

PERFORMANCE MONITORING & EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of June 3, 2026, Meeting
Northside Conference Room
1230 W Boone Avenue, Spokane, WA

In person meeting with optional virtual link

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' PRESENT

Tim Hattenburg, City of Spokane Valley*
Bill Campbell, City of Airway Heights (*Ex-Officio*)
Dan Sander, City of Millwood (*Ex-Officio*)
Josh Kerns, Spokane County
Michael Cathcart, City of Spokane
Zack Zappone, City of Spokane
Karl Otterstrom, Chief Executive Officer

**Committee Chairman*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Brandon Rapez-Betty, Chief Operations Officer
Carly Cortright, Chief Communications and Customer Service Officer
Emily Poole, Chief Planning & Development Officer
Kade Peterson, Chief Information Officer
Nancy Williams, Chief Human Resources Officer
Robert Hamud, Chief Financial Officer
Molly Fricano, Executive Assistant to the COO

PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL

Steve Lamberson, Etter, McMahon, Lamberson, Van Wert & Oreskovich, P.C.

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1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**
Chair Hattenburg called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and roll call was conducted.
 2. **COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT**
Chair Hattenburg had no report at this time.
 3. **COMMITTEE APPROVAL**
 - A. **Minutes of May 6, 2026, Committee Meeting**
Mr. Zappone moved to approve the May 6, 2026, committee meeting minutes. Mr. Cathcart seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
 4. **COMMITTEE ACTION** (none)
 - A. Board Consent Agenda
 5. **REPORTS TO COMMITTEE**
 - A. **2026 First Quarter Year-to-Date Performance Measures**
Mr. Rapez-Betty presented the 2026 First Quarter Year-to-Date Performance Measures Summary, noting that the full presentation is available on the STA website. Each performance measure aligns with a specific Spokane Transit priority, and these quantifiable benchmarks demonstrate the agency's commitment to accountability.

He highlighted significant improvements in both Fixed Route and Paratransit preventable accident rates, with the Fixed Route rate being the lowest in five years. These improvements may be attributed, in part, to telematics monitoring. Mr. Rapez-Betty also noted that STA is now fully staffed with Fixed Route drivers, resulting in more than 99% of scheduled service being consistently delivered.

Discussion followed regarding the increase in youth ridership alongside a decline in adult ridership, despite overall growth in fixed-route usage. This trend reflects a shift in rider demographics rather than a decrease in total ridership. It was noted that declining enrollment at Eastern Washington University and local community colleges is likely a major contributing factor.

Council Member Zappone suggested providing graduating students with a Connect Card for a subsidized period. This approach could help transition youth riders into long-term adult riders and support ridership continuity.

B. Opportunity Fare Program Update

Dr. Cortright provided a six-month update on the Opportunity Fare pilot. Open enrollment is performing well, with more than 300 participants, while the housing-based approach has experienced limited uptake despite ongoing outreach efforts. The program is having a positive impact on ridership, but financial impacts remain minimal and within the program cap. Discussion focused on perceived enrollment barriers and limited data on incomplete applications. The committee emphasized the need to strengthen community partnerships and establish clear success metrics.

C. 2026 Community Perception Survey Results Summary

Dr. Cortright presented results from the 2026 Community Perception Survey conducted by ETC Institute in March and April of 2026, highlighting public awareness and views of STA services. The survey coincided with media coverage of the double-decker investigation, which may have influenced responses. The target sample size was 400 respondents, and a total of 460 surveys were completed.

There was an overall shift in how respondents rated the Spokane region's transportation system overall, with more positive evaluations and fewer respondents describing the system as fair compared to prior years.

It was also reported that just over half of respondents rated Spokane Transit as doing a good or excellent job providing service, reflecting a slight decline from the previous year but remaining within the margin of error, though negative ratings increased, likely tied to the double-decker incident.

There was a decrease from 2025 in perceived value across several key measures, including services for individuals with special mobility needs, overall value to the region, and support for low-income individuals requiring transportation. However, these measures still rated high and were consistent with years prior to 2025.

Concern was raised that, in the context of a ballot measure, many respondents indicated they did not know whether funds are being used appropriately, with many answering “don’t know,” highlighting the need for clearer transparency and communication to build public trust.

Overall, results reflect continued community support for transit, with opportunities to enhance communication, visibility, and public understanding. Even though results dipped slightly from 2025 to 2026, ratings remain higher than in 2023 and exceed the national average. A new rider survey in five months will help assess the impact of the Double Decker investigation.

Council Member Cathcart asked if ETC is able to provide customized benchmarking comparing transit systems with guaranteed funding to those without, and how their outcomes differ. Dr. Cortright stated she would ask.

6. CEO REPORT

Mr. Otterstrom reported on the following topics:

- The 2026 Community Perception Survey is available online at the Spokane Transit website. Last year was the first time the survey was made available on the STA website, making it more accessible for anyone reviewing meeting materials.
- The STA Bus Roadeo took place the previous weekend, which was a successful event with strong participation. Photos and highlights will be shared at the next board meeting.
- SkyFest will be taking place on June 6-7 at Fairchild Airforce Base. STA will be providing express shuttle service from downtown to Fairchild Air Force Base. Shuttles will run approximately every half hour, with the schedule available on the STA website.
- There is a financial transparency memo that has been distributed to board members and will be posted on the Financial Information page on the STA website. The memo explains STA’s overall financial picture, including why the agency maintains reserves, how those reserves are used, and how debt factors into long-term planning.

7. JULY 1, 2026 – COMMITTEE MEETING DRAFT AGENDA REVIEW

Council Member Zappone requested two future agenda items for discussion before year-end: bus wraps, including policy considerations and community partnerships, and special events/strategic partnerships.

The committee discussed potential advertising and sponsorship opportunities on bus wraps for revenue generation. Mr. Otterstrom noted that peer transit agencies are generally reducing advertising revenue expectations, as returns are typically modest outside major markets. Regarding special event fares, Mr. Otterstrom confirmed they were previously reviewed annually but are now governed by a standard Special Event Fare Policy adopted by the Board. He suggested reviewing the 2027 events schedule to identify opportunities for community support. Discussion also included an update on the potential partnership with the Spokane Public Facilities District (SPFD). STA is prepared to partner, but progress is on hold due to SPFD’s ongoing procurement process. Mr. Otterstrom added that STA is also pursuing a partnership with the Spokane Chiefs.

8. NEW BUSINESS

9. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

10. ADJOURN

With no further business to come before the committee, Chair Hattenburg adjourned the meeting at 2:49pm.

The next committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 1, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. in person with a virtual Teams joining option.

Respectfully submitted,

Molly Fricano

Molly Fricano

Executive Assistant to the Chief Operations Officer