

MEETING MINUTES

Spokane Regional Transportation Council
Board of Directors Meeting – Thursday June 11, 2020
Zoom Video Conference Meeting

1. **Call to Order** – Chair Ben Wick brought the meeting to order at 1:02 pm.

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

Board Members Present:

Mayor Ben Wick, <i>Chair</i>	City of Spokane Valley
Council Member Paul Schmidt, <i>Vice Chair</i>	City of Cheney
Council Member Sonny Weathers	City of Airway Heights
Council Member Lori Kinnear	City of Spokane
Larry Stone	Major Employer Rep.
Matt Ewers	Rail/Freight Rep.
Larry Krauter	Spokane Airports
Commissioner Al French	Spokane County
Commissioner Mary Kunej	Spokane County
E. Susan Meyer	Spokane Transit Authority
Kennet Bertelsen	TAC Chair
Karl Otterstrom	TTC Chair
Council Member Micki Harnois	Town of Rockford, Small Cities/Towns Rep.
Mike Gribner	WSDOT-East. Region

SRTC Staff Present:

Sabrina Minshall	Executive Director
Ryan Stewart	Principal Transportation Planner
Jason Lien	Principal Transportation Planner
Mike Ulrich	Principal Transportation Planner
Eve McMenamy	Principal Transportation Planner
David Fletcher	Assoc. Transportation Planner III
Michael Redlinger	Assoc. Transportation Planner II
Kylee Jones	Assoc. Transportation Planner II
Julie Meyers-Lehman	Administrative-Executive Coordinator
Greg Griffin	Administrative Services Manager

Board Members Not Present:

Council Member Kate Burke	City of Spokane
Mayor Shane Brickner	City of Liberty Lake

Board Alternates Present

Guests Present

Sean Messner	HDR
Mark Haberman	TAC
Rhonda Young	TAC
Brandon Blankenagel	KPFF
Paul Kropp	
Adam Jackson	City of Spokane Valley
Alex Paganotacos	2020 Census Complete Count Cmte
Meg Lindsay	Innovia Foundation
Brandi Colyar	Spokane County
Char Kay	WSDOT-East. Region
LeAnn Yamamoto	CommuteSmartNW
Chad Coles	Spokane County

Chair Wick said Kate Burke had requested an excused absence for today’s meeting.

Mr. Schmidt made a motion to excuse the absence and Mr. Kinnear seconded. All votes were in favor.

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

4. **Executive Director’s Report** – Ms. Minshall reported on:

- The audit process is still in progress and should be completed by the next Board meeting.
- A good number of proposals for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Financial Forecast were received and are being evaluated. Approval by the Board for the Executive Director to sign the contract with the top ranked firm will be on the July Board agenda.
- SRTC is holding discussions with EWU regarding a proposal to have planning students and faculty assist with the processing of agency Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data
- SRTC held a member agency workshop to discuss improved process for project delivery and discussion of how the region can be better prepared for grant opportunities. Currently 55% of the federal obligation

target has been met. The first deadline for federal obligation is July 31 and historically many projects come in the last two months. SRTC staff is still concerned about meeting obligation targets.

- Last month the Board approved SRTC to act as a fiscal agent for an additional grant for 2020 Census outreach. SRTC, on behalf of the Spokane County Census Complete Count Committee received \$22,000 and Ms. Paganotacos will provide more details.

5. Special Report: 2020 Spokane Census Complete Count – Ms. Paganotacos reported that Spokane County is just about to surpass the 2010 response rate; currently at 69.5% which is wonderful considering the obstacles faced as a result of the COVID situation. She said on Saturday, June 20 there will be a Census Drive-Through event to assist residents who have not responded to the census yet. There will be multi-lingual staff on hand, internet access, and devices available for people to submit their responses. She introduced Meg Lindsay, Director of Educational Programs at Innovia Foundation, who will be taking over census coordination for Ms. Paganotacos. Ms. Lindsay said the additional grant money recently received is going to distribute 90,000 post cards and utility bill inserts in low-response rate areas. A final Spokane Census Complete Count report will be presented at the July Board meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

6. Consent Agenda (a) May 2020 Meeting Minutes (b) May 2020 Vouchers – Chair Wick called for any discussion of the consent agenda. There was none.

Mr. Krauter made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; Ms. Harnois seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Resolution 20-01: Bylaws for SRTC Board Administrative Committee (BAC) – Chair Wick noted the Board discussed the BAC duties and purpose at the March meeting and the draft bylaws are a written summary of that conversation.

Mr. Schmidt commented that he is in favor of the resolution as it makes a formal committee of a formerly ad-hoc group. He reminded the group that the BAC does not act on behalf of the Board; it is an advisory group to assist the Executive Director in agency operations. He commented that increased transparency of the BAC will be another benefit of the resolution. Chair Wick pointed out that while BAC meetings and agendas will be made public, it is not the intent for the BAC to receive public comments.

Mr. Krauter stated that he is disappointed that the proposed membership has not left room for a private-sector seat. He noted that Mr. Stone, with many years of experience as a CEO and business owner, provided invaluable advice during his tenure on the BAC. Mr. Krauter has concerns about the diversity element of the group's membership and suggested that consideration be given to the addition of a member from the private sector, as they have a lot to offer. He commented that making BAC meeting agendas public may not be a good idea, as there is a need for some level of protection in order for frank conversations to take place; some matters need to be private and there are times that discussion topics are brought up during a meeting. Making the agendas public will limit the group's flexibility.

Mr. French joined the meeting at 1:21 pm.

Mr. Stone made a motion to table this item for 60 days. Mr. French seconded the motion.

Mr. Stone said he is concerned about major agencies no longer being represented on the committee; those representatives could give the Executive Director experienced support on personnel or administrative issues. He said the new BAC membership is not ideal for the type of assistance the BAC provides to the Executive Director. He noted that the previous Executive Director selected members who were best able to help deal with agency operational issues, not policy issues.

Chair Wick questioned if the group was requesting an additional review of the BAC's duties. He brought up the proposed bylaws and read the sections referring to duties and responsibilities.

Mr. French said the BAC was designed to assist the Executive Director in agency operations and personnel issues. He said in the past there were only two elected officials on the BAC and he feels there are too many elected officials as members now. He stated that membership should be based on skill set, not position. He feels there should be spots for private-sector and other agency representatives. He noted that agency policies are set by the Board, not the BAC and said it should not be assumed that elected officials have business operations skills.

Mr. Schmidt stated again that he feels committee transparency is important and publishing meeting agendas would not be an issue or hinder the group's conversations. He would prefer the BAC to operate out in the open, not holding backroom type discussions. He said the Board hired a professional Executive Director to run the agency and that person can either do the job or they can't; a committee should not be acting as a replacement Executive Director or making their decisions for them. He does not agree that elected officials are not qualified to serve on this committee. He emphasized his support for Resolution 20-01.

Chair Wick asked if any other Board members had comments to share on the topic.

Mr. Krauter noted that Roberts Rules of Order do not allow for discussion following a motion to table an item and he called the question.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion to table the item for 60 days. The motion passed with 8 votes in favor and 3 votes against.

Mr. Krauter said he would appreciate the inclusion of Mr. French, Mr. Gribner, Ms. Meyer and Mr. Stone in any further discussions about BAC restructuring, as they can provide input for a workable outcome.

8. Comprehensive Plan Certification: City of Airway Heights – Mr. Stewart read the requested action and explained why SRTC is responsible for certifying the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans. He outlined the elements required for certification and the RCW requirements. Mr. Stewart thanked the CAWH staff and consultants working on the plan update; he noted the city's plan references a Transportation Circulation Plan, approved by the city council in 2018. He noted that while there are some discrepancies between the Circulation Plan and the Comprehensive plan, planned street improvements are sufficient to address the city's future transportation needs.

Mr. Stewart said that SRTC staff will continue to provide assistance with all agencies working on transportation issues in the West Plains area and CAWH has committed update their comprehensive plan and circulation plan within two years, to be consistent with the next MTP update.

Mr. Stone made a motion to certify the transportation related provisions for the City of Airway Heights Comprehensive Plan update. Mr. Krauter seconded the motion. All votes were in favor.

INFORMATION & DISCUSSION ITEMS

9. Electrification Grant Update – Ms. Jones re-capped the Department of Commerce Electrification of Transportation Systems (ETS) Grant to date. This grant would be used to fund electric vehicle charging throughout Spokane County to be used for personal vehicles, buses, and fleet vehicles. The application was submitted on June 1, 2020 and notification of award is scheduled for December. She said this project focuses on installing stations in historically underserved neighborhoods, libraries, community centers, etc and next steps in the process will concentrate on micro-mobility (scooters, e-bikes). Ms. Jones said the Spokane Regional Transportation Electrification Application team hopes that the ETS project will create the

critical mass needed for market transportation to electric vehicles in our region. She thanked the project team and project partners.

10. Land Use Introduction – Ms. Minshall announced the item will be an interactive online poll to determine members’ depth of understanding about transportation and land use in order to have the most productive in-depth conversations about land use forecasting over the next few months. She described the reasons that land use discussions by the MPO Board are important. She stated that transportation planning historically gravitates towards identifying a list of projects and then distributing funding, primarily because that is more visible and tangible. However, the much broader discussion is the 20-year regional outlook, which is not just the “what” of building projects, but the “how” and the “why”.

Ms. Minshall explained the upcoming deep dive discussions on land use assumptions will explore not only how the region grows, but why it is growing in terms of both employment and population and the infrastructure needed to support the growth. She described the importance of the Board’s decisions impacting the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

Mr. Ulrich introduced the poll, described different methodologies of land use and population forecasting, and explained how population and employment growth rates are not always correlated. The group responded to five questions.

1. What should be SRTC’s primary consideration in forecasting land use for the planning period
2. Should a quantitative analysis of available capacity for future development be a consideration when forecasting the location of future growth
3. Should employment growth be directly tied to population growth or should independent sector-based forecasts be used to inform region-wide employment growth
4. A multiple-choice question about growth forecasting
5. What demographic and economic trends should we consider when forecasting population and employment growth.

Mr. Ulrich said that land use and population forecasting will be brought back to the Board in July for in-depth review and discussion.

11. US 195/I-90 Study Update – Mr. Stewart described the study, which was launched in 2019, as a multimodal effort to address safety, operations, access and infrastructure issues along the US 195 corridor near the I-90 interchange. He noted it is a multi-agency study and listed the partners of the Study Advisory Team. The study approach has four elements; existing conditions, future conditions, systems analysis and strategies.

Mr. Stewart reported that the existing conditions analysis is complete and has been posted to the Study’s website. He explained that data for trip patterns, origin-destination paths were obtained from passive location-based data from cell phone apps and vehicles GPS devices; he presented a map of collisions along the corridor, which are mostly clustered around access points. These safety issues will be considered when evaluating solutions. The next major task for the study is a market-based land use analysis. He presented the study schedule, which is expected to wrap up in March 2021, and noted that all past studies of this corridor will be evaluated when developing future scenarios.

12. Division Connects: Project Update – Mr. Lien said the Board was last briefed on this study in March and explained the project is a multimodal study incorporating the implementation of bus rapid transit and forecasting how Division St will operate after completion of the North Spokane Corridor. He presented the study’s timeline, outlined the project team members, and described the study area which will be evaluated in five segments, which each have different footprints.

Mr. Lien announced the State of the Corridor report was complete and posted on the study’s website and presented an overview of the key findings, which were:

- Vehicle trips show strong commute peaks, transit ridership is spread throughout the day
- Average of 50,000+ vehicle trips/day

- The corridor is a T2 Freight route
- Consistently high transit ridership
- Collisions most often occur at intersections
- Fairly complete sidewalk network
- Bicycle network on parallel routes

He said a community survey about the Division St corridor is currently active and so far has received 230 responses. He presented respondents' demographic data and responses to a few of the survey questions.

Mr. Stone stated that he strongly objects to surveys because they are only responded to by people who are motivated to do so. He questioned how much funding is being spent on this study; Ms. Minshall replied that SRTC and STA both put \$500,000 towards the study. It was clarified that the funding includes a local, non-federal, contribution from WSDOT. Mr. Stone suggested that the survey results should not be posted on the study's website; he feels it is very unprofessional and he is very disappointed this was a part of the study. Ms. Minshall relayed that it is common practice for MPO and other public agency studies to have a public survey component, understanding that survey respondents are self-selected. Ms. Minshall also indicated the survey is still open and not finalized. She said the project team is doing other types of public outreach as well. For example, Mr. Lien spoke at the Spokane Neighborhood Council last week. She noted that conducting a statistically significant survey is very expensive, but could be added to the project scope if the Board directed.

Mr. Ewers asked how far in the future is the study evaluating; before or after completion of the NSC. Mr. Lien replied some future changes are contingent upon the NSC opening but other enhancements need not wait until then. Mr. Ewers emphasized that Division St is a freight corridor and for safety reasons, it is not a good idea to add pedestrian or bicycle facilities along that route because freight and non-motorized traffic don't mix. Mr. Lien noted that the team is also evaluating parallel routes to Division St for bicycle travel.

13. Board Member Comments

- Mr. Bertelsen gave an update on the Transportation Advisory Committee process. Their next two meetings will focus on the creation of a work plan and deliverables, which should be finalized and ready for Board input by the end of July.
- Chair Wick commented that several Board members and the Executive Director are taking part in the State Freight Advisory Committee.
- Ms. Harnois asked if anyone knew the next time the Joint Transportation Commission would be meeting. No one had that information.

14. Adjournment - There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:57 pm.

Julie Meyers-Lehman, Clerk of the Board