

MEETING MINUTES

Spokane Regional Transportation Council Board
Thursday, September 13, 2018
SRTC Office, 421 W Riverside Ave, Ste 504, Spokane WA

1. **Call to Order** - Chair Al French brought the meeting to order at 1:02 pm.

2. **Roll Call/Record of Attendance – Excused Absences**

Board Members Present:

Al French, Spokane County Commissioner	Mayor Steve Peterson, City of Liberty Lake
Kate Burke, City of Spokane Council Member	Larry Stone, Major Employer Representative
Dee Cragun, Small Cities/Towns Representative	Joe Tortorelli, WA State Transportation Commission
Mike Gribner, WSDOT-Eastern Region	Kennet Bertelsen, TAC Chair
Lori Kinnear, City of Spokane Council Member	Matt Ewers, Freight/Rail Representative
Larry Krauter, Spokane Airports	Arne Woodard, City of Spokane Valley Council Member
E. Susan Meyer, Spokane Transit Authority	Mike Tedesco, TTC Chair
Dave Malet, City of Airway Heights Council Member	Josh Kerns, Spokane County Commissioner
Paul Schmidt, City of Cheney Council Member	

Guests Present:

Stanley Schwartz, Legal Counsel	Paul Parker, WA State Transportation Commission
Chad Coles, Spokane County	Karl Otterstrom, Spokane Transit Authority
Char Kay, WSDOT-Eastern Region	Larry Larson, WSDOT-Eastern Region
Brandon Blankenagel, City of Spokane	Adam Jackson, City of Spokane Valley
Paul Kropp, Citizen	Mayor Rod Higgins, City of Spokane Valley
Diana Wilhite, Citizen	

SRTC Staff Present:

Sabrina Minshall Executive Director	Anna Ragaza-Bourassa, Senior Transportation Planner
Staci Lehman, Communications Coordinator	Mike Ulrich, Senior Transportation Planner
Jason Lien, Senior Transportation Planner	Tristan De Alwis, Data Scientist
Greg Griffin, Administrative Services Manager	Julie Meyers-Lehman, Administrative Assistant

3. **Public Comments** - There were no public comments.

4. **Executive Director's Report**

Ms. Minshall spoke about:

- WSDOT development of the 2019 rail system plan.
- WSDOT update to the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) funding formula.
- Local agencies and jurisdictions obligated just over \$10M, exceeding the target of \$8.2M
- The latest speaker in the Education Series, Joe Minicozzi, will present at a public meeting later today and a technical session tomorrow.
- In sponsorship with APA Washington, former Governor of Maryland Parris Glendening will be the next speaker in the Education Series on October 3.
- SRTC is hosting a Business After School event in coordination with Greater Spokane Incorporated on October 17 to present information about the work done by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to middle and high school students.
- October 17 & 18 most SRTC staff will be participating in an in-house Project and Program Management training led by EWU. Staff from member agencies are also welcome to attend.
- She will be attending the Association of MPOs (AMPO) conference later this month.

5. Consent Agenda – (5a) Minutes of the August 9, 2018 Board Meeting, (5b) August 2018 Vouchers, and (5c) 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) September Amendment #1

Ms. Meyer made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Mr. Peterson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Recap for August, 2018:			
Vouchers: V120692 to V120717			52,449.91
Salaries/Benefits Warrant Nos.	460563-460574, 463112-463123 & 465606-465617		122,880.03
Interfund, other expenses, and reimbursements processed directly by the City of Spokane			284.50
			175,614.44

6. 2018-2021 TIP September Amendment #2: SRTC Studies

Ms. Minshall explained this item was on the agenda separately to ensure full understanding of the projects. She outlined the two studies (the US 195/I-90 Study and the Division Street Corridor Study), noted that the Board took action in March to set aside STBG funds for the studies, and stated that scope and schedule information were presented to the Board in July and August. She described the work done with stakeholders.

She spoke about project funding, both projects include funding from WSDOT and the City of Spokane is also contributing funding for the US 195/I-90 Study. Ms. Minshall explained that the Division Street study will be done jointly with STA. She said incorporating the studies into the TIP will permit the consulting request for qualifications (RFQ) process; contracts with consultants will be brought to the Board for approval. Ms. Kinnear asked for confirmation that SRTC is coordinating with City of Spokane Planning Department and Ms. Minshall replied affirmatively.

Mr. Stone made a motion to approve 2018-2021 TIP September Amendment #2: SRTC Studies; Mr. Peterson seconded.

Mr. Kerns inquired about the goals of the Division Street study and what can be expected from the final report. Ms. Minshall provided details about what will be examined and projected outcomes. Mr. Kerns expressed concern about accurate traffic count projections as it not known yet how completion of the NSC will affect other north-south arterials. Ms. Minshall replied that no model is perfect, but with WSDOT data and improvements done to parallel roadways, the traffic projection model will be as accurate as possible to the year 2040.

Mr. Gribner said it would be a mistake to wait until hard data becomes available after completion of the NSC before beginning the planning process for Division; opportunities to plan ahead for change would be missed and we would end up being reactive instead of proactive. He stated he has enough confidence in the model data to begin making decisions about where the corridor is headed.

Motion carried unanimously.

7a. Washington Transportation Plan Update

Mr. Parker, Deputy Director of the Washington State Transportation Commission (WTSC), provided information about WTSC’s purpose and responsibilities, and spoke about the road usage charge pilot program. He said the statewide transportation plan is updated every four years. In this update they are focusing on regional differences and how they affect the needs for types of funding and projects. He described the statewide transportation system, the WTSC long-range planning role, and six policy goals.

Mr. Parker outlined the statewide transportation planning process and how the statewide plan interacts with the WSDOT long-range plan and those of other agencies throughout the state. He explained what the draft plan is based upon, spoke about the stakeholder engagement process. He said the final plan will be primarily in a web-based format and spoke about the focus on three topics as they affect the six transportation policy goals: Technology & Innovation, System Resiliency, and Paying for Transportation.

He described the goals and draft recommendations of the plan and important issues identified as part of the update. He said the next steps include public outreach, gathering public input, plan revision, then approval by the WTSC and submittal to the Governor. There were no questions or comments.

7b. Performance Target Setting Update

Ms. Nelson stated that federal mandates require MPO's to have performance measures and performance targets. She explained that after WSDOT set their statewide performance targets on May 20, 2018, MPO's have 180 days to either support WSDOT targets or develop their own quantitative regional targets; that is the issue before the Board today. Ms. Nelson provided an illustration of the performance management cycle and described the reasons why performance management regulations were created.

She reminded the Board that Safety performance targets were approved in December and Public Transit Asset Management targets in June. The areas under consideration now are: (1) Pavement & Bridge Condition (2) Congestion (3) Air Quality. She provided information about the current performance, conditions, locations, and WSDOT targets for: Spokane County bridges, pavement on and off the NHS, congestion, and air quality/emissions reduction. She noted that there are no penalties to MPO's for not meeting targets and the State does not have the refined data to give staff an idea of what the four-year trendline would be for this region.

Ms. Nelson reported that a working group of Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) members convened twice to discuss these targets in-depth, and they were in favor of supporting the WSDOT targets. She remarked that WSDOT is in favor of SRTC supporting the state targets; Puget Sound Regional Council and Benton Franklin Council of Governments are also supporting the WSDOT targets.

Chair French gave a historical perspective of air quality non-attainment in Spokane County and the group further discussed air quality. Mr. Gribner stated that it is unlikely that the federal government would put so much energy into creating a national performance matrix if it was not eventually going to be tied into federal funding. He stated that it is his belief that at some point states will be required to monitor the performance of their transportation systems and address capital investments related to that performance and the results will have an impact on funding. The group discussed prioritization initiatives.

Ms. Minshall noted that she has become aware that many MPOs in small/medium urban areas which have another large urban area in another part of the state (such as eastern/western Washington) are setting their own targets because of the significant differences in conditions and of regional priorities. She feels that SRTC should not set their own targets because the state has not provided enough data about anticipated future conditions; she believes it may be premature to set separate targets that we may not want to live by.

Mr. Ewers explained how freight reliability and decreased freight efficiency impacts the costs of goods for the whole community. He said the cost of transportation for raw materials for some shippers in the area has gone from 6% to 18% and that affects the prices to the consumers.

Mr. Krauter said there is a significant difference between what the state has set versus our baseline and in many instances the difference is negative versus our situation. He asked if the TTC discussed that the terms of what we are considering accepting are at a far lower standard in many of these categories than those we currently have. Mr. Tedesco said the conversation at the TTC resulted in an agreement to follow the recommendation of the working group.

Ms. Nelson said the target setting process is highly technical and without having data to make a trendline or projection line, it would be very hard for the TTC to set realistic targets. She said the recommendation to support WSDOT targets is not an agreement that the State target should be our target as well; it means to agree that SRTC supports the work that the WSDOT is doing. She confirmed that the federal regulation states that MPOs may “accept” or “support” state targets. Mr. Krauter stated his concern about making a statement to support or adopt anything when some of the state targets are at levels below the conditions in the region now.

Ms. Nelson reviewed the pavement performance measurement grid again; the group discussed how MPOs work towards the state and local targets and the ability to adjust targets and requirements being built into the system for DOT oversight over target setting. Ms. Nelson said although there are state reporting requirements, there are no penalties to the MPO for failing to make progress to the target. Mr. Krauter said he does not feel we should make any change from the baseline until additional conversations about the target are held. The group continued to discuss. Mr. Gribner stated that he agrees with SRTC supporting state targets.

After continued discussion the Board asked staff to populate as many of the remaining data sets as possible then bring it back for the October meeting in order to make a more informed decision.

7c. 2019-2022 TIP: Overview

Ms. Ragaza-Bourassa provided an overview of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and explained how it fits into the regional transportation planning process. She reported that the new TIP contains 98 projects, of which seven are new, and totals \$818M over four years and \$1.1B over six years. She presented a graphic that broke out the 98 projects by type, reviewed the determinations for inclusion into the TIP, and described the public involvement process. The Board will be asked to approve the 2019-2022 TIP at the October meeting. There were no questions or comments.

7d. 2019-2022 TIP: New Project Programming

Ms. Ragaza-Bourassa recapped the 2018 Call for Projects process to date, the steps in making priority-driven resource decisions and explained programming. She said the two policy questions before the Board were:

- (1) Should SRTC fully fund fewer projects or partially fund more projects?
- (2) Direction for legacy projects historically partially SRTC funded, but not ranking high in this round.

She presented a list of the pros/cons of partial funding, related TTC/TAC input and concerns about partial funding, and a series of graphs showing, theoretically, the number of projects that could be funded with full funding and with partial funding.

Mr. Krauter said the goal is to advance as many projects as possible and is concerned this approach is overly rigid and oversimplifying a complex process; a one-size-fits all approach could be limiting to funding projects. He questioned what problem was trying to be solved. He stated that any approach should allow the greatest amount of flexibility possible.

Ms. Minshall spoke to historical funding practices, explained the two alternative programming methods, and said the request for policy guidance is in which way does the Board want to the program to be presented; top-down full-funding based upon ranking of fewer projects or a program that partially funds more project and leverages other funding sources? Mr. Krauter said he would like staff to create a program that maximizes the region’s transportation investments; Mr. Gribner agreed.

Mr. Woodard said staff should review funding with agencies on a project by project basis and remarked that smaller agencies do not have the same resources to obtain additional funding as larger agencies. He said flexibility is key to maximizing infrastructure. He explained how receiving partial funding on a project

encourage other agencies to want to participate in the project. He commented that projects now are being completed by collaborative efforts, rather than receiving 100% of funding from one outside source.

Chair French remarked that it would helpful to receive information about other sources of funding available to jurisdictions that are not included on the chart and not under SRTC authority, for example FMSIB, TIB, etc. He said if a program of projects is being assembled that relies on other funding sources, information about the other funding sources should be made available so the Board can make a more informed decision.

Ms. Kinnear is concerned about the plan for the Board to provide feedback on the program of projects as there is so much that is not known at the Board level; the list is a snapshot, but nuances of projects, outside funding sources, etc. is unknown. She said the Board has to rely on staff to inform them. Mr. Tedesco commented that TTC members have committed to do strategic analysis of the program.

Mr. Schmidt said he likes the idea of trying to fuse more resources, although it can be very complicated and he doesn't want to oversimplify the impact to smaller jurisdictions; sometimes if they don't receive 100% funding on a project, it will not go forward. Chair French spoke to the Board's historical practice of setting aside funding for smaller cities and towns.

Ms. Ragaza-Bourassa asked about question 2. The group discussed but did not reach a conclusion. Chair French said that staff should come back with a recommendation on how to maximize resources.

8. SRTC Board Comments

Mr. Schmidt said, in his experience, Performance Measurement is always someone else's idea and it can get political, so best to enter into it with open eyes.

Mr. Peterson spoke about upcoming community events in Liberty Lake.

Mr. Krauter announced new non-stop service to San Diego on Alaska Airlines begins October 2.

Ms. Meyer furnished details about the West Plains Transit Center ribbon cutting ceremony.

Mr. Stone spoke about the recent Transportation Research Board conference he attended.

Mr. Tortorelli said the annual Good Roads Conference is in Spokane on September 19.

9. Adjournment - There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:12 pm.

Julie Meyers-Lehman
Recording Secretary