

**MEETING MINUTES**

Spokane Regional Transportation Council  
Board of Directors Meeting – Thursday June 9, 2022  
421 W Riverside Ave Suite 504, Spokane WA 99201 and Zoom

**# 1 Call to Order/Record of Attendance/Excused Absences**

Chair Paul Schmidt brought the meeting to order at 1:01 pm and roll was taken.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

**Board Members:**

Council Member Paul Schmidt, *City of Cheney* (Chair)  
Council Member Betsy Wilkerson, *City of Spokane* (Vice-Chair)  
Council Member Sonny Weathers, *City of Airway Heights*  
Mayor Cris Kaminskis, *City of Liberty Lake*  
Mayor Terri Cooper, *City of Medical Lake*  
Mayor Kevin Freeman, *City of Millwood*  
Council Member Betsy Wilkerson, *City of Spokane*  
Council Member Zach Zappone, *City of Spokane*  
Mayor Pam Haley, *City of Spokane Valley*  
Council Member Rod Higgins, *City of Spokane Valley*  
Sev Jones, *Kalispel Tribe of Indians*  
Doug Yost, *Major Employer Representative*  
Susan Meyer, *Spokane Transit Authority*  
Rhonda Young, *Transportation Advisory Committee Chair*  
Inga Note, *Transportation Technical Committee Chair*  
Mike Gribner, *WSDOT-Eastern Region*  
Kelly Fukai, *WA State Transportation Commission*

**Board Alternates:**

Danny Kieffer, *Spokane Tribe of Indians*

**Guests:**

Ross Kelly  
Kevin Picanco, *City of Spokane*  
Karl Otterstrom, *Spokane Transit Authority*  
Kim Zentz, *Transportation Advisory Committee*  
Paul Kropp  
Gloria Mantz, *City of Spokane Valley*  
Joe Tortorelli, *Spokane Good Roads Assn.*  
LeAnn Yamamoto, *CommuteSmartNW*  
Chad Coles, *Spokane County*  
Anna Ragaza-Bourassa, *WSDOT-Eastern Region*  
Council Member Tom Sahlberg, *Liberty Lake*  
Council Member Jennifer Morton, *Airway Heights*  
Francis SiJohn, *Spokane Tribe of Indians*  
Char Kay, *WSDOT-Eastern Region*

**Staff:**

Lois Bollenback, *Executive Director*  
Eve McMenamy, *Deputy Executive Director*  
Ryan Stewart, *Principal Transportation Planner*  
Jason Lien, *Principal Transportation Planner*  
David Fletcher, *Principal Transportation Planner*  
Kylee Jones, *Associate Transportation Planner III*  
Michael Redlinger, *Associate Transportation Planner II*  
Greg Griffin, *Administrative Services Manager*  
Julie Meyers-Lehman, *Administrative-Executive Coordinator*  
Megan Clark, *Legal Counsel*

Chair Schmidt noted that excused absences had been requested by Commissioner Al French, Commissioner Mary Kuney and Matt Ewers.

***Mayor Freeman made a motion to approve the excused absences. Council Member Higgins seconded. Motion passed unanimously.***

Chair Schmidt noted that this is Council Member Weathers last SRTC Board meeting and he thanked him for his service over the past several years.

**# 2 Public Comments** - There were no comments.

### **# 3 Executive Director's Report**

As Ms. Bollenback had not yet joined the meeting, Ms. McMenemy reported on:

- The SRTC Interlocal Agreement (ILA) Implementation Subcommittee, established to implement portions of the ILA, met for the third time on June 3 to review the final updates to the SRTC Rules of Procedure. The updated rules will be presented to the Board in July for input. The group will also be discussing the purpose and role of the SRTC Administrative Committee.
- As discussed at last month's meeting, the Joint Transportation Commission (JTC) Working Group will be convening to discuss the IJA funding split between state and local governments. To represent SRTC, Chair Schmidt appointed Mayor Kevin Freeman as the primary representative and Council Member Zack Zappone as the alternate. The JTC Working Group is expected to meet three or four times and the Board will be kept informed of their progress. Chair Schmidt thanked Mayor Freeman and Council Member Zappone for stepping forward to serve in this capacity.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **# 4 Consent Agenda**

- a) May 2022 Meeting Minutes
- b) May 2022 Vouchers
- c) 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program June Amendment

***Council Member Cragun made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; Council Member Higgins seconded. Motion passed unanimously.***

### **# 5 Resolution #22-06 SRTC Executive Director Review**

Chair Schmidt said the Board is being asked to approve the findings of the Executive Director Review Committee. Committee members were Chair Schmidt, Mayor Pam Haley, Susan Meyer, and Mike Gribner. He explained Ms. Bollenback's employment agreement specified a performance review after six months of employment; as outlined in the Resolution, the committee agreed that Ms. Bollenback was doing a very good job. He said that the committee also felt that since they were doing the six-month review almost four months late, that this review be considered the 12-month review. Chair Schmidt stated that if the Resolution is approved, they will move right into a review of Executive Director compensation based on latest data and on comparable MPOs in the state. They will look to making any necessary adjustments before the end of the year. He said in the future they will try to synchronize the annual review and compensation review with the annual agency budget preparation process. There were no questions or discussion.

***Council Member Cragun made a motion to approve Resolution #22-06. Mayor Haley seconded. Motion passed unanimously.***

At 1:12 pm the following people joined the meeting in the conference room: Washington State Senator Markos Lias, Washington State Representative Marcus Riccelli, Council Member Betsy Wilkerson, Mike Gribner, Susan Meyer, Kelly Fukai, Char Kay, and Lois Bollenback.

Chair Schmidt introduced Senator Lias and asked him to address the Board.

Senator Lias spoke about:

- The State Legislature passing the *Move Ahead Washington* transportation package
- Advancement of the North Spokane Corridor completion
- Excited to see the transformative investments being made using climate commitment funding, such as expanded transit and bicycle/pedestrian facilities
- Efficient use of multimodal systems is the most effective way to moving increasing numbers of people and freight, not simply adding more lanes or roads
- Ways of using the existing transportation system more efficiently
- Need for talking candidly about what is coming next for transportation; what will be the next set of investments

Ms. Bollenback shared information about the 2021 Unified List of Regional Transportation Priorities, ongoing regional planning efforts, the Board's legislative priority statements, the priority project list approved by the Board in 11/2021, and two-page project information sheets being produced by staff for use by member agencies for project promotion.

Senator Lias spoke about need to develop data-driven project screening tools and mechanisms. He emphasized the use of good science, evidence, engineering, and involvement by a comprehensive set of stakeholders when evaluating solutions to transportation issues.

The group discussed autonomous vehicles (AVs). Senator Lias suggested it could be helpful to launch AV technologies in small areas to build real world experience. He said there is a robust AV state level work group already but having some real experience to build on would provide useful information.

At 1:34 Commissioner Al French joined the meeting virtually. At 1:43 Senator Lias, Representative Riccelli, Mr. Gribner and Ms. Fukai left the meeting.

## **# 6 Alternate Meeting Location**

Ms. Bollenback stated that SRTC plans to host a panel discussion on July 14 about the connection between land use and transportation. To accommodate the anticipated number of attendees, SRTC has reserved space at The Hive, 2904 E Sprague Ave. The regularly scheduled Board meeting will take place following the panel discussion. The Board is being asked to approve the alternative location for the July Board meeting.

***Council Member Higgins made a motion to approve holding the July 14 panel discussion and SRTC Board meeting at The Hive. Council Member Wilkerson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.***

#### **# 7 Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) Resolution & Bylaws**

Mr. Stewart provided background information about the development of Resolution #22-07, to formalize the purpose, duties and responsibilities of the TTC and update the TTC bylaws. He recapped the prior Board discussion and development of the Resolution by the ILA Implementation Subcommittee. There were no questions or discussion.

***Council Member Cragun made a motion to approve Resolution #22-07. Mayor Cooper seconded. Motion passed unanimously.***

#### **# 8 Transportation Advisory Committee Appointments**

Ms. Jones reported that three TAC members had to resign for various reasons and explained that staff had reached out to other applicants from the last TAC recruitment process to seek replacement members. She said the proposed new members are Charles Hansen, Caleb Newbill and Dr. Paul Vose and shared information about their transportation related interests and experience.

***Council Member Wilkerson made a motion to approve the appointments of Charles Hansen, Caleb Newbill and Dr. Paul Vose to the TAC. Council Member Higgins seconded. Motion passed unanimously.***

### **INFORMATION & DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **# 9 2022 Transportation Planning Presentation Series: Funding**

Ms. Bollenback reported that the federal government is expected to spend about \$567 B in the next five years on infrastructure and the state legislature just passed a \$17 B transportation bill. She said a high quality and resilient transportation system is expensive; she spoke about the unique challenges in the region that increase the cost of transportation infrastructure and reviewed sources of transportation revenues at the federal, state and local levels.

She explained how Metropolitan Planning Organizations provide a platform for local voices to be heard and to relay local priorities to the state and federal level. Issues to keep in mind are the area's rapid growth, limited funding opportunities in the long range and ongoing maintenance/preservation needs.

The group was asked to consider what would be most helpful to the Board in identifying the highest value solutions. Comments included:

- An overall analysis of what is needed for the region; information about where the system has gaps that need to be filled
- A visual and in-depth planner's perspective to assist in making policy decisions.
- Emphasized using a holistic approach in which the group evaluates what is bring brought to the table for funding, projects or analysis.

- Information about what projects can be implemented which will have the greatest amount of impact for the amount of money spent
- Knowing the downstream impact analysis of projects could assist the Board prioritize and work together as a cohesive group when going to legislators. For example, the impact of completing grade separation project extends far beyond just the local jurisdiction; knowing the downstream impact analysis of projects such as these might help the Board prioritize and work together as a cohesive group when going to legislators.
- The two-page project information sheets SRTC is developing is to give people key information about a project without having to read a lengthy study document
- It's difficult to balance caring deeply about meaningful projects and a purely objective framework. The prioritization process tends to be complicated and has flexible/changing criteria. Different projects get different values.
- Need a solid base of facts along with information about hidden impacts.
- Appreciates two-page project flyers.
- Consider future population growth, especially in the West Plains
- Having a variety and diversity of projects (large, small, trails, roads, transit) in the plan is important

The group was asked to consider how can SRTC stay flexible and current as the MTP (Metropolitan Transportation Plan) is updated every 4 years and the Call for Projects occurs every 3 years. Ms. Bollenback said she would like to see the Unified List of Regional Priorities and supporting package to be updated on an annual basis. The group discussed and comments included:

- The three and four year cycles for plan updates was probably adequate when they were established, but now funding sources change much more rapidly.
- The MTP is designed to be a long-range (20 + years) plan, but how could new information be incorporated to keep it the most effective.

Ms. Bollenback asked for input about how SRTC can provide the most assistance in helping to advance projects and where could the SRTC affect change in increasing revenue to the region. Mayor Freeman spoke about being prepared to advocate for solutions that work best for the region and shared comments about vehicles from Kootenai County that utilize Spokane area transportation system.

#### **# 10 2024-2026 TIP Call for Projects**

Ms. Jones provided an overview of the Call for Projects process so far. She stated that the #1 ranked project has requested a significant dollar amount (\$23M) and asked the Board to discuss how this should be addressed. She noted that TTC and TAC suggested consideration of a maximum award or cap. The group discussed and comments included:

- Questioned how has lack of a cap impacted funding in the past. Ms. Jones said in the past the Board was deliberate in focusing on geographic distribution of funding so it had not hindered awarding projects. She said this is the first time that a very high scoring project has asked for such a large portion of the funding availability.

- Emphasized the Board's focus on completing projects. With increasing costs, partial funding isn't always the most effective way to promote completion.
- Concerns about awarding any single project more than \$3M because of possible need to backfill in case of project phase delays and the need to be regional in the approach to funding
- Not sure about a hard number cap; the circumstances of a project should be reviewed. What can we do to move the #1 project along and not jeopardize it by under-funding. Also need to keep the greatest number of projects moving forward and keep our eye on meeting the federal obligation target.
- By funding a project that has positive regional impacts, even though the money goes to a single jurisdiction, the benefit is felt by region. Need to consider a project's circumstances.
- A \$3M cap isn't really enough to help a lot in advancing projects.
- Just awarding from the top down would limit funding to only 5 or 6 projects. There are more key priorities than just the top few, so suggested looking at something between a \$3M award and fully funding the highest ranked project.
- Mayor Haley suggested an award of \$10M to the Pines Rd project.
- Suggested looking at the list of projects using a holistic approach; what they need and what they can realistically deliver.
- Sometimes fully funding a larger project moves it out of the way for smaller projects in the next funding cycle.
- Not supportive of a funding cap. Not always the best to give a little bit to everyone. Sometime best to fund a large project to make room for smaller projects in the future. Best to look at projects on a case-by- case basis.
- This is a regional agency so the regional distribution of funds should be considered.

Chair Schmidt noted that the meeting was almost out of time, but here still is another agenda item after this one. He asked for a motion to extend the meeting by 15 minutes.

***Ms. Meyer made a motion to extend the meeting to 3:15 pm. Council Member Wilkerson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.***

Discussion continued:

- Ms. Note said the TTC discussed this topic at great length at the last meeting. She said it sounds like the Board is leaning towards awarding a sizeable award for the highest-ranking priority project; if that occurs the TTC will very likely ask the Board to decide how much should one agency be allowed to be awarded in a single call for project; Spokane Valley has the number one, four and seven project on the scoring list.
- Council Member Wilkerson said this is a nuanced conversation and there are many layers of information to be considered; she does not feel that there is enough information to advance the conversation any further today.
- Chair Schmidt said he is hearing a general consensus against a funding cap.

- Ms. Jones said that staff and the TIP Working Group will develop a draft plan that programs \$10M to the first project and then see how the funding can be spread further down the list, based upon the Board's input today. The draft plan will be presented to the TTC and TAC later this month and to the Board next month for action.
- Ms. Meyer requested that several alternatives be developed for the Board to consider next month; she suggested one which awards \$10M to the Pines Rd project and another that focus more on equitable geographic distribution.

#### **# 11 Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) Priorities**

Mr. Fletcher reported that FMSIB is developing a statewide list of freight investments, which includes collecting project and investment priorities from state MPOs. SRTC must deliver this information to FMSIB by 8/15/22. He shared information about eligible projects and the FMSIB prioritization criteria. Part of recent SRTC work for the MTP, Unified List of National Highway Freight Program Project list was the development of freight priorities. Those projects will be evaluated for inclusion in the FMSIB submission. He described the next steps in the process. There were no questions or discussion.

#### **# 12 Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:14 pm.

---

Julie Meyers-Lehman, Clerk of the Board