

MEETING MINUTES

Spokane Regional Transportation Council Board
Thursday, February 14 2019
SRTC Office, 421 W Riverside Ave, Ste 504, Spokane WA

1. **Call to Order** - Chair Al French brought the meeting to order at 1:01 pm.

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

Board Members Present:

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

Board Members Not Present:

Board Alternates Present

Guests Present:

Stan Schwartz, Legal Counsel	Char Kay, WSDOT-Eastern Region
Greg Wright, WSDOT-Eastern Region	Mayor Rod Higgins, City of Spokane Valley
Chad Coles, Spokane County	Karl Otterstrom, Spokane Transit Authority
Adam Jackson, City of Spokane Valley	Katherine Miller, City of Spokane

SRTC Staff Present:

Sabrina Minshall Executive Director	Eve Nelson, Senior Transportation Planner
Ryan Stewart, Senior Transportation Planner	Mike Ulrich, Senior Transportation Planner
Jason Lien, Senior Transportation Planner	Julie Meyers-Lehman, Administrative Assistant

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

Chair French took privilege of the Chair to announce that Mr. Krauter testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure last week and was the only individual on the panel representing the aviation industry; focusing on the need to increase the passenger facility charge. Mr. Krauter said it was a significant privilege to represent this community in front of the Committee.

Chair French noted that agenda item 6b would be addressed next.

6b. Re-appointment of Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Chair

Mr. Schmidt made a motion to re-appoint Mr. Bertelsen as TAC Chair for 2019. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

4. Executive Director's Report

Ms. Minshall reported on:

- This week SRTC hired two Associate Transportation Planners and a Geographic Information Systems intern
- On 2/21/19 the STA Board will consider an agreement between SRTC and STA regarding the Division Street Corridor Study. The agreement will be brought before the SRTC Board in March
- The upcoming 2019 Journal of Business Real Estate Forum will focus on banking and transportation and she will be doing a presentation at the event
- Staff is starting preparations for geography related topics in the upcoming 2020 census. She discussed the census reporting change from TAZ structure to census block groups and tracts. She said staff will keep member agencies updated as more information becomes available
- WSDOT's funding request to the legislature has additional funds for RTPO's. Due to the request for a funding increase and a long standing belief by many that the current funding formula is inequitable, WSDOT and the RTPO Coordinating Committee are discussing changes to the funding formula. She spoke about current state funding distribution between the RTPOs, noting that while RTPO responsibilities have increased, state funding has remained stagnant. She expects the formula changes to yield a small increase to SRTC.

5. Consent Agenda – 5(a) Minutes of the January 18, 2019 Board Meeting, 5(b) January 2019 Vouchers, 5(c) 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) February Amendment

Mr. Peterson made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda is presented. Mr. Woodard seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Recap for January, 2019:		
Vouchers: V120804 to V120822		43,203.83
Salaries/Benefits Warrant Nos.	486599-486607 & 488857-488863	88,922.46
Interfund, other expenses, and reimbursements processed directly by the City of Spokane		1,807.00
		\$ 133,933.29

6a. Interlocal Agreement Terms: Appointed Officials as Alternates for Elected Board Members

Chair French said this item is to try to bring closure to an earlier conversation about the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) and said the intent is to provide clarity about who can serve as an Alternate Board member. He said as part of the team that created the ILA, the expectation was that the alternate for an elected official would also be an elected official, because this body deals with administration and distribution of funding, which is a legislative act therefore there should be legislators at the table.

Mr. Schwartz read ILA Section 5(k), summarized Section 5(a) through 5(d), and noted that the interpretation of paragraph 5(k) would mean, with respect to sections (a) through (d), that elected officials are the only persons that can serve as alternates. He briefly discussed the appointed officials outlined in Sections 5(e) through 5(i). He recommended that if this agenda item is approved, then SRTC Rules of Procedure should be amended to include both clarification of this topic and definition of Board terms as discussed at the December 2018 meeting, with the amended Rules of Procedure to be brought before the Board for approval.

Mayor Condon questioned what circumstances brought about this conversation. Chair French replied there was confusion about whether a staff person could sit on the Board in place of an elected official and this is to provide clarity; he noted that City of Airway Heights had the City Manager attending as alternate for a City Council Member and the question was raised.

Mr. Kerns questioned how if the term “in same capacity” were to be used, how could a Mayor have an alternate? A council member isn’t truly in the “same capacity” as a strong mayor.

Mayor Condon stated if SRTC exists as part of an Interlocal Agreement then Board membership selection should be up to each jurisdiction or organization to select the individual who best represents them. He expressed his surprise that the Board should dictate to member organizations who they can or cannot appoint. Chair French remarked that appointed staff cannot make decisions about how funds are spent or about allocations and this Board does.

Mr. Woodard said continuity of information and knowledge of projects between the Board and member agency is more important than the job position of the member. Chair French suggested maybe an alternate who is an appointed official could attend meetings, but not vote.

Mayor Peterson stated he is in agreement with Mayor Condon and pointed out that there are multiple members of the Board that are non-elected already. He said in smaller cities where council positions are part-time, it can be difficult to find members available during the middle of a business day to attend meetings.

Mr. Schmidt stated he agrees with the clarity this change would provide, said it is the agency not the member that selects the alternate, and as elected officials there is accountability for decisions made.

Mr. Schmidt made a motion that Alternates for SRTC Board Members who are Elected Officials must also be Elected Officials. Mr. Stone seconded the motion. Motion carried, with Mayor Condon, Mr. Kerns, Mr. Malet, and Mayor Peterson voting against.

Chair French asked Mr. Schwartz to prepare the Rules and Procedures documents to reflect the decisions of the Board and bring them back before the Board at a later date for action.

6c. Appointment of Work Group for TAC Analysis

Chair French stated that both the Board Administrative Committee and the TAC have held conversations about the ways in which the TAC can be most effective. He said we are looking for a task force or ad hoc committee to help shape direction for TAC input to the Board.

Mr. Bertelsen said there have been several discussions about the role of the TAC and he and staff want to reinvent the committee in order to provide the most value to the Board. The work group can evaluate how that can be done, whether it’s by membership or the work plan.

Mr. Gribner made a motion to authorize the creation of a task force to create scope and direction of the TAC. Ms. Meyer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Chair French asked who would be willing to participate in the task force; Mr. Woodard, Mr. Kerns, Mr. Tortorelli and Mr. Bertelsen volunteered.

6d. 2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Guidebook

Ms. Nelson explained the purpose of the Guidebook and defined the TIP. She outlined the edits suggested by the TTC and that the Guidebook is being brought before the Board for approval because the partial funding of projects in the SRTC 2018 Call for Projects created some inconsistencies in the policies. The TTC suggested several edits regarding the project contingency list, cost overruns, and geographical segments. She said the

edits can be seen in the red-lined version of the document included in the packet and noted the TTC recommended Board approval of the Guidebook last month.

Ms. Meyer made a motion to approve the 2019 TIP Guidebook as presented. Mr. Woodard seconded the motion and all votes were in favor.

Ms. Nelson said the Board is also being asked to have a discussion regarding a potential new policy on SRTC Project Promotion, which was recommended by the TTC, also in response to partial project funding. She read the proposed language:

“The SRTC Executive Director may promote funding applications for federal and state programs outside the purview of the SRTC Board. Such promotions may include letters expressing concurrence with regional plans, policies, or programs.

Promotion may also include assistance, as desired, to prepare applications and communications on behalf of SRTC member agencies. SRTC promotion will be conducted at the request of a member agency only for projects that are consistent with the MTP.

Promotions will be unbiased, and no project/agency will be prioritized above another project from this region. Any promotion will be reported to the Board and committees.”

Ms. Nelson said the Board is being asked to consider (1) would the policy unintentionally limit opportunities by defining the types of promotion that could be used; and (2) certain projects are more competitive based on the funding sources available. Does remaining neutral or a lack of priority conflict with the Board’s intent to be more competitive statewide?

Board members discussed the intent of the language and the challenge with the word “promotion” or “advocacy” as presented in the TTC policy version. Board members agreed “advisory services” could be a better term, and there were different places in the process where SRTC would engage in helping member agencies. Discussion acknowledged different agencies may need different levels of help from SRTC and SRTC staff did not want to choose winners or losers. Board members discussed the intent of the policy would be to give sideboards to the Executive Director and staff of how to engage with projects and members to help the region be successful in funding pursuits.

SRTC staff will take the Board member suggestions given for policy language and provide language for the Board consideration at a later meeting.

7. US 195/I-90 Study

Mr. Stewart described the purpose of the study is to develop a holistic strategy for addressing safety, operations, access and infrastructure while considering practical solutions as well as the need for more coordinated land use planning and access management between agencies. He spoke about the recently completed WSDOT I-90 Operations Study. He spoke about current conditions in access, infrastructure, road conditions, and land use.

Mr. Stewart identified the agencies that will be participating and said there have been three team meetings so far to discuss study scope. The study approach will evaluate existing conditions, future conditions, multimodal systems analysis to arrive at strategies for a preferred alternative. He discussed the current funding plan and noted interlocal agreements are being finalized. He presented a tentative timeline and reported that the study will likely be complete in late 2020. He said the next steps will be to execute funding agreements, finalize RFQ for release, select a consultant and bring the consultant contract before the Board for approval.

Mr. Gribner announced that WSDOT staff will present additional information for further discussion because there are differences in opinion about the study’s scope; he acknowledged the City of Spokane’s concern that their staff has not had an opportunity to review all of the information prior to today.

Ms. Kinnear requested that public stakeholder outreach extend to the neighborhoods of Eagle Ridge, Latah Creek, West Plains, Grandview Thorpe, lower South Hill, Cliff Cannon and Manito Cannon.

Mr. Gribner noted that WSDOT plans to involve stakeholders at the regional level as well. He said WSDOT staff is here to discuss the history of this project because there has been disagreement about the scope. He said WSDOT has been asked in many different forums about the reasons behind their position and staff is here today to share that. He noted that while the entirety of this information has not been shared with the City of Spokane prior to today, much of it has been; additionally, there have been lengthy discussions regarding the information with City staff.

Mayor Condon said he felt the study is not a good use of resources as the solutions appear to be predetermined. He said WSDOT wants to create a limited access roadway and not allow local access, vehicular or otherwise, so the two agencies are at an impasse. He noted that neighborhoods want more access, not less; many residents in Eagle Ridge work downtown and the 195 issue, combined with discussions about possible closure of existing I-90 on/off ramps, is very problematic. Mayor Condon said the very first step in this study should be to find out what solutions are actually on the table. He re-stated that funding the study seems wasteful because WSDOT is already aware of the only two solutions they are willing to accept: (1) utilization of the Inland Empire Way and other local access roads from the area into downtown or (2) a \$400 million interchange. Mayor Condon highlighted the additional traffic that will come from the projected residential growth on the West Plains and said the idea of having limited access on 195 is unfortunately too late.

Mr. Gribner said from WSDOT's perspective there is a sense of urgency to solve the problem now and the study is an attempt to get people talking about it again. He said people are being harmed on the intersections and the issues need to be addressed without delay. He stated that the discussion needs to be about what agencies and jurisdictions are willing to collectively support together.

Ms. Kay took the floor and presented a historical context of US 195 and spoke about its significance as a national freight corridor, from Canada down to Nevada and California, and provided data on the amount of freight that passes along the corridor yearly. She said the 195 Corridor, through a formal access hearing process, is a limited access facility.

She showed areas of residential development since 1981 when City of Spokane annexed property south on 195; she highlighted the land use milestones along the corridor and noted original documents have been located that support the milestones. In 1992 the City of Spokane approached WSDOT to ask for permission for sewer lines to be extended to support the proposed growth. WSDOT gave permission but noted the interest in preserving the corridor as a regional facility. She said the access management plan was to allow for growth, but to keep limited access along US 195 by utilizing four interchanges; she said this access hearing process was very formalized and extensive public outreach was done. Ms. Kay spoke about past studies of the corridor and noted as this is an era of practical solutions, the proposal being considered is a re-evaluation of the corridor as a whole.

Mr. Gribner said it has been the intent of WSDOT since day one to protect the facility; the position has not changed since sewer lines were installed in the 1980's.

Mayor Condon said launching a study gives a false sense that there will be different outcomes.

Chair French said conversation will resume at next month's meeting.

8. SRTC Board Comments

Mr. Ewers noted the Executive Director of the Washington Trucking Association will be at the Spokane Joint Chambers Transportation Meeting on April 25 to discuss freight issues and other freight topics which were considered by the State Legislature in the recent session. He also reported that Washington State Senator Hobbs has presented a \$17 billion transportation package to the Legislature; however, not all of that package goes directly to transportation. Mr. Ewers said culvert replacement for fish passage is a big issue on the west side of

the state because it is estimated to cost \$3.5 billion and there is no funding. Some legislators relayed to him that if Senator Hobbs bill does not pass, which will help fund the culverts, then they will have to start looking for money elsewhere and that could possibly be Connecting Washington funds, of which the North Spokane Corridor is a part. Mr. Ewers said Eastern Washington officials should monitor this situation closely to protect the NSC funding.

Mr. Tortorelli passed around a list of all the projects included in the \$17 billion transportation package, but none of those funds are scheduled to be spent in Spokane and a very limited amount to be spent in Eastern Washington. He noted that very few Eastern Washington legislators voted in favor of the Connecting Washington program several years ago. He reported that the WSTC is going before the Senate for approval of six commissioners.

Mayor Peterson congratulated Spokane International Airport for the increase in air passenger travel last year.

Chair French reported that State Representative Riccelli recently introduced Bill 1584 to the Legislature which states that RTPOs must provide a voting position on their Board of Directors for local Tribes in a reasonable time frame. He said a legislative committee met yesterday and Spokane County representatives gave testimony, which was primarily neutral because there is a lot that is unclear about the bill. In talking to leadership at other RTPOs, other County Commissioners around the state, there is a lot of concern about the bill because RTPOs are governed by an interlocal agreements and people are questioning how the State can enter as a party to an interlocal agreement and unilaterally change the conditions. He also said there is a lack of clarity about the term "reasonable time frame" in Bill 1584. Mr. Krauter reported that he was invited to meet with the Spokane Tribal Council on behalf of the SRTC Board to discuss the Board's concerns about Tribal membership, but he respectfully declined. Chair French said he and the Board Administrative Committee will continue to research the issue and will keep the Board apprised of the legislation.

9. Adjournment

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

Julie Meyers-Lehman
Recording Secretary