

MEETING MINUTES

Spokane Regional Transportation Council
Board of Directors Meeting – Thursday April 8, 2021
Zoom Video Conference Meeting

1 - Call to Order/Record of Attendance/Excused Absences: Chair Ben Wick brought the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

Board Members Present:

Mayor Ben Wick	City of Spokane Valley (Chair)
Mayor James Weathers	City of Airway Heights
Mayor Cris Kaminskas	City of Liberty Lake
Council Member Lori Kinnear	City of Spokane
Council Member Candace Mumm	City of Spokane
Larry Stone	Major Employer Representative
Matt Ewers	Rail/Freight Representative
Council Member Micki Harnois	Small Cities/Towns Representative
Commissioner Al French	Spokane County
Commissioner Mary Kuney	Spokane County
E. Susan Meyer	Spokane Transit Authority
Todd Coleman	TAC Chair
Mike Gribner	WSDOT-Eastern Region

Guests Present

Joe Tortorelli, Spokane Good Roads Assn.
Char Kay, WSDOT-Eastern Region
John Hohman, City of Spokane Valley
Paul Kropp
Kristine Williams, Spokane Transit Authority
Chad Coles, Spokane County
Brad Brey
Katy Allen, City of Spokane Valley

Alternate Board Members Present:

Mary Jensen	TTC Vice-Chair
Mayor Chris Grover	City of Cheney

SRTC Staff Present:

Kevin Wallace	Interim Executive Director
Eve McMenamy	Principal Transportation Planner
Ryan Stewart	Principal Transportation Planner
Jason Lien	Principal Transportation Planner
David Fletcher	Assoc. Transportation Planner III
Michael Redlinger	Assoc. Transportation Planner II
Greg Griffin	Administrative Services Manager
Julie Meyers-Lehman	Administrative-Exec. Coordinator
Stanley Schwartz	SRTC Legal Counsel

Chair Wick announced that Kelly Fukai requested an excused absence for today's meeting.

Ms. Mumm made a motion to approve the excused absence; Mr. Gribner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2 Public Comments: There were no public comments.

3 Interim Executive Director's Report: Mr. Wallace spoke about:

- At the next SRTC Interlocal Signatory Members meeting the group will review final changes to Interlocal Agreement (ILA) and will be asked to take action to approve the document and approve distribution to member agencies/jurisdictions ratification. The Board will receive an overview of the new ILA next month. A letter will go out in mid-April asking for review and approval of new ILA. The two basic requirements to meet ratification requirements are (1) approval by Spokane County and

(2) approval by 8 of the 13 municipalities, representing 75% of the total city population. Once the ILA is ratified, SRTC will contact the Kalispel and Spokane Tribes in writing offering membership on the Board.

- He provided a brief overview of the federal reauthorization of a new surface transportation bill and the administration's infrastructure jobs plan recommendations. The transportation portion of proposed legislation includes \$115B for repair of roads/bridges, \$85B for transit programs, \$80B for passenger and freight rail, \$174B for vehicle electrification, \$25B for airports, \$20B for transportation equity, and \$17B for inland waterways.
- The state transportation package is still being discussed by legislators; the legislative session is scheduled to end April 25. The Senate is considering consolidating different proposals into one package.
- Two US195/I-90 Study proposed strategies have been released for public review and comment as approved by the Board last month and an online open house is live.

ACTION ITEMS

4 Consent Agenda

- (a) March 2021 Meeting Minutes
- (b) March 2021 Vouchers
- (c) 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) April Amendment
- (d) SFY 2020-2021 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment

Ms. Kinnear made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; Ms. Meyer seconded. All votes were in favor.

5 Unified List of Regional Transportation Priorities

Mr. Wallace said this item is for information, discussion, and possible action. There is no specific proposed action; it would be at the discretion of the Board. This topic has been discussed by the Board several times recently and while creation of a list of priorities involves a lot of work, it is being done because the region wants to be competitive for state and federal funds as they become available; coordinating the effort gives the region that opportunity.

He explained that the Board indicated they are willing to spearhead the development of such a list and the Chamber Coalition have expressed their support of that idea. He emphasized that SRTC cannot lobby legislators or create a legislative agenda; that falls to the member agencies and the private sector. SRTC would be a technical resource at that point in the process.

Mr. Wallace presented a tentative schedule from now to October to approve a project list in preparation for the 2022 legislative session. He spoke about the priority list created in 2011 and recommended that this be an annual process for the Board to complete. He asked the group if the timeline seemed reasonable.

Mr. Ewers commented that he appreciated the recognition of October as the deadline of getting information to the Chamber Coalition so they have time to create a legislative agenda. He said the list can't consist of a huge number of projects; it has to be narrowed down. Chair Wick agreed with having information ready in the early fall is beneficial so that discussions with legislators can be held before they go session.

Mr. Wallace posed the following questions to the group;

Question 1 - What input would the Board like to receive from the Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) and Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) on this process?

He proposed taking this item to these two committees for input; the TTC for guidance regarding project selection methodology and getting a community perspective from the TAC.

Ms. Mumm commented that selection methodology is very important. She suggested having the committees reach out to federal partners for clarification about selection criteria in light of the shift in priorities with the new administration. She said there will be a larger emphasis on transit and climate change; it is key to understand that projects would be judged differently than in the past.

Ms. Meyer agreed with Ms. Mumm about the shift in focus and the importance of adapting to it. She said it may be the role of the Board to reach out to federal partners to understand context in which agencies will be expected to plan. She said development of a framework for evaluation of priorities seems better handled by the Board and could then be reviewed by the two committees.

Question 2 - What projects should be considered in developing the new list?

Mr. Wallace stated that his thought was not for the Board to prioritize all of the regional projects; the screening process identify a certain number of projects as being the regional priorities. He said the group should focus on the ultimate objective of being more competitive for state and federal transportation dollars. The 2011 list contained 17 projects, including a category for preservation/maintenance. He said between 15 – 20 projects on the list is a good target. He emphasized that a large number of projects would end up being more of a wish list, rather than an agenda based on regional priorities.

He explained that the near-term projects in Horizon 2040, the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) have already been through the discussions to identify regional projects, completed air quality conformity determinations, travel demand modeling and public comment periods. He is hoping that in the future the MTP can provide more guidance of priority identification. Some member agency projects have been submitted for federal consideration to Senator Murray's and Rep. McMorris Rogers' office recently, and those should probably be included on the initial list for consideration as well.

Mr. Gribner said the ways in which the funding is delivered will be an important factor; it will come from different places and with criteria attached to it. There will be different mechanisms to compete for funding and the Board should consider a strategy about how to compete successfully. For example, it is unknown if the federal package will come by federal formula to be distributed against a set of criteria or as earmarks. He explained that the criteria will drive the Board conversations.

Mr. Gribner said the goal is ultimately to bring money here to solve problems, so the lens through which the Board should be looking at the is not as a ranked order, but a sense of community priority around each individual criteria or funding source. He said input from private sector and the public will be key.

Mr. French agreed that aligning projects with funding criteria is the essential and conversations must be sensitive to the funder and their goals.

Ms. Kinnear asked if we should be taking into consideration the proximity of Kootenai County, travel back and forth between Spokane County, and the impacts to our system. She asked if looking at a broader regional approach incorporating both metropolitan areas may have an impact with legislators.

Mr. Gribner said Ms. Kinnear's point is worth more discussion; a holistic transportation conversation about where funding is being spent and how it creates measurable impacts on the region is likely to help bring more money to the area. He said there are measurable traffic impacts from north Idaho and WSDOT will be launching a study about this in the next few months.

Chair Wick discussed the importance of project readiness.

Question 3 - What guidance would be Board provide in terms of developing a project screening methodology?

Mr. Wallace said staff has discussed several ideas including project readiness, consistency with the long-range plan, regional support, and review of different program categories. He said at the next Board meeting staff will present the initial criteria for the Board to consider. He then asked the group for other input for project screening.

Ms. Mumm said that equity another key factor for screening and it will be important to identifying opportunities for disenfranchised areas or those that have historically lacked investments. She stated that it would be beneficial to have demographic or economic data sets to make decisions.

Mr. Gribner said the equity question may be the biggest discussion item and it raises interesting questions. There will be a lot of discussion about a funder's definition of equity. He said the City of Spokane has done a good job about getting in front of this topic and would be interested in hearing their perspective. He said there will need to be significant conversations regarding equity before we start putting projects in slots.

Ms. Kinnear reported that the City has hired an Equity Manager and he would be able to share information.

Question 4 - What guidance would be Board provide in terms of community outreach for this effort?

The group suggested a Virtual Town Hall with the ability for attendees to provide comment in the chat as a method of capturing feedback, reaching out to all business associations within the city and county, neighborhood councils, surveys, social media, and interaction with the Joint Chambers of Commerce Transportation Coalition.

INFORMATION & DISCUSSION ITEMS

6 Division Connects Update

Mr. Lien reported that the study consists of two phases and phase one is nearly complete with the identification of the preferred alternative for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and active transportation, safety, and other improvements along the Division corridor. Phase two will consist of land use evaluation and refinement of the multimodal facility design. He noted four alternatives had been released for public review in January, and he spoke about the public engagement process so far in 2021.

He announced that based on feedback from the Division Connects Steering Committee, technical team analysis, and public input, the alternative titled "Side Running C" has emerged as the preferred choice. This alternative has street parking on Division, a two-way active transportation facility along Ruby St, and business access and transit (BAT) lanes through the couplet and mainline of Division.

Mr. Lien described the components of the recommended alternative, including alignment through four different sections of the Division corridor, preliminary locations of transit stations and lane configurations. The STA Board will be asked to take action on April 15 in support of the preferred alternative, and the project team will also seek City of Spokane and Spokane County concurrence. The plan will be presented to the SRTC Board in June.

7 SFY 2022-2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Overview

Mr. Redlinger spoke federal requirements for developing a UPWP and what it must contain. He outlined the 8 task categories for 2022-2023 and noted that STA and WSDOT plans are also included in the document by appendix. He presented a schedule of milestones in the development of the program, which includes a virtual coordination meeting on April 27 with WSDOT-Eastern Region, WSDOT TRIP, FHWA, FTA, STA and SRTC staff. The Board will be asked to approve the 2022-2023 UPWP in June.

He said the new federal administration has an emphasis on planning through lens of climate change and environmental justice; SRTC is starting to scope work products in this light.

8 2021 Q1 Budget Update

Mr. Griffin provided a report on first quarter expenses and revenues. He noted a correction to the CY 2020 budget; there was \$150 less in expenditures than previously reported. Ms. Meyer expressed her appreciation for Mr. Griffin's work handling agency finances.

9 Board Member Comments – There were no comments.

10 Adjournment - There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm.

Julie Meyers-Lehman, Clerk of the Board