

EQUITY WORKING GROUP

MAY MEETING NOTES

Location: 421 W Riverside Ave, Suite #500
Date: May 31st, 2024
Time: 4:15 – 5:15 pm
SRTC Staff: Michael Redlinger, Savannah Hayward, Ben Kloskey, Angel Jackson, Jason Lien
Attendees: Thomas B., Paul K., Erik L., Rachel L., Dennis S., Tara L. Naghmana S.

Michael welcomed the group and gave participants a brief introduction about the meeting agenda. He then introduced the group to the Principal Transportation Planner and Planning Lead of SRTC, Jason Lien, who was presenting a high-level overview of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

Jason briefly introduced himself and then dove into the MTP. He explained that SRTC is in the process of updating the MTP, which outlines a 25-year planning Horizon. The MTP gets an update every 5 years, and this cycle will be called Horizon 2050. Jason then showed the group SRTC's six guiding principles, and how they help shape SRTC and the whole region's vision for the planning future. The key question that the MTP seeks to answer is, "What do we want our transportation system to look like during the 25-year planning horizon? What are we going to do to support that outcome?"

Following the higher-level overview, Jason talked about the work that is in progress for the MTP. He highlighted the fact that SRTC is working on a new guiding principle surrounding equity. Other items in progress that are tied to the MTP are the Regional Safety Action Plan, Congestion Management Plan, Smart mobility plan, and the system resiliency plan. Jason then talked about work coming up around the corner, which are the regional priority networks, and a needs assessment summary. Jason wrapped up his presentation by explaining some of the other components that go into the MTP such as population and travel demand updates, financial forecasts, performance tracking, and public engagement. Over the next two years, the MTP will be highlighted at several SRTC outreach events.

A participant asked whether this working group would be able to have input on the proposed equity guiding principle. Both Jason and Michael responded and said absolutely, and that it will be brought before the Equity Working Group before it goes to the Board and committees for approval. Another inquiry was whether the majority of the MTP comes to fruition, that items identified within it become implemented. Jason explained that the long-range plan is fiscally constrained, and that there are foreseeable funds that are available to fund projects within the MTP. There are items from the long-range plans over the last 20 years that are great examples of how the projects are acted upon, such as the City Line bus route and the North Spokane Corridor. Michael added that the law requires SRTC to revisit this plan every few years, because it is important to stay on top of emerging trends. Things change often, and that is why it is crucial to revisit this plan as frequently as SRTC does. The process is designed to be flexible because Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) don't want to be held to a decision that no longer makes sense for the region or metropolitan area.

Another participant offered their perspective that it is a citizen's duty to hold elected officials accountable in order to see projects reach completion or at least be acted on. They ended their remarks by stating that most projects that get approved by one group of elected officials, but then end up being

implemented by their successors – a different group of elected officials. Michael talked about how SRTC may not be able to tell elected officials what to do, rather that the SRTC staff have been given the power to make recommendations to them. MPOs are a very real place to affect change as a member of the public, to which the participant reiterated the importance of citizens going to talk to the Board of Directors and using your opportunity for public comments at their meetings. Jason added that part of SRTC's role as a planning agency is to ensure that funds are being fairly distributed to projects and that SRTC looks at everything it does from various perspectives. That way, the agency can give solid recommendations because every problem is viewed holistically.

Michael thanked the group for their questions and comments, after which he passed the presentation to Savannah for a discussion about community outreach and public events.

Savannah introduced the agenda item by explaining where SRTC is currently at with community outreach and then posed a key question to the group: "Where does SRTC need to go? We need an outside perspective on groups we need to reach and how to reach them." While going over a list of events that SRTC attends, Savannah explained how the agency needs to be better at reaching different community groups and participating in events outside the city of Spokane. A participant commented about a series of events that Spokane Regional Health District attends, such as Spring Market Northeast, Spokane Pride Fest, among several others. This comment was followed by another participant who invited SRTC to potentially attend a legislative summit that is occurring in Spokane this month hosted by the Lands Council. The event is occurring in coordination with Expo '74 and will have a large portion of the event dedicated to native culture and ceremonies from tribes of the Spokane area. In particular, the event will include a symbolic Salmon Ceremony passed down over generations of native culture. Savannah and Michael were grateful for the offer and informed the participant that it would be brought up with leadership at SRTC. The last comment on this topic from a participant was a suggestion to begin attending more rural community fairs, as well as maybe putting a table up at local DMVs and licensing locations. These suggestions were applauded by the group.

Michael then talked about the different communities and community organizations that we reach out to. He went down the list of community groups and highlighted several groups we hear from such as NAACP and Latinos en Spokane, and other partner agencies such as SRHD and STA. Michael and Savannah then asked if there were any groups not listed that the working group thought should be on there. A participant added that Mujeres in Action, Pacific Islander Community Association (PICA) and the Hispanic Business Professionals Association should be added to SRTC's list, as well as Manzanita House, Refugee and Immigrant Connections Spokane, and Muslims for Community Action and Support. Michael thanked them for those suggestions and mentioned that we are aiming to attend an El Mercado event within the next few months.

Savannah introduced the last slide detailing resources that SRTC brings to different outreach events. She then asked what activities and resources SRTC could bring/do to improve communication at these events. She also mentioned that SRTC is following up on feedback at the prior meeting by looking into translation services as an area of improvement, but that the 2024 budget is limited.

A participant commented that it was nice to see SRTC have a presence at the Spokane Bike Swap, and that the materials we had there were good. They added that it would be nice to see the Regional Safety Action Plan Draft as a handout (trifold) in some capacity at upcoming events. Overall, the group was happy with a lot of the events SRTC has been attending. Another participant added that a community

resource directory had been published by The Fig Tree – a list which has detailed contact information for community organizations across Spokane. Michael and Savannah confirmed that they knew about the Fig Tree and will be looking at it further.

Michael and Savannah wrapped up the meeting and reminded the group of the upcoming July meeting and its agenda.