

MEETING MINUTES

Spokane Regional Transportation Council
Board of Directors Meeting – Thursday July 9, 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
Mayor Shane Brickner	City of Liberty Lake
Larry Stone	Major Employer Rep.
Matt Ewers	Rail/Freight Rep.
Larry Krauter	Spokane Airports
Commissioner Al French	Spokane County
Commissioner Mary Kuney	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
Kelly Fukai	WA St Transp. Commission

Board Members Not Present:

Council Member Lori Kinnear	City of Spokane
Council Member Kate Burke	City of Spokane

SRTC Staff Present:

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

Board Alternates Present

n/a

Guests Present

Dave Anderson	WA Dept of Commerce
Joe Tortorelli	
Paul Kropp	
Alex Paganotacos	
Meg Lindsay	Innovia Foundation
Mark Haberman	TAC Member
Adam Jackson	City of Spokane Valley
Sean Messner	HDR
Brandon Blankenagel	KPFF Engineers
Molly Sanchez	Innovia Foundation
LeAnn Yamamoto	CommuteSmart NW
Anna Ragaza-Bourassa	WSDOT-East. Region
Char Kay	WSDOT-East. Region
Greg Figg	WSDOT-East. Region
Brandi Colyar	Spokane County
Hannalee Allers	City of Spokane
Todd Coleman	S3R3 Solutions

Chair Wick welcomed new Washington State Transportation Commissioner and SRTC Board member Ms. Kelly Fukai to the group. He then reported that Lori Kinnear and Kate Burke requested excused absences for today's meeting.

Mr. Schmidt made a motion to excuse the absences. All votes were in favor.

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

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

- The topics discussed at the recent Washington State Transportation Commission (WTSC) symposium; she moderated a panel discussion in the second half of the meeting. Topics included transportation revenue forecasting, response/recovery for transportation to the COVID pandemic, and others. She said many of the discussions were focused on the urbanized Puget Sound region, but she was able bring up questions pertaining to eastern Washington and rural areas. WTSC is holding follow up sessions will be held next week.

- She is participating in the WSDOT Freight Stakeholders and WSDOT Investment Strategy workgroups as a representative of state Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and will keep the Board updated both groups' work. She provided an overview of both groups' purpose and objectives. Ms. Minshall also noted that the SRTC Freight Subject Matter Expert recently held its second meeting for the SRTC freight strategy as part of the MTP update and staff will make sure the strategy is consistent with statewide freight strategies.
- On July 14 at 1:00 pm SRTC will host a Project Briefing for New Board Members meeting; this will be information about current SRTC projects (US 195/I-90 Study, DivisionConnects study, DATA Project, TIP, Call for Projects, etc.) in more detail than can be covered at a Board meeting. All members are welcome.

5. Final Report: 2020 Spokane Census Complete Count – Ms. Paganotacos noted the official end date for her position with the Spokane Census Complete Count (SCCC) was June 30, but she wanted to present a final report before the Board. She reported that the federal census has been extended until October, the final SCCC budget will be filed the end of this month, and as of today Spokane County has a 70.6% response rate, exceeding the 2010 response rate of 70.4%, making it the fourth most response rate in the state. She said of the 10 largest cities in Washington, Spokane has the best response rate, in spite of the many challenges going on right now. The SCCC has met all of their stated goals that are able to be measured right now. There were no questions or discussion.

ACTION ITEMS

6. Consent Agenda (a) June 2020 Meeting Minutes (b) June 2020 Vouchers (c) 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program June Amendment – Chair Wick called for any discussion of the consent agenda. There was none.

Mr. Stone made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; Mr. Schmidt seconded. All votes were in favor.

7. Authorize Executive Director to Sign Contract for Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Financial Forecast – Mr. Fletcher explained the MTP Financial Forecast is part of the 2020 budget and the 2020-2021 Unified Planning Work Program. He said the MTP must be fiscally constrained and a reasonable forecast of expected revenues is a key component. He noted the MTP Financial Assessment has two parts (1) the Financial Forecast and (2) the Needs Analysis. He said a consultant will be complete the financial forecast, which is identifying potential federal, state and local revenue sources, while staff will perform the needs analysis.

SRTC sent out an RFP earlier this year and Berk Consulting has been selected. Mr. Fletcher noted that SRTC has assembled a subject matter expert team made of representatives from eight member agencies to assist with the Needs Analysis. Mr. Fletcher highlighted the MTP financial assessment process and explained the financial forecast work plan will consist of four parts (1) inventory potential revenue sources (2) review historical transportation revenues (3) develop core financial forecast assumptions (4) forecast available revenues. He presented the anticipated project timeline and read the requested action.

Mr. Stone expressed his disappointment that the selected consultant firm is not local; he is concerned that the fact that they are based in Seattle will lead them to recommend solutions not suitable for the Spokane area. Mr. Fletcher said five firms submitted bids and none were from eastern Washington or Idaho. Mr. Stone suggested that perhaps staff should review how RFP's are being written in order to better attract local consulting firms.

Chair Wick commented that the consultants will be working only on the financial forecast portion; SRTC staff, in conjunction with the subject matter expert team, will conduct the needs analysis. Mr. Schmidt suggested that for future RFPs maybe scoring weight could be appointed to bids from local consulting firms.

Mr. Schmidt made a motion to authorize Executive Director to execute contract for consultant services with Berk Consulting to complete MTP Financial Forecast for amount not to exceed \$39,750. Ms. Meyer seconded the motion.

Ms. Meyer noted that local sales tax as a funding source for transit was omitted in the documentation. Mr. Fletcher responded that was an oversight.

Mr. Krauter stated that he agreed with Mr. Stone's concerns; however, he is familiar with Berk Consulting and personally thinks very highly of them. He said he supports the motion but emphasized that staff should make it very clear to Berk the Board's concerns about maintaining focus on the needs and solutions for the Spokane area.

A vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION & DISCUSSION ITEMS

8. Quarterly Budget Report – Mr. Griffin noted this was the update for second quarter, April to June, which represents 50% of the budget year. He said overall the budget is in line with expectations and any variances are due to timing of revenue/expenses. He explained that other than member dues, all other revenues are received on a reimbursement basis. At the start of 2020 SRTC had unrestricted cash balance of \$521,000 and as of June 30 there was \$517,000; this cash balance allows the agency to have four to five months of operating expenses in reserve. Mr. Griffin said restricted local cash funds for the US 195/I-90 Study and the Division Street Corridor Study started the year at just under \$350,000 and had \$317,000 as of June 30. He spoke about projected expenditures for the second half of the budget year. He noted a reduction in full time employees in April from eleven to ten; refilling that position is being held off for now to conserve funds. There were no questions or discussion.

9. TIP Delivery and Project Readiness – Ms. McMenemy said the focus of today's discussion will be about strategies to deliver projects prior to the July 31 federal obligation deadline and also how to better prepare more projects for outside funding opportunities. She will be presenting a survey to poll Board members of. The responses to the poll (which was just a survey to gauge opinions, not voting) will provide input to staff to craft alternative delivery strategies; these will be discussed by TTC and the TIP Working Group and ultimately be brought back before the Board for additional discussion and possible action in October.

Ms. McMenemy provided a background of the requirements of SRTC to meet federal funding obligation targets, which are established by WSDOT and change slightly each year but are generally between \$10M - \$13M. If the target is reached by July 31 it increases the chance for the region to receive additional funding and conversely, if all the funds are not obligated by September 30, there is a possibility of losing the unspent funds.

She said last month we were at 40% of the target, but thanks for Spokane County advancing phases of the Bigelow Gulch project and City of Spokane Valley advancing the Wilbur Sidewalk projects, we are now at 88% and anticipate exceeding the target by \$2.37. She described how many projects are in the TIP, the different types of funds it contains and the four-year programming timeline.

Ms. McMenemy discussed eight potential programming strategies (short, medium and long-term) She restated that the draft strategies and the Board's responses will be brought to the TTC and TIP Working Group for further technical evaluation and this topic will be brought before the Board again this fall. She then launched the on-line poll, which were answered anonymously, presenting eight possible strategies and asking Board members generally supported or did not support them.

10. SRTC Forecasting Part 1: Growth Management Act and Regional Land Use – Mr. Ulrich said this is the first of a three-part series about forecasting and its relationship with regional transportation plan update; additional conversations will be held at future Board meetings. Traditionally this process is very technical and the TTC evaluates the forecast and makes a recommendation to the Board; for this MTP update a subject matter

expert team has convened and will do an in-depth evaluation of the land use forecasts and report their findings to the TTC for additional review. He spoke about the next steps in the process and update schedule.

Mr. Anderson said he will be covering basics of Washington land use framework including GMA, SEPA and how MPO planning work is connected to individual comp plans and how B members can be savvy users of this information. He spoke about the reasons why land use plans are necessary, public values about the planning process, emphasis of Washington law at the comprehensive plan level and at the permit level.

He spoke about the consistency requirements of the GMA and the transportation elements of jurisdictional comprehensive plans, the comp plan update cycle and how that incorporates into the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Mr. Anderson described the differences between forecasting and modeling and the definition of land capacity. There were no questions or discussion.

OTHER BUSINESS

11. Seek Direction on Resolution 20-01: Bylaws for SRTC Board Administrative Committee (BAC)– Chair Wick reminded the group that this item was tabled at the last meeting and noted this discussion will be to get feedback and input from the Board on this topic. He said the BAC has been an ad-hoc committee for at least a decade, so the thought was that it was time to move it to a formal standing committee structure. He highlighted the duties of the group, which were outlined in the draft resolution, and said they are primarily to provide administrative guidance to the Executive Director and to review items to make recommendations to the Board. He emphasized that the BAC is not a decision-making body.

Mr. French said he has been on this committee for many years and provided a historical perspective to its formation and past practice. He stated that there should not be too many elected officials on the committee; having the private sector representative and non-elected executives on the BAC is essential to provide a good perspective for agency operations. He said the Board should make the decisions about how the BAC operates.

Chair Wick asked what changes in the resolution the Board would like to see.

Ms. Fukai asked what prompted the shift to formalize the BAC and what was not working about the group. She said that she agreed with Mr. French that it should not be a policy making body. Chair Wick said there was a feeling in the past that the BAC was driving the Board, so in order to provide guidance and clearly stated duties, a resolution was drafted to clarify the purpose. He said the goal was to ensure that the BAC would not operate as a type of executive committee or policy driving body.

Mr. Schmidt said an ad-hoc committee meets for a single purpose for a limited amount of time, which is not how this group has been operating; it meets regularly and discusses a variety of topics. He commented that a more formal standing committee helps to alleviate the workload of the whole Board for routine administrative matters; this saves time and brings context to issues. He said that a written structure of the committee lends transparency to this group and its work.

Ms. Harnois said she reviewed the group's duties and agrees with having them do the Executive Director's performance review but does not want them to get heavily involved in staff personnel issues. Mr. French gave some examples of ways that the BAC has assisted with agency administration in the past and said they are not involved in staff level issues at all.

Mr. Weathers commented that he recalled the prior discussions focused on committee membership, not the duties of the committee.

Mr. Krauter feels there should be a change in the membership structure. He questioned what people felt what was wrong with the BAC the way it was operating previously. He said the BAC had been very successful in the past in assisting with smoothing out agency operations when the prior Executive Director came on board, for

ensuring Executive Director performance, etc. He stated that someone needs to speak up and say what it is exactly about the committee that needed to be fixed and to clarify the comments about transparency.

Mr. French stated that the current member composition feels more like a policy committee. He feels it should consist of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the other agency executive directors, and the private sector representative.

Ms. Harnois commented that the resolution lists out the Chair, Vice-Chair and Past Chair, and that should be the limit of elected officials for that group.

Mr. Schmidt said he did not think there was anything wrong with the way the group functioned or operated; the group has done an excellent job guiding the Executive Director. The resolution was just to formalize the BAC into a standing committee because it is not an ad-hoc committee.

Mr. Krauter said the questions that need to be answered before this issue can go any further are (1) What is the purpose behind this change? (2) What wasn't working? (3) What things about the committee operation needs to be changed and why? He said unless these questions are answered it does not appear the committee can continue at all.

Chair Wick said at the March 2020 meeting the Board unanimously approved the BAC committee membership at an ad-hoc level. The proposed resolution is just to formalize it to be a standing committee. Mr. Krauter said the reason the item was tabled last month is that people became concerned when they saw the proposed change in structure, yet no concerns have been articulated openly. Mr. Krauter stated he is not interested in moving the topic forward until members come forth and speak about what their concerns are. Members discussed the pros and cons of distributing BAC meeting agendas and reporting on BAC meetings to the Board.

Chair Wick had to end the discussion due to meeting time running out.

12. Board Member Comments

- Ms. Fukai said she is glad to join the Board and to be here today. She hopes to bring a perspective from the WA State Transportation Commission to this group and forward information to the Board about about what WSTC is working on statewide.

13. Adjournment - There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:04 pm.

Julie Meyers-Lehman, Clerk of the Board