for the coming year and what it will bring for STA," remarked Otterstrom. "We want to maintain the momentum we have built as an agency."

"Transitions always bring some level of uncertainty," added Rapez-Betty. "However, Karl and I are confident our partnership in this structure will ensure stability, consistency, and strong leadership during the interim period."



Brandon Rapez-Betty



Karl Otterstrom

## New Chief Information Officer



STA is excited to announce the creation of a new Chief Information Officer (CIO) position. Kade Peterson, previously STA's Senior Information Services Manager, has been promoted to CIO.

"We have a dynamic and talented team at STA that I've had the privilege to work with for the past two years," Peterson said. "I look forward to what we'll accomplish."

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## Two New Board Members

At the January 16 Board of Directors meeting, STA welcomed two new members to its Board: [Lily Navarrete](#) and [Michael Cathcart](#). Navarrete is a city council member for the City of Spokane, representing District 2. Also a city council member for the City of Spokane, Cathcart represents District 1.

## Rider Interest



## STA Achieves Major Ridership Milestone in 2024

STA reached a significant milestone in 2024, with annual bus ridership topping over 10.16 million trips. This represents a 94% increase from 2021 when ridership dropped to just 5.24 million due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a trend experienced by transit agencies nationwide. STA's bus ridership recovery also surpasses 2019 pre-pandemic ridership of 9.8 million rides, solidifying its position as the second busiest bus network in the state, according to the most recent [data from the National Transit Database](#) at the Federal Transit Administration.

“Surpassing the 10 million mark is a testament to the essential role that public transit plays in Spokane’s economy and daily life,” said Karl Otterstrom, STA Interim Co-Chief Executive Officer. “The multi-year increase in ridership is a major accomplishment and is attributable to STA’s dedication at adding service such as the City Line, the region’s first Bus Rapid Transit route, as we emerged from the Pandemic.”

[Read more](#)

## New Bus Washer Operational



On January 6, a new bus washer became operational at STA’s Valley Service Center (Fleck). The previous washer was originally installed in the early 1990s. The new washer has several useful features. Water reclamation allows the wash to reuse about 80% of the water from a previous wash. The washer can also be adjusted for seasonal needs, and it has a sensor to

automatically adjust to the type of vehicle being washed, a feature which STA Servicers have noted will save an immense amount of time. The washer was largely funded by a Washington State Department of Transportation Bus and Bus Facilities Grant.



## Feedback

### Amenities Survey for Division Street BRT Now Open

STA is seeking community input on select amenities for the Division Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project with a survey running from Wednesday, January 22 to Tuesday, February 18, 2025. The survey seeks feedback on shelter design, station art elements, digital monitors, and more.

[Take the survey](#)

## Transit Education

### Double Decker FAQs



Learn more about the features and amenities of the new double deckers as well as why STA has invested in them. Also find out whether they will get stuck under viaducts along the route (spoiler: they won't).

[Learn more](#)





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