

MEETING MINUTES

Spokane Regional Transportation Council Transportation Technical Committee
February 22, 2017
421 W Riverside Ave Suite 500, Spokane, Washington

1. Call to Order

Mr. Brandon Blankenagel, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Committee Members Present

Brandon Blankenagel	City of Spokane	April Westby	Spokane Regional Clean Air
Louis Meuler	City of Spokane	Mike Frucci	WSDOT-Eastern Region
Chad Coles	Spokane County	Gordon Howell	Spokane Transit Authority
Barry Greene	Spokane County	Heleen Dewey	Spokane Regional Health Distr.
Todd Ableman	City of Cheney	Gloria Mantz	City of Spokane Valley
Roger Krieger	City of Deer Park	Inga Note	City of Spokane
Andrew Staples	City of Liberty Lake	Sean Messner	City of Spokane Valley

Committee Alternates Present

Keith Martin	WSDOT-Eastern Region	Char Kay	WSDOT-Eastern Region
Scott Englehard	Spokane County	Kathleen Weinand	Spokane Transit Authority

Guests

Paul Allen	City of Millwood	Chris Mansfield	TO Engineers
Mark Bergam	City of Airway Heights	Rich Burnett	Citizen
Matt Gillis	Welch Comer		

Staff

Ryan Stewart	Interim Executive Director / Senior Transportation Planner		
Eve Nelson	Senior Transportation Planner	Anna Ragaza-Bourassa	Senior Transportation Planner
Amanda Mansfield	Assoc. Transportation Planner	Julie Meyers-Lehman	Administrative Assistant
Staci Lehman	Communications Coordinator		

Chair Blankenagel presented Ms. Dewey with a certificate of appreciation for her service as Chair last year. The group welcomed new TTC member Ms. Gloria Mantz.

3. Approval of January 25, 2017 Minutes

Mr. Frucci made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Staples seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

5. Technical Member Comments

Mr. Mueller stated the City of Spokane would be holding several open house events on the transportation plan section of the City's comprehensive plan update and a draft plan document along with the dates of the open houses were posted on the city's website.

Mr. Martin said WSDOT Local Programs estimated allocations were out and he and his staff were ready to help with paperwork or scope changes. He noted there was a heightened emphasis on funding packages.

Mr. Coles reported that 20 roads are closed due to flooding and a state of emergency had been declared.

Mr. Ableman said preservation projects would be begin early this year, as they are trying to complete them before WSDOT begins work on SR 904 from Mullenix Road to Betz Road.

Mr. Krieger noted there had been difficulties with repair work due to frost levels down to four and a half feet deep.

Ms. Kay thanked those who came to the Phase II Corridor Sketch Initiative workshop and passed around information about upcoming workshops.

Mr. Staples remarked that bids for the Liberty Lake Road project open tomorrow.

Mr. Frucci stated WSDOT has a number of upcoming projects and ADA updates in urban areas; he thanked jurisdictions for their collaborative approach to communicate with the public and minimize disruptions. He said bridge joint repair on I-90 over 3rd Avenue will have a significant impact on east bound traffic for about 40 days this summer.

Ms. Weinand said there will be bus service changes in September to routes providing service on I-90 to Liberty Lake and Spokane Valley, the Arena Shuttle and to northeast Spokane. She said an on-line survey regarding the future changes was available on the STA website.

Mr. Howell noted the Plaza project is on schedule to be completed this summer and also remarked there are several planning and managerial positions open at STA.

Ms. Dewey reported that SRHD was partnering with WSDOT, Washington Transportation Improvement Board and Washington State Dept. of Health to offer Rural Complete Streets training in Dayton, Ritzville and Chewelah.

Ms. Mantz said City of Spokane Valley was working with Spokane County Utilities to bring sewer service to the Industrial Park on Euclid Ave from Flora Rd to Barker Rd, which will allow for additional economic development in the area.

Ms. Note said that potholes were a major concern right now.

Chair Blankenagel reported that major upcoming projects are the Division Street Gateway, Martin Luther King Boulevard, University District Bridge, Barnes Road, and completion of the Monroe Lincoln roadway replacement.

6. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 2017-2020 March Amendment

Ms. Mansfield noted the public comment period had been extended by five days due to a problem with the new SRTC website. She read and described seven projects in the proposed amendment to the 2017-2020 TIP:

- Spokane County Signal Safety
- Barker Rd/BNSF Grade Separation
- Citywide Reflective Signal Backplates
- Citywide Signal Backplates
- SR 290/Spokane River E Trent Br – Replace Bridge
- US 395/North Spokane Corridor
- US 395/NSC – Spokane River to Francis Ave - Grading

Mr. Meuler asked if any public comments had been received so far and Ms. Mansfield replied as of today no comments have been received.

Mr. Messner made a motion to recommend to the SRTC Board approval of the March amendment to the 2017-2020 TIP, as presented. Mr. Coles seconded the motion. A vote was taken on the motion and it passed unanimously.

7. Additional Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) Program Project Selections

Ms. Ragaza-Bourassa noted that the 2017 Project Tracking Report and Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) Project Delivery Update as of 1/31/2017 were at each person's place and reported the region was currently at 15.9% of the \$11,707,671 target, which must be met by August 1, 2017.

She outlined the obligation target, pending obligations and de-obligations, and explained a \$1.6 million shortfall of the target is expected. She explained that the TIP working group reviewed the STP and CMAQ contingency lists for any projects that are "shovel ready" or able to obligate the funds by the August 1 deadline.

She said that due to the pending STP de-obligations, approximately \$1.2 million in STP funds are anticipated to be available; therefore staff and members of the TIP Working Group are recommending the following project selections off the STP contingency list:

- Spokane – Sprague Ave, Division to Hamilton (PE only - \$440,000)
- Spokane County – Harvard Road (RW only - \$749,365)

Ms. Ragaza-Bourassa said there is approximately \$1.9 million anticipated to be available in CMAQ funding. The TIP Working Group and staff are recommending the following CMAQ project selections:

- Spokane County – Street Sweeper Replacements (\$331,170)
- Millwood – Argonne Road, Empire to Liberty Congestion Relief (PE/RW only - \$205,092)
- Spokane – Centennial Trail Gap, Summit Blvd to TJ Meenach Bridge (PE only - \$150,000)

She noted that the three recommended CMAQ projects total about \$700,000, with \$1.2 million in CMAQ funds remaining that could be used for additional CMAQ project selections.

Ms. Ragaza-Bourassa pointed out that the STP and CMAQ project selections would add to the net obligations bringing those to approximately \$12 million, which only provides a \$300,000 buffer. She asked the committee if they felt the buffer was sufficient or if additional CMAQ or STP projects should be considered.

Mr. Englehard asked if any suggestions had been received for additional projects. Ms. Ragaza-Bourassa replied that Mr. Howell had followed up with the TIP Working Group regarding a proposed project and she turned the floor over to him.

Mr. Howell outlined two different options, both involving the purchase of STA buses, which are CMAQ eligible projects. He said the first option was the use of CMAQ funds to purchase buses instead of the two STA projects on the CMAQ contingency list since STA is not ready to move ahead with those projects at this time. He noted that if STA was awarded funding for bus purchases, they would remove the two remaining projects from the contingency list.

Mr. Howell then described the second option. He said in the last CMAQ call for projects period STA wrote a letter to SRTC to request a reduction in CMAQ funds for the Division Street High Performance Transit Corridor Improvements project in order to free up funding for other projects; the portion of the project to purchase 60 foot articulated buses to increase capacity was removed.

He said the second option was that STA would propose that the remaining \$1.2 million available is used to restore this project back to its original scope and CMAQ request.

The group then discussed the two options.

Mr. Frucci made a motion to fulfill the original funding request by STA to purchase buses for the Division St route. Mr. Krieger seconded the motion.

The group discussed how this project would add to the obligation target buffer and the procedure for adding a removed portion of a project back into the TIP. They discussed several other options which had been covered at the TIP Working Group. Ms. Mantz noted that a City of Spokane Valley project on the contingency list, Evergreen and Broadway ITS, could potentially obligate the PE phase in the amount of \$206,000.

Chair Blankenagel noted there was a motion on the table that must be addressed before beginning a discussion of additional projects.

Mr. Frucci clarified his motion, saying it was to add the STA project to the three CMAQ projects already outlined above, not to replace them.

Ms. Ragaza-Bourassa explained the reasons for the obligation target buffer and the results of failing to meet the target.

Chair Blankenagel called for a vote on the motion and it passed unanimously.

Chair Blankenagel noted the proposed CMAQ list now included the STA buses, then asked Ms. Mantz for further discussion of her project suggestion and she provided details.

The group further discussed the contingency list, project ranking on the list, and the obligation target buffer.

Mr. Frucci made a motion to recommend to the Board the list of additional STP and CMAQ project selections as amended, with the addition of the STA bus purchases and project selections must obligate regional funds prior to August 1, 2017 or risk losing the funds. Mr. Martin seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Blankenagel remarked that the prior discussion completed agenda item 11, TIP Working Group update.

8. Horizon 2040 Update – Draft Chapter One

Ms. Nelson noted updates to each chapter of Horizon 2040 would be brought before the TTC throughout the year for discussion but action would not be requested until November. She provided a summary of the topics covered in Chapter One, a history of the Guiding Principles, and reviewed the two TAC workshops. She described the purpose of the review process, outlined the mechanisms for policy implementation, and provided an example of a specific workshop policy review.

She reported one TAC recommendation was to reduce the number of Guiding Principles from seven to six by combining “Choice & Mobility” and “Quality of Life” because there was so much overlap between the two. Ms. Nelson stated that no new policies were added.

Ms. Nelson called for questions. Ms. Dewey asked if snow removal equipment might possibly be eligible for funding under the snow maintenance policy. Ms. Ragaza-Bourassa replied she did not think so. Mr. Martin remarked that he has seen in other grants programs where application points given for maintenance commitments; not equipment funding specifically, but integrated into the grant application.

Chair Blankenagel called for additional comments or question; there were none and he thanked Ms. Nelson for her presentation.

9. City of Spokane Monroe Street Update Presentation

Chair Blankenagel stated he would provide an update about the Monroe Street project; however it would be primarily a discussion about the public involvement process for this project. He provided a background of the Emerson Garfield neighborhood plan, their original vision for Monroe, and historical classification of Monroe Street. He described the funding which had been received for the project and showed a project timeline starting from 2007.

Chair Blankenagel discussed the meaning of public involvement and described the different breadth and width of public interaction as it occurs through the different phases of project development. He said a stakeholder advisory group, recommended by City Council and the Mayor, had been assembled to objectively review the scope of the project. He stated that even though the project concept was now designed, there was still room to hone and revise it to best fit the needs of the neighborhood.

Chair Blankenagel reported the project team had worked closely with the advisory board, held both a traditional open house and on-line open house, and conducted an internet survey for public input. He provided membership information of the advisory board and noted after many in-depth discussions with the board their input was taken to the open houses. He showed the presentation materials from the open houses and noted the Mayor and City Council Members attended the open houses and conversed with participants. He said a key objective of the project was to find balance between safety, transportation, business vitality and neighborhood livability. He showed the online web tool and the survey responses. He described the next steps, which include reaching out to local business owners individually and discussing methods for the least negative impact.

Mr. Krieger asked if analysis had been done about impact to other north/south routes during peak hours. Chair Blankenagel replied it had, noted the model indicated approximately 230 vehicles would be displaced during peak hours, and said the model also showed no change to level of service. He acknowledged there would be some change in traffic patterns, but was expected to have a minimal impact. Chair Blankenagel said it is recognized that there will be a change on how the corridor will be used and stated the project strives for the area to become a destination, which has a different look than a commuter route.

The group discussed strategies of assisting business districts during the construction process.

10. WSDOT US 2 – Deer Road to Elk Chattaroy Road Preservation

Mr. Frucci reported this was a WSDOT safety project and he presented a history of collisions in the area from 2004 to 2013. He said this was an example of a functioning state highway changed by land use decisions because the land use created an environment around the highway comparable to a city commercial area. He said even though there is modified access control, collisions concentrate mostly on three intersections.

He explained the community engagement process that occurred in late 2013/early 2014 and described the stakeholder groups included in the planning process. Mr. Frucci outlined the methods used to obtain public input and some of the suggestions received, such as: roundabouts, full length center median, u-turns, signals, pedestrian crossings, etc.

Mr. Frucci said the question has become what is the best way to respond to the land use changes that have already happened. He stated WSDOT was attempting to change this one-mile section of US-2 to make the street reflect the environment in which it is located. He said this way of thinking is a bit of a change because historically it was all about how to move the most cars safely at the highest rate of speed; the goal of this project is to get drivers on this section of roadway to slow down.

He showed images of the current design in the contract plans and reiterated that the goal is to find solutions that balance the needs of everyone involved and improved safety. He noted the predominant crashes are turning movement related, so changes to the major intersections are essential.

Mr. Frucci described the plan to get motorists' speeds down to 45 mph throughout the corridor, which is installing chicanes, or curves, into the road. He said the two-way left turn lane will be retained throughout the corridor, lane width will be reduced from 12 feet to 11 feet and sidewalks will be installed; these changes are to give drivers a mental sense that the road is no longer open highway and speed must be reduced. He said overhead advanced warning signs before the US-2/SR 2-6 Intersection will be installed as well.

Ms. Nelson asked if the plan for roundabouts had been withdrawn. Mr. Frucci said that was correct, for the time being. He said crash history on the corridor will be evaluated after the project is complete and if it is not improved there may be more changes necessary in the future.

Mr. Frucci reported initially the plan was to install one roundabout with the safety funds received, leaving the rest of the one mile section of the corridor unchanged; however after reconsideration it was decided that a better use of the funds would be to make improvements to the whole corridor and to try to change the character of the highway to match the area's development.

The group discussed how state facilities can be impacted by local land use decisions and the importance of clearly communicating the potential impact of those decisions to the public, local jurisdictions and elected officials.

Chair Blankenagel thanked Mr. Frucci for the update.

12. Agency Update

Ms. Nelson noted Staci Lehman was working on the 2017 construction map and the new SRTC website. Ms. Nelson reported the application period for Horizon 2040 was now closed, 32 applications were received, and they will be reviewed using the evaluation tool. She reminded the group about the email she sent everyone regarding FGTS classifications on freight routes and the change in deadline from August to June.

13. Future Agenda Items

Ms. Kay suggested a presentation by a representative from WSDOT headquarters on the Washington State Transportation Plan and possibly the Freight Plan as well.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:22 pm.

Julie Meyers-Lehman
Recording Secretary