Spokane Regional Transportation Council – Board of Directors
March 9, 2023 | Meeting Minutes
Hybrid Meeting at SRTC, 421 W Riverside Ave Suite 504, Spokane, WA and virtually via Zoom
Meeting presentations are available on the SRTC website: SRTC Board of Directors

1 Call to Order/Excused Absences
Chair Wilkerson called the meeting to order at 1:00pm; attendance was taken. In attendance were:

Board Members:
Council Member Betsy Wilkerson, *City of Spokane, Chair*
Commissioner Al French, *Spokane County, Vice Chair*
Council Member Paul Schmidt, *City of Cheney*
Mayor Cris Kaminskas, *City of Liberty Lake*
Mayor Terri Cooper, *City of Medical Lake*
Council Member Zack Zappone, *City of Spokane*
Mayor Pam Haley, *City of Spokane Valley*
Council Member Rod Higgins, *City of Spokane Valley*
Doug Yost, *Major Employer Representative*
Matt Ewers, *Rail/Freight Representative*
Council Member Micki Harnois, *Small Towns Representative*
Commissioner Mary Kuney, *Spokane County*
Susan Meyer, *Spokane Transit Authority*
Kim Zentz, *Transportation Advisory Committee Chair*
Mike Frucci, *WSDOT-Eastern Region*
Kelly Fukai, *WA State Transportation Commission*

Guests:
Gary Wirt, *All Aboard Washington*
Karl Otterstrom, *Spokane Transit Authority*
Charles Hansen, *Transportation Advisory Committee*
Jami Hayes, *Spokane County*
Adam Jackson, *City of Spokane Valley*
Steven Polunsky, *WA Dept of Commerce*
Shauna Harshman, *WSDOT-Eastern Region*
Kevin Picanco, *City of Spokane*
Gloria Mantz, *City of Spokane Valley*
Larry Larson, *WSDOT-Eastern Region*

Staff:
Lois Bollenback, *Executive Director*
Eve McMenamy, *Deputy Executive Director*
Jason Lien, *Principal Transportation Planner*
Mike Ulrich, *Principal Transportation Planner*
David Fletcher, *Principal Transportation Planner*
Michael Redlinger, *Assoc. Transportation Planner II*
Kylee Jones, *Associate Transportation Planner III*
Greg Griffin, *Administrative Services Manager*
Julie Meyers-Lehman, *Admin.-Exec. Coordinator*
Megan Clark, *Legal Counsel*

Board Alternates:
n/a

There were no requests for excused absences.

2 Public Comments - There were no comments.

ACTION ITEMS

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3 Consent Agenda
    a) February 2023 Board Meeting Minutes
    b) February 2023 Vouchers
    c) 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program March Amendment (Resolution R-23-04)

Ms. Meyer made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Council Member Higgins seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

 # 4   Carbon Reduction Program (CRP): Urban Funding Allocations

Ms. Jones reviewed the new 5-year funding program and outlined the 3 suballocation categories: Urban, Urban Small and Rural. She explained that there is approximately $3.2 M of Urban funding available for SRTC to distribute over a 5-year period (the other two categories will be addressed later in the year) and outlined project eligibility. When new funding or funding from de-obligations becomes available, the method of project selection falls under the contingency list process, covered by Policies 4.7 and 6.8 of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Guidebook. Adoption of the TIP Guidebook through Resolution R-22-23 was approved by the Board in November 2022. She reviewed the policies, including the deliberations by the TIP Working Group and described the three projects proposed to receive funding. Projects were selected from the contingency list in a top-down manner.

- 2022-2023 allocations:
  - *Fish Lake Trail – Phase 2 PE* – fully funded ($650,250)
  - *Millwood Trail – Children of the Sun to Fancher PE* – fully funded ($237,405)
- 2024-2026 allocations:
  - *Fish Lake Trail – Phase 1 CN* – partial funding ($2,291,720)

Ms. Jones addressed project obligation timing, project readiness, and outlined the next steps. Chair Wilkerson opened the floor for questions and discussion.

Mayor Haley spoke about the conversation at the Transportation Technical Committee meeting on this topic and noted the TTC recommendation to the Board did not pass unanimously. She expressed concern that regional equity seems to be a factor for some funding processes and not for others; she feels there may be a lack of consistency and a standard operating procedure for funding distribution. She suggested that SRTC review this issue prior to allocating all of the available funding.

Mayor Haley made a motion approve the funding for the projects for 2022-2023 allocation, but not for the 2024-2026 allocation, to allow more time for the Board consideration. Council Member Higgins seconded.

There was a lengthy discussion. Comments included:
- Project readiness and eligibility are major considerations for the 2022-2023 dollars due to a tight obligation deadline.
- The Board should decide if funding will be distributed evenly throughout the region or by project importance.
- As presented the Board would be following the contingency list process adopted four months ago.
- The two Fish Lake trail projects are interconnected; a member expressed support for getting these constructed as soon as possible.
- There is an existing policy for contingency funding process and the recommendation follows the policy.
- In the 2022 Call for Projects, a City of Spokane Valley project received an award, but not for the full amount. The reason given at that time was that the dollar amount was so large it would have left very little for other jurisdictions, so in the name of regional equity Spokane Valley received a partial award. The group discussed the conversations that led to that decision.
- The 2022 Call for Projects allocated multiple funding sources and totaled approximately $35M. The decision to limit the award to Spokane Valley during the 2022 Call for Projects was an effort to limit the risk to SRTC in meeting the annual obligation target. The CRP funding is a much smaller program (about $636K per year for 5 years) and therefore contains less risk of a project delay impacting the obligation target.

- The Board should decide definitively the process of how projects get funded in order to be transparent and be able to explain decisions clearly to constituents.
- The Board approved SRTC's funding policies several months ago contained in the TIP Guidebook. The Guidebook is updated annually so the Board could re-visit funding policies again later this year.
- The funding policies for a general call for projects differ from the contingency funding policies.
- Funding policies don't necessarily have to be modified, but perhaps the Board could have more time to review and discuss the later 2024-2026 allocations.
- Member stated he is hearing concern is being expressed for Board action taken previously under other circumstances.
- Perhaps the TTC should be asked to review and discuss again.
- The motion on the table is just requesting additional time to review the later years' funding more closely.
- The Board should ensure that a consistent funding process is followed every time.

Chair Wilkerson called for a vote on the motion. There were 6 votes in favor and 8 votes against. Motion did not carry.

Mayor Haley made a motion to approve the funding for the projects for 2022-2026 funding as presented. Mr. Frucci seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION & DISCUSSION ITEMS

5   Congestion Management Process (CMP) Introduction

Mr. Fletcher spoke about the recent launch of a project to update the CMP, a federally required activity, last updated in 2014. He reported on the ways in which the CMP is utilized and outlined the eight-step update process. He stated it is expected to conclude by the end of the year. He reviewed PM Peak Hour Delay measures from 2019 compared to those being projected in 2045. A CMP Working Group consisting of staff from regional jurisdictions and agencies under development. This group will assist in setting regional objectives, performance metrics, network evaluation, etc. The Board will receive regular updates throughout the year.

6   Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress

Mr. Lien reported on the ongoing work to analyze the Regional Bicycle Priority Network facilities and assign a grade based on the factors that determine the level of stress a bicycle user may experience on those routes. The goal is to make sure the network is accessible for all abilities and comfort levels. Examples of traffic stress factors include: vehicle through-lanes and speed, on-facility parking, traffic volume, lane width, etc. He stated that the data collection is nearly complete and analysis will begin soon. The technical analysis portion of the project is expected to wrap up in June; the Board and committees will be kept informed of the project's progress.

7   Passenger Rail Update

Ms. Bollenback stated that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) has made funding available for the development of passenger rail nationwide. She added that there is limited discussion in the existing long-range plan regarding passenger rail or intercity connectivity. She expects to introduce discussions like this as SRTC moves towards the next plan update. She is currently part of a stakeholder group exploring re-activation of long distance service along discontinued Amtrak routes around the nation. She introduced Mr. Gary Wirt from All Aboard Washington (AAWA).

Mr. Wirt spoke about the difference between long-distance and state sponsored passenger rail service. WSDOT's 2019 state rail plan states that in order to assess the viability of a Seattle-Spokane route, a ridership analysis and

updated list of infrastructure improvements are needed. A high-level study in 2020 found that a cross-state route along Stampede Pass is feasible, but more in-depth analysis is needed. He shared information about discontinued Amtrak routes, corridor selection criteria, and AAWA's vision for daytime east-west routes in Washington.

He stated that to advance the process, in addition to further analysis, the State must submit an "expression of interest" and apply for FRA designation as a "corridor". Members can assist by contacting legislators and urging them to support funding for the service. There were no questions or discussion.

 # 8   Board Member Comments - There were no comments.

 # 9   Adjournment - There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:36 pm.

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Julie Meyers-Lehman, Clerk of the Board