

PERFORMANCE MONITORING & EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of May 6, 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*
Dan Sander, City of Millwood (*Ex-Officio*)
Josh Kerns, Spokane County
Michael Cathcart, City of Spokane
Karl Otterstrom, Chief Executive Officer

**Committee Chairman*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' ABSENT

Bill Campbell, City of Airway Heights (*Ex-Officio*)
Zack Zappone, City of Spokane

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

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

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 April 1, 2026, Committee Meeting

Mr. Cathcart moved to approve the April 1, 2026, committee meeting minutes. Mr. Kerns seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

B. Battery Electric Bus On-Route Charging: Scope of Work Approval

Ms. Poole introduced Dan Wells, Director of Capital Development, to present the scope of work approval for the Battery Electric Bus On-Route Charging project. Mr. Wells provided an overview of the project, noting its inclusion in the Capital Improvement Program, its partial grant funding, and the need to expand charging capacity to support the agency's zero-emission fleet goals. The project includes installation of on-route charging infrastructure at the Valley Transit Center and Liberty Lake Park and Ride, along with associated site and electrical improvements.

Mr. Wells shared that the total project budget was approximately \$4.9 million with an estimated construction cost of \$1.9 million. The anticipated timeline for design, procurement, and construction was also discussed.

Mr. Cathcart moved to approve, by motion, the general scope of work and authorize staff to release an Invitation for Bid for the Battery Electric Bus On-Route Charging contract. Mr. Kerns seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. COMMITTEE ACTION

A. Board Consent Agenda

1. Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan - Approval of 2026 Update (Resolution)

Ms. Williams introduced Stephanie Crawford, Director of Safety, who presented the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) 2026 Update. Ms. Crawford explained the PTASP is a federally required annual document outlining STA's Safety Management System. She shared the PTASP was reviewed by the Employee Safety Committee and will be presented to the STA Board for final approval at the May Board meeting.

Ms. Crawford outlined key updates and reported improved safety trends, including fewer safety events, preventable collisions, and operator assaults, along with increased paratransit reliability. She noted pedestrian incidents and training completion as areas for continued monitoring.

Mr. Hattenburg moved to approve, by resolution, the 2026 updates to the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan as presented. Mr. Cathcart seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Battery Electric Bus On-Route Charging: Equipment Purchase

Ms. Poole introduced Dan Wells, Director of Capital Development, to present the Battery Electric Bus On-Route Charging Equipment Purchase brought forward for decision due to the cost exceeding \$1 million. Mr. Wells provided background and explained the project supports the agency's zero-emission fleet transition, noting that existing charging capacity is already at its limit. The proposed equipment includes pantograph-based fast chargers and supporting infrastructure for installation at the Valley Transit Center and Liberty Lake Park and Ride.

The total project budget is approximately \$4.9 million, with an estimated equipment cost of \$1.58 million. Mr. Wells also outlined the anticipated timeline, with construction expected to begin August 2026 and continue through August 2027.

Mr. Cathcart moved to approve, by motion, the sole source purchase of charging equipment necessary for the Battery Electric Bus On-Route Charging project. Mr. Kerns seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

5. REPORTS TO COMMITTEE

A. 2026-2027 Workforce Development Plan

Ms. Williams introduced Kate Kelly, Manager of Training and Workforce Development, who provided background on the 2026–2027 Workforce Development Plan which focuses on strengthening employee training, recruitment, and retention. Ms. Kelly highlighted key initiatives, including the launch of Accelerate, a learning management system, the Pathfinders mentorship program, and the formation of a recruitment and retention task force. A video on

the Pathfinders mentorship program was shared. Additional efforts include continued integration of CliftonStrengths to support employee development and team effectiveness.

B. FIFA Planning

Dr. Cortright shared an update on the FIFA planning efforts, highlighting preparations for the *Summer of Soccer* and the agency's role in supporting increased activity. She outlined plans to increase service on select routes, provide shuttle service to Fan Zone events, and enhance security and customer support during peak times.

Additional efforts include promoting the use of transit through partnerships with Visit Spokane and Spokane Sports, distributing special promotional items, and encouraging riders to use tools such as the Transit App and tap-to-pay.

C. Fixed Route System Performance Report

Ms. Poole presented the 2025 Fixed Route System Performance Report, which provides accountability and transparency on route performance, analysis methods, and action plans to address underperformance. She noted that the report is the result of a significant agency-wide effort and is used to track system improvements year over year.

The report includes information on ridership, energy use, fares, park and ride activity, and detailed route performance data. It is publicly available on the agency's website, along with downloadable files associated with the report located from various sources.

D. Citizen Advisory Committee Update

Dr. Cortright provided an update from the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), noting that the committee received presentations on several key initiatives, including rider surveys, corridor planning, long-range development plans, performance measures, safety and security, and upcoming community engagement efforts.

CAC Chair Dan Brown shared a summary of recent accomplishments. Mr. Brown praised the committee's diversity and strong engagement across all aspects of transit, highlighting the valuable input provided by members. Although membership previously reached its maximum, some turnover took place, but there is confidence in attracting qualified applicants to fill upcoming openings. Active outreach efforts, including neighborhood meetings and hands-on transit field trips, revealed community interest and the need to better educate the public on available transit services. Overall, the CAC's work is helping improve awareness and understanding transit within the community.

6. CEO REPORT

Mr. Otterstrom reported on the following topics:

- **Proposed Funding Measure Update:** Legal counsel submitted the required information package to the county auditor after committee review. Both Pro and Con Committees are completing their respective work. The final decision on the funding measure rests with the community.
- **Bloomsday:** Transit service was highly successful, with approximately a 50% increase in shuttle ridership, especially strong demand for trips to the race. Park-and-ride locations such as Ferris High School and NorthTown Mall saw very high usage.

Despite detours affecting regular routes, overall ridership remained strong. Transit ambassadors were deployed downtown to assist riders proactively, resulting in positive public feedback and improved navigation during the event.

- **Ridership Trends:** Ridership continues to increase, potentially influenced by rising gas prices. Friday, May 1, 2026, reached over 41,000 riders, which is the highest of the decade, with strong weekend ridership exceeding 21,000 on Saturday, May 2, 2026.
- **Fare Options and Accessibility:** Customers are increasingly utilizing convenient payment methods, including Connect Cards for long-term savings and tap-to-pay options, which were especially useful for event riders who did not pre-purchase passes.
- **Planning for Upcoming Opportunities:** The same transit strategies and resources used for Bloomsday will be applied to upcoming events such as *Summer of Soccer* to further showcase STA system ease and accessibility.
- **Staff Recognition and Organizational Progress:** Appreciation was expressed for staff and presenters, emphasizing the value of subject matter experts and recognizing continued growth in organizational expertise, particularly in capital projects and safety initiatives.

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

8. NEW BUSINESS

9. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

10. ADJOURN

With no further business to come before the committee, Chair Hattenburg adjourned the meeting at 2:33pm.

The next committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 3, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. in person with a virtual Teams joining option.

Respectfully submitted,

Molly Fricano

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Executive Assistant to the Chief Operations Officer