

MEETING MINUTES

Spokane Regional Transportation Council
Board of Directors Meeting – Thursday August 12, 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.

IN ATTENDANCE

Board Members:

Mayor Ben Wick, *City of Spokane Valley* (Chair)
Paul Schmidt, *City of Cheney* (Vice Chair)
Mayor James Weathers, *City of Airway Heights*
Council Member Dee Cragun, *City of Deer Park*
Mayor Cris Kaminskas, *City of Liberty Lake*
Council Member Tony Harbolt, *City of Medical Lake*
Mayor Kevin Freeman, *City of Millwood*
Council Member Candace Mumm, *City of Spokane*
Council Member Linda Thompson, *City of Spokane Valley*
Matt Ewers, *Rail/Freight Representative*
Commissioner Al French, *Spokane County*
Commissioner Mary Kuney, *Spokane County*
E. Susan Meyer, *CEO Spokane Transit Authority*
Adam Jackson, *Transportation Technical Committee Chair*
Mike Gribner, *Regional Administrator, WSDOT-Eastern Region*
Kelly Fukai, *Washington State Transportation Commission*

SRTC Staff:

Kevin Wallace, *Interim Executive Director*
Lois Bollenbeck, *Incoming Executive Director*
Eve McMenemy, *Deputy Executive Director*
Mike Ulrich, *Principal Transportation Planner*
Jason Lien, *Principal Transportation Planner*
David Fletcher, *Associate Transportation Planner III*
Michael Redlinger, *Associate Transportation Planner II*
Julie Meyers-Lehman, *Administrative-Executive Coordinator*
Stanley Schwartz, *SRTC Legal Counsel*

Alternate Board Members:

n/a

Guests:

Chad Coles, *Spokane County*
Larry Larson, *WSDOT-Eastern Region*
Sean Messner, *HDR*
Joe Tortorelli, *Spokane Good Roads Assn.*
Paul Kropp
Chamisa Radford, *Spokane Tribe of Indians*
Shauna Harshman, *City of Spokane*
Charles Hansen
Karl Otterstrom, *Spokane Transit Authority*
Brandi Colyar, *Spokane County*
John Hohman, *City of Spokane Valley*
LeAnn Yamamoto, *CommuteSmart NW*
Katherine Miller, *City of Spokane*
Kristine Williams, *Spokane Transit Authority*
Anna Ragaza-Bourassa, *WSDOT-Eastern Reg.*
Brett Lucas, *City of Cheney*
Carole Evans, *Spokane Tribe of Indians*
Char Kay, *WSDOT-Eastern Region*
Kevin Picanco, *City of Spokane*
Gloria Mantz, *City of Spokane Valley*
Bill Helbig, *City of Spokane Valley*

Chair Wick stated that members Lori Kinnear, Larry Stone and Micki Harnois requested excused absences.

Mr. Schmidt made a motion to excuse the absences. Ms. Thompson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2 Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3 Interim Executive Director's Report

Mr. Wallace reported on:

- US Senate passed a 272-page, \$1.2 trillion investment and jobs act. Approximately \$550 billion is set for new spending over a 5-year period for transportation projects and broadband, but there are to be likely amendments and adjustments to come.
- SRTC received communication from the Kalispel Tribe of Indians regarding Board membership. He will set a meeting with Tribal leadership to discuss the details.
- Three of the projects from the WSDOT Consolidated Grant applications process, approved by the Board in January have received funding. The projects are (1) vehicle replacement for the Deer Park shuttle (2) sustaining Deer Park shuttle expansion, and (3) SNAP transportation services.
- SRTC will have a booth at the August 21 Unity in the Community event.

ACTION ITEMS

4 Consent Agenda

- a) July 2021 Meeting Minutes
- b) July 2021 Vouchers
- c) 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) August Amendment
- d) Resolution 21-02: Approving the Designation of Individuals to Sign Warrants for SRTC

Ms. Cragun noted a correction to the minutes; her name is not on the list as being in attendance and she was at the meeting.

Ms. Cragun made a motion for approval of the Consent Agenda with the amended July minutes. Ms. Thompson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Recap for July 2021:		
Vouchers: V121604 - V121639		120,177.04
Salaries/Benefits Pay Periods Ending: 6/26/21, 7/10/21 and 7/24/21		109,338.17
Spokane County Treasury Monthly SCIP fee - June 2021		21.45
		229,536.66

5 Calendar Year (CY) 2022 Member Dues

Ms. McMenemy outlined the history of the three-year plan to increase member dues by 15% per year, which was temporarily suspended in 2020 due to economic impacts of the pandemic. The proposed increase will raise the per capita dues rate from \$0.26 to \$0.30 and population numbers are obtained from the Washington State Office of Financial Management. She said the 2021 Interlocal Agreement update offers membership to the Spokane and Kalispel Tribes and dues structure for those organizations are to be determined. There were no questions or discussion.

Ms. Cragun made a motion SRTC member dues for CY 2022 based upon the population formula and allowable 15% increased as outlined in the SRTC Interlocal Agreement. Mr. Freeman seconded. All votes were in favor.

6 2021 Call for Preservation Projects

Mr. Lien provided a background of the \$6M call for projects and the principles of investments approved by the Board; he reported that SRTC received 18 project applications totaling \$12M. He reviewed the application scoring process, presented the recommended project awards, and summarized the application/award review process and recommendation by the Transportation Advisory Committee, Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) and the TIP Working Group.

Mr. Ewers made a motion to approve the project awards for the 2021 Call for Preservation Projects as outlined and Ms. Cragun seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

7 Transportation Funding Priority Statement – 2021 WA State Special Session

Ms. McMenemy stated this item is for potential action; the SRTC Transportation Funding Priority Statement containing three priorities was approved by the Board last month. This is an opportunity to add a fourth priority statement for the purpose of bringing more projects and investments to the priority statement document, due to a potentially large state revenue package.

In review, she said the State legislature created transportation packages, but none passed in the 2021 regular session and there continues to be speculation about a special session in late 2021 at which time the transportation packages may be revisited. In anticipation of a special session, the Board approved the SRTC Transportation Funding Priority Statement designed to be used by member agencies, chambers of commerce, or other private sector interests in discussions with legislators.

She reviewed the Priority Statements 1-3. Draft language for Priority 4 is “*Targeted investments to improve safety, conditions, and operations to maintain quality of life and economic vitality in the region as we experience continued growth*”. A list of projects to accompany Priority Four is based on the Unified List of Regional Transportation Priorities that SRTC staff has been working on with member agency staff and the Board since early April; the draft list was presented and totals ~\$465M.

The Board discussed at length. Comments included:

- In regards to Priority 2, Mr. Gribner noted that legislative funding packages cover many years and our needs should roughly reflect the timeline of the program. He suggested that a 10-year need is appropriate. If a legislative package passes, it will cover multiple biennium.
- The primary focus of the priority statements document should maintenance/preservation and safety.
- A fourth priority should be seriously considered because it demonstrates overall need. Lawmakers don't always fully understand how much money it takes to get transportation projects right.
- There has been talk that the legislature is coming to the funding package discussions with a clean slate and that it will be a long-term package. The private sector and chambers can take this document and use it to help bring additional funding to our area.
- There is \$72M of maintenance/preservation in Priority 2, but the actual need is far more significant. The backlog and need for maintenance/preservation funding should be brought to the forefront. Economic development opportunities are appreciated, but if there is insufficient investment in the foundation of the system, those won't help.
- Mr. Gribner said recent conversations in the state Senate may indicate a deeper dedication and different approaches to funding preservation projects, in which case Priority 2 should be the focus and maybe there should be discussions about how to relay that message. He suggested that we pivot the primary message to preservation and maintenance.
- List of prioritized projects for the first year or two and additional needs for the 10 year package.
- Mr. Ewers said it would be helpful to have a dollar amount requested, then a list as backup. He suggested a seeking initial funding as a lump sum and then possibly WSDOT or SRTC could distribute the rest of it over a 10 or 15 year period. The list can provide backup to the need amounts.
- Does this align with what is being sought by Senator Billing for the region? Conversations in the House seem to be more general, but conversations in the Senate appear to be supporting a robust preservation package.

Mr. Wallace suggested the Board contemplate timing before taking action; the special session has still not been scheduled and staff is trying to be positioned to be ready if/when it happens. He agrees with the suggestions for Priority 2 and staff update with information from member agencies, but it will have to happen very quickly. He said the Board must decide how much time is available to pivot the focus and how much time is the Board willing to give staff. He asked if the Board wants to see this again in September. He would like to have a clearer understanding of the Board's expectation of timing.

Conversation continued;

- Mr. Gribner said his view is that much of the capital investment funding is probably already spoken for by projects legislators have been pursuing for a long time. However, the door for preservation and maintenance appears to be opening and that is what he feels should be focused on.
- Mr. Ewers agreed that he is hearing that the legislature has more of an appetite for preservation and less for capacity expansion. Most items on the existing project list could be categorized as maintenance or safety, there is only several are capacity expansion and transit. There is a lot of upcoming bridge repair needs in the region.
- Mr. Gribner suggested to have a near-term list of projects to be done first and the rest would be the size of the need. He would like the MPO's list align with the types of things the legislature is discussing.
- Mr. Ewers said the reason that *Connecting Washington* was successful was that the entire region was behind it.
- Ms. Mumm likes the idea of having a short-term and long-term project list. She questioned the likelihood of a legislative special session actually happening.
- Ms. Fukai spoke about the need to be positioned for maintenance and preservation conversations with legislators.
- Mr. French said a transportation funding package will have to be passed with a bond and it is also an election year, so he sees a lot of obstacles to the passing of a large transportation package in 2021. But he would not discourage being prepared.
- Ms. McMenemy asked if the Board is in agreement that they would like a longer term list of needs. Chair Wick said that next month the Board was slated to start discussing the 2022 process and development of a long term list will push that to October.
- Mr. Wallace asked the Board to decide if (1) to make the requested changes and bring this back to the Board next month or (2) or if staff can finalize it with the direction given by the Board today.
- Chair Wick said he is hearing that the group prefers to move away from addition of a fourth priority and apply additional focus to Priority 2. Tweaking and emphasizing priority 2. Not taking away Priority 3, just expanding priority 2.
- Mr. Ewers emphasized legislators have indicated "clean slate" funding discussions.
- Several members said they prefer see this item again in September to review changes to Priority 2.

Mr. Wallace asked to confirm the Board's direction for staff to create a list consisting of 1-2 years of preservation/maintenance projects and then a program that describe the need over a 10 year period, not trying to provide a project list for the entire 10 years. Chair Wick confirmed that was correct.

The Board did not take action on this item.

8 Selection of new SRTC Legal Counsel

Chair Wick outlined the membership of the subcommittee and the work done to solicit proposals for new legal counsel. After evaluating the proposals and holding interviews, the subcommittee recommended that Etter, McMahan, Lamberson, Van Wert & Oreskovich, P.C. be selected to serve as SRTC's new Legal Counsel.

Mr. Schmidt made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to execute an agreement with Etter, McMahan, Lamberson, Van Wert & Oreskovich, P.C. to provide legal counsel services to SRTC for a term to run through 12/31/2026. Mr. French seconded the motion, which passed with all votes in favor

Chair Wick thanked Mr. Schwartz for his many years of excellent service and hard work he has performed for SRTC.

INFORMATION & DISCUSSION ITEMS

9 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP); Chapters 1 & 2

Mr. Ulrich gave a short overview of what an MTP is and the purposes that it serves. He provided a status report of the 2021 update to SRTC's MTP (Horizon 2040) which began in mid-2019, and noted the number of times sections of the update were presented to the TTC and the Board thus far.

He listed the completed/almost completed tasks for the update and provided a high-level summary of the topics covered in *Chapter 1: Who We Are* (an introduction, regional history, regional vision and general MTP info) and *Chapter 2: Where We Are*. Draft versions of both chapters have been posted to the SRTC website for review and comment.

Mr. Ulrich spoke about the remaining tasks to complete the MTP update and the future topics to be presented to the Board at meetings for the rest of the year, culminating in a request to adopt the new plan in December.

10 City of Spokane Valley Streets Sustainability Committee

Mr. Jackson provided a background of the Streets Sustainability plan, showed a short video about the city's Pavement Management Program, and described the ongoing efforts to obtain public input. He spoke about the difference between pavement preservation and street maintenance, the pavement evaluation process, and different types of surface treatments.

11 Board Member Comments

- Mr. Schwartz shared some personal and professional observations from working with SRTC, how the Growth Management Act is key to serving people, land, and infrastructure and MPO's are an essential part of building and maintaining infrastructure. He commented on the excellence of the new SRTC Interlocal Agreement and urged every Board member to read Section 3, which outlines the Board's powers, duties and functions.
- Ms. Mumm welcomed Ms. Evans to today's meeting.
- Ms. Meyer announced STA, in collaboration with Avista, is again supplying free transit rides to cooling centers.
- Mr. Weathers expressed his appreciation for the conversations held by this Board and the high expectations for the region which they reflect.

12 Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:58 pm.

Julie Meyers-Lehman, Clerk of the Board