

Spokane Regional Transportation Council – Board of Directors

July 11, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Hybrid Meeting at SRTC, 421 W Riverside Ave, Suite 504, Spokane, WA and virtually via Zoom

1 Call to Order/ Excused Absences

Chair French called the meeting to order at 1:00pm and attendance was taken.

In attendance were:

Board Members:

Commissioner Al French, *Spokane County (Chair)*
 Council Member Vincent Barthels, *City of Cheney*
 Council Member Diane Pfaeffle, *City of Deer Park (arrived at 1:43p)*
 Council Member Cris Kaminskis, *City of Liberty Lake*
 Council Member Don Kennedy, *City of Medical Lake*
 Mayor Kevin Freeman, *City of Millwood*
 Council President Betsy Wilkerson, *City of Spokane*
 Council Member Kitty Klitzke, *City of Spokane*
 Mayor Pam Haley, *City of Spokane Valley*
 Council Member Rod Higgins, *City of Spokane Valley (Vice Chair)*
 Daniel Clark, *Kalispel Tribe (arrived at 1:37p)*
 Doug Yost, *Major Employer*
 Matt Ewers, *Rail/Freight Rep*
 Commissioner Josh Kerns, *Spokane County*
 Susan Meyer, *Spokane Transit Authority*
 Mike Frucci, *WSDOT-ER*
 Kelly Fukai, *WSTC*
 Paul Vose, *TAC Chair*
 Barry Greene, *TTC Chair*

Absent Members:

Council Member Jennifer Morton, *City of Airway Heights*
 Council Member Micki Harnois, *Small Towns Representative*

Guests:

Lisa Corcoran, *Spokane Int. Airport*
 Jeff Frkonja, *RSG Inc.*
 Cathy Gunderson
 Ryan Jerman
 Paul Kropp
 Charlene Kay, *WSDOT-ER*
 Shauna Harshman, *WSDOT-ER*
 Larry Larson, *WSDOT-ER*
 Mike Houston
 Sean Mesner, *CivTech*
 Spencer Montgomery
 Karl Otterstrom, *STA*
 Bob Turner, *City of Spokane Valley*
 Leann Yamamoto, *Spokane County*

Staff:

Lois Bollenback, *Executive Director*
 Eve McMenemy, *Deputy Executive Director*
 Ryan Stewart, *Principal Trans. Planner*
 Jason Lien, *Principal Trans. Planner*
 Mike Ulrich, *Principal Trans. Planner*
 David Fletcher, *Principal Trans. Planner*
 Michael Redlinger, *Assoc. Trans. Planner*
 Savannah Hayward, *Comm. & PR Coord*
 Greg Griffin, *Admin. Services Manager*
 Angel Jackson, *Admin.-Exec. Coord.*
 Megan Clark, *Legal Counsel*

Chair French stated the following members requested an **excused** absence from the meeting:

- Council Member Jennifer Morton, *City of Airway Heights*
- Council Member Micki Harnois, *Small Towns Representative*

Mr. Ewers made a motion to approve the excused absences from the meeting. Council President Wilkerson seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Mr. Frucci announced Ms. Charlene Kay has been selected to be the new Regional Administrator of WSDOT-ER effective August 1, 2024.

2 Public Comments

Ms. Gunderson is seeking major street work for Mission Ave/Trent Ave (North Napa Road area). Chair French encouraged the City Representatives to follow up with this comment/request.

ACTION ITEMS

3 Consent Agenda

- a) Minutes of the June 2024 Board of Directors Meeting
- b) Vouchers for May 2024 (corrected) and June 2024
- c) CY 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) July Amendment
- d) CY 2024 2nd Quarter Budget Update
- e) Update of the Fourth Quarter Budget

Council Member Higgins made a motion to pass the Consent Agenda. Council Member Klitzke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4 Calendar Year (CY) 2025 Member Financial Contributions

Mr. Griffin explained the process of updating population figures to calculate the 2025 membership contributions in each of the represented areas. This year, local Tribal communities were included in the final estimated membership fees per the Interlocal Agreement (ILA). Local member contributions will be used to sustain an operating reserve as federal and state grant funds operate on a reimbursement basis and to fund any matching funds opportunities.

Mayor Freeman motioned to approve the CY 2025 Membership Contributions as presented. Council Member Higgins seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

5 Data Applications for Transportation Analysis (DATA) Project Update

Mr. Ulrich presented the multi-year initiative aimed at improving how data is applied to transportation planning. He stated that the request is for the Board to approve a resolution confirming the project's successful completion according to the scope of the contract. The project had six tasks, with five already successfully delivered. Today's focus was on the final task, updating the travel demand model. This model, essential for forecasting transportation demands, follows industry standards that are endorsed by FHWA. The delivered model's attributes don't match every detail on the ground in all cases, which is common for regional-scale models.

He explained that some of the user concerns expressed at the June TTC meeting highlighted mismatches with on-the-ground details. In response, SRTC staff developed a scope, schedule, and budget to address the items the model users identified as "critical". The estimated cost for these updates would be around \$90,000. He noted that while the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended proceeding with the model and addressing Option A separately, the Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) recommended all concerns be resolved prior to approval.

Emphasizing the model's validity for regional planning, Mr. Ulrich asked the board to approve the resolution to release the model (pending) the Option A updates, acknowledging the need for the model in ongoing and upcoming projects.

Chair French mentioned there were concerns about the impact of delaying the model release on currently funded federal projects. Chair French opened for comments and discussion from Board members:

- Mr. Frucci questioned the impact of using the model prior to the adjustment being completed. Mr. Ulrich stated that for sub-area studies, for example, a consultant would use the model by making "localized" adjustments to the model so there is not a negative impact in that regard.

- Ms. Meyer asked if the ridership data has been updated since the significant increase in 2023 and if not, what would that involve. Mr. Ulrich explained it is not specifically addressed with the “Option A” revisions and it would involve coordination from STA staff to retrieve the data to incorporate in the model. Ms. Bollenback stated the ridership figures would need post processing to reflect the changes as this is a current snapshot. She also highlighted that there was language added to the model documentation to reflect that as well.
- Council President Wilkerson stated she has concerns with approving this as it is presented today. She stated upon speaking with city engineers, there could be negative consequences to releasing the model now and would like to see it released after the revisions have been made.
- Mr. Green (TTC Vice Chair) explained the committee’s concerns on approving the model were based on how the model forecasts volumes on Interstate 90. In addition, the member agencies would like to review the model before it is released.
- Council President Wilkerson explained she understands the timing of the model release could impact grants for both the City and Spokane County.
- Mr. Ulrich explained the model timeline for updates would rely on data from member agencies, which could take weeks to receive.
- Mayor Freeman reminded members the model is valid at a regional scale and moving from how it is intended to be used could lead to inaccurate outcomes.

There was a robust conversation including several clarifying questions from the Board members concerning the estimation of time for completion of Option A and release of the model.

Mayor Freeman motioned to approve the DATA Project Update, as presented. Council Member Higgins seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

INFORMATION & DISCUSSION ITEMS

6 Transportation Priorities: Spokane International Airport

Ms. Corcoran, Chief Development Officer-Spokane Airports, which includes Spokane International Airport, Airport Business Park and Felts Field, informed the board that they are focused on expanding and improving its facilities. Major projects include the Concourse C expansion and Central Hall project at Spokane International Airport. The goal is to enhance passenger experience and accommodate more flights. They are also upgrading airfield infrastructure and parking systems, while improving safety with a new interchange on Spotted Road. Additionally, she reviewed development of a rail truck transload facility to streamline cargo transport.

7 Regional Safety Action Plan (RSAP) Update

Mr. Ulrich provided an update on the Regional Safety Action Plan, which was discussed last month. The committees indicated their support for the plan, expressing comfort with the included data and strategies. However, they requested that the prospectus sheets for the three regional targeted corridors be completed and included in the plan, rather than as separate, stand-alone documents. Initially, the project had a compressed schedule to enable members to apply for FY25 implementation funding. With the realization that the aggressive timeline was no longer necessary, there is now ample time to incorporate these items into the plan.

Mr. Ulrich announced that the entire plan, along with the completed prospectus sheets, will be presented at the September SRTC Board meeting. This will include all elements reviewed and recommended by the TTC and TAC, ensuring a comprehensive and updated plan for final consideration.

8 Draft 2025 Unified List of Regional Transportation Priorities

Ms. McMenemy discussed the Unified List of Regional Transportation Priorities, which outlines the region's top transportation projects for communication with legislators and stakeholders. Now in its fourth year, the process is focused on finalizing the state version of the list and subsequently the federal version. The plan includes policy statements emphasizing the need for improved safety, increased collaboration, and additional funding. The need for improved safety is backed by data showing a 66% increase in fatal and serious injury crashes in Spokane. The safety statement also identifies key corridors for investment to enhance safety. Ms. McMenemy reviewed the top three priority statements and briefly referred to the additional policy statements as provided in the Board packet.

Mr. Fletcher provided an overview of the project prioritization process. The project submission period ended on May 17th, with 30 projects submitted by seven agencies, representing nearly \$700 million in unfunded needs. He detailed the review process, ensuring consistent evaluation of all projects based on specific criteria. A draft list was created, highlighting the projects based on their scores and other considerations. Mr. Fletcher reviewed various options for narrowing the list to respond to expectations from local legislators. The Board was invited to provide feedback on this draft and how many projects to include before the final list is presented for approval in September. Ms. Bollenback also asked the Board for input on the project listing, however no direction was provided. Staff will seek additional input from advisory committees and make a recommendation at the next meeting.

9 SRTC Website Project Update

Ms. Hayward presented an update on the project to redesign the SRTC website, brand, and logo. This initiative aims to strengthen SRTC's outreach program by modernizing foundational communication elements. The selected consultant, The Woodshop, has significant local and national project experience. The project aligns with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan update, with a target completion date of February 2025. The new website is expected to launch in mid-December and will improve user-experience, navigation, and compliance with government standards.

Currently, The Woodshop is gathering information about SRTC through stakeholder meetings. The next phase will involve updating the brand and logo, which will be presented to the board for feedback in September. Phase three will encompass the website update. In the final phase, The Woodshop will create collateral materials to support the new brand. Ms. Hayward invited board members to participate in the branding process and share their feedback.

10 Smart Mobility/Resiliency – Goals & Objectives

Mr. Lien presented updates on two concurrent projects focusing on resiliency and smart mobility technologies. Initially, these projects reviewed current practices and existing technologies in our region, comparing them with best practices from other Western US regions. The next phase involves assessing the viability of smart mobility technologies and identifying vulnerabilities in the transportation system. The Smart Mobility project aims to enhance the multimodal transportation system's safety, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness using technology and data.

The goals include integrating technology into the transportation network to improve safety, efficiency, resilience, and equity, with performance metrics to evaluate strategies' effectiveness. Key objectives are empowering travelers with information, supporting seamless mobility, increasing access to new technology, promoting environmentally responsible travel, and reducing vulnerability to disruptions. He invited feedback from board members.

For resiliency, the goal is to improve the region's ability to anticipate, adapt to, and recover from disruptions, building on foundational work by Spokane County Emergency Management. A Stakeholder Advisory Groups has been formed, and draft recommendations will be presented by the end of the year, contributing to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan update.

11 Executive Director's Report

The Safe Streets for All (SS4A) federal grant program has a secondary grant opportunity titled the Supplemental Planning and Demonstration Grant. The deadline for applying for this grant is the end of August. The goal is to use the Regional Safety Action Plan (RSAP) to inform an application for a demonstration grant, which involves implementing a pilot project, measuring its effectiveness, and reporting the results. This process requires collaboration with project implementers, not just planners.

The Mayor of Spokane recently issued an executive order and resolution to address safety issues, especially for vulnerable road users, due to recent tragic incidents. SRTC would like to support their efforts along with the entire region to identify a potential demonstration grant.

The SRTC Board is not scheduled to meet in August, however, and we would not be able to present the grant for approval in advance of the deadline. SRTC requests support from the board to work with local communities to develop a grant application using the RSAP as a guide and then bring it back to the board for approval in September. It would also be possible to get a tentative recommendation for approval from the administrative committee in August and then seek full board approval. Ms. Bollenback is seeking direction and approval from the board to pursue this grant.

Board members discussed authorizing the Director to use her discretion and submit an application without further input from the SRTC Board.

Council Member Klitzke made a motion for the Executive Director to pursue the SS4A grant. Council Member Kennedy seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

12 Ongoing/Upcoming Events

Board members highlighted events in their perspective areas.

13 Transportation Funding: Opportunities

No action/comments

14 Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:56 PM

Angel Jackson, Clerk of the Board