



## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 12, 2026- 1:00 pm

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

### Excused Absences:

Doug Yost

*Major Employer Rep.*

Council Member Micki Harnois

*Small Towns Rep.*

***Council Member Barthels made a motion to approve excused absences. Deputy Mayor Hattenburg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.***

In attendance were:

### Board Members:

Council Member Vincent Barthels

*City of Cheney*

Council Member Dianne Pfaeffle

*City of Deer Park*

Mayor Cris Kaminskis

*City of Liberty Lake*

Council Member Don Kennedy

*City of Medical Lake*

Council Member Kate Telis

*City of Spokane*

Council Member Kitty Klitzke

*City of Spokane*

Council Member Pam Haley

*City of Spokane Valley*

Deputy Mayor Tim Hattenburg

*City of Spokane Valley*

Daniel Clark

*Kalispel Tribe*

Matt Ewers

*Rail/Freight Rep.*

Commissioner Al French

*Spokane County*

Commissioner Josh Kerns

*Spokane County*

Karl Otterstrom (CEO)

*STA*

Council Member Cecilia Evans

*Spokane Tribe*

Char Kay (Region Administrator)

*WSDOT-ER*

Commissioner Kelly Fukai

*WA Transp. Commission*

### Absent Members:

Council Member Jennifer

Morton

*City of Airway Heights*

Mayor Shawna Beese

*City of Millwood*

### Ex-Officio Members:

Tara Limon

*STA*

*(TTC Chair)*

### Guests:

Wende Wilber

*Kittleson & Assoc.*

Wade Scott

*Kittleson & Assoc.*

Stephen Lamberson

*Etter McMahan*

Inga Note

*City of Spokane*

Kevin Picanco

*City of Spokane*

Erik Lowe

Kelley Dolan

*FHWA*

Stu Barton

*J-U-B Engineers*

### Staff:

Lois Bollenback

*Executive Director*

Greg Griffin

*Admin Services Manager*

Savannah Creasey

*Comm. & PR Coor.*

Anadia Grier

*Admin-Executive Coor.*

Jason Lien

*Transp. Planning Manager*

Ryan Stewart

*Principal Transp. Planner*

David Fletcher

*Principal Transp. Planner*

Ben Kloskey

*Assoc. Transp. Planner II*

Angela Paparazzo

*Assoc. Transp. Planner I*



## # 2 Public Comments

Mr. Lowe expressed concern about the recent presentation on I-90 operations between Four Lakes and the Idaho Stateline, stating that the discussion appeared to be laying the groundwork for widening the interstate. He questioned the reliance on Level of Service (LOS) to justify expansion, noting that the segment identified as approaching LOS E was based on traffic speeds of around 65 mph in a 70-mph zone, and suggested that adjusting the posted speed limit could address the issue without adding lanes. Mr. Lowe also criticized the use of LOS as a decision-making metric and urged the Board to prioritize maintaining and improving the existing transportation system rather than pursuing costly highway expansion, citing significant regional funding gaps for preservation and maintenance. Note: these remarks were provided in writing as well.

## ACTION ITEMS

### # 3 Consent Agenda

Chair Kaminskas called attention to items comprising the Consent Agenda, including:

- a. February Board Meeting Minutes
- b. CY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment - March 2026
- c. Vouchers Paid for the Month of February

**Chair Kaminskas asked if there were any items requiring further discussion.**

**Deputy Mayor Tim Hattenburg made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Council Member Haley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

### # 4 US 2 Multimodal Improvement Project Economic Benefits – Approval

Mr. Stewart introduced the requested board action to approve Resolution R-26-10, which would accept the US-2 Multimodal Improvements Project Economic Benefits Report. He explained that SRTC began conducting economic analyses of transportation projects to better support member jurisdictions in applying for state and federal grants. While many planning studies focus primarily on operations or infrastructure, competitive funding programs often require information on broader economic benefits. In 2022, the SRTC Board approved an increase to the operating budget to support this type of work, and the activity was later included in the 2024–2026 Unified Planning Work Program. SRTC utilized the General Planning Consultant contract with Kittelson & Associates to conduct the analysis, setting aside about \$50,000 annually to evaluate projects from the region’s unified project list. The US-2 project in Airway Heights is the first completed analysis, with additional studies underway for other jurisdictions.

Ms. Wilber from Kittelson & Associates described the methodology used to estimate the project’s transportation-related economic benefits over a 20-year period. The analysis focused on benefits directly tied to transportation improvements, including crash reduction, improved walking and biking access, reduced operations and maintenance costs, reduced emissions, and the potential to attract investment. The study used widely available tools, including the USDOT Benefit-Cost Analysis Tool and an open-source tool developed by Caltrans, to create a process that could be replicated for other projects and used to support grant applications.



The US-2 project represents a \$49.4 million construction investment and includes improvements such as replacing signals with roundabouts, narrowing lane widths, improving pedestrian crossings, adding shared-use paths, and providing in-lane transit stops. Based on the analysis, the project is estimated to generate approximately \$355 million in transportation-related benefits over 20 years. These benefits include about 524 construction jobs during the construction period and an estimated 148 long-term jobs along the corridor.

A large portion of the projected benefits comes from increases in residential property values near the corridor, estimated at about \$189 million over 20 years, along with roughly \$2.1 million in additional property tax revenue for the city. Safety improvements were also a significant factor, with crash reduction benefits estimated at about \$155 million using USDOT valuation methods. Additional benefits include health improvements from increased walking and biking, an improved travel experience, and modest savings in maintenance costs from roundabouts and newer roadway infrastructure.

Ms. Wilber noted that some potential benefits, such as travel time savings, could not be quantified due to limited available data, even though the project is expected to improve traffic flow. She also referenced a separate West Plains land use study that estimated additional economic activity if the surrounding vacant land were eventually developed, though those outcomes are more difficult to directly attribute to the US-2 project.

Following the presentation, Councilmember Klitzke asked how SRTC plans to continue this type of analysis in the future. Ms. Bollenback explained that projects are selected from the Unified List, with a focus on those that could benefit from economic analysis to strengthen funding applications. SRTC plans to continue conducting these studies using the allocated funding, with the next analysis underway for the Argonne/Upriver Drive and Centennial Trail connection project. Ms. Bollenback also noted that jurisdictions can request consideration if they have projects with timing or funding needs.

**Ms. Kay made a motion to approve Resolution R-26-10 Accepting the US-2 Multimodal Improvements Project Economic Benefits Report as presented. Deputy Mayor Hattenburg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

## INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

### # 5 Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Policy – Draft

Mr. Griffin explained that the Washington State Auditor's Office requires agencies to formally adopt an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) policy to protect public funds, prevent fraud, and ensure compliance with state requirements. Although SRTC already follows secure financial practices with strong internal controls, adopting a formal policy aligns the agency with state guidance, relevant RCWs, and standard government financial management practices.

He noted that SRTC currently maintains a clear segregation of duties for financial transactions. No single staff member can both initiate and approve a payment, whether it is an EFT or a



warrant. Bank reconciliations are also reviewed by someone other than the person who performed the reconciliation to provide an additional level of oversight.

Mr. Griffin also described several fraud prevention measures already in place. For example, any changes to employee payroll banking information must be submitted via a signed form delivered in person, not by email. He shared an example where a fraudulent email appeared to request a banking change, but staff denied the request by phone before taking action. Banking information changes are then verified and processed through standard procedures with U.S. Bank and the Spokane County Treasury.

Currently, SRTC limits EFT use to specific types of transactions, including payroll; payroll-related payments such as PERS, L&I, and ESD; payroll transfers and withholdings; and grant reimbursements received electronically through the Washington State Office of Financial Management. The agency also uses security measures such as two-step verification, restricted system permissions, separate payment initiation and approval roles, full documentation of transactions, timely bank reconciliations, and a clear audit trail.

Mr. Griffin stated that a resolution to formally adopt the EFT policy will be brought to the board for approval at the May meeting.

## **# 6 CY 2027 Unified List Process & Criteria – Draft**

Mr. Fletcher presented an overview of the draft process and evaluation criteria for developing the 2027 Unified List. He explained that the Unified List is a strategic tool SRTC uses to communicate the region's transportation priorities to state and federal legislators when seeking potential funding opportunities.

He described how the Unified List fits within SRTC's overall planning framework. Long-range planning begins with Horizon 2050, the regional metropolitan transportation plan that identifies transportation needs and potential projects more than 20 years into the future. As projects become more developed and begin seeking funding, they are added to the Unified List, which represents medium-range priorities identified by member jurisdictions. Once projects secure funding, they move into short-range planning through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which includes projects with already committed funding.

Mr. Fletcher explained that the Unified List is updated annually and includes both state and federal versions tailored to those audiences. Projects are submitted by local agencies and added to the list as funding priorities, and they are typically removed once funding has been secured. Projects on the list are organized into three stages based on their level of development: initiation for early-stage projects, development for projects actively seeking funding, and implementation for projects nearing full funding and construction readiness.

He then outlined the timeline for the 2027 update. The project submittal period is planned for May 15 through June 12, during which agencies may submit projects for consideration. SRTC staff will review submissions and prepare a draft list by August. The draft will be presented to the



Transportation Technical and Advisory Committees in August and to the Board in September. The state version of the list is expected to return to the Board for approval in October, followed by the federal version in November.

Mr. Fletcher also discussed the evaluation criteria used to score projects. These criteria are based on SRTC's guiding principles, which include economic vitality, cooperation and leadership, stewardship, operations, maintenance and preservation, safety and security, quality of life, and equity. In the past, each category was weighted equally. However, staff is proposing updates to better reflect recent planning work and feedback from the Horizon 2050 planning process.

The proposed changes focus primarily on economic vitality, operations, maintenance and preservation, and safety and security. Updates to the economic vitality category incorporate SRTC's new methodology for identifying and classifying regional activity centers. Projects that improve access to or within these centers would receive points based on their support for connectivity and economic activity. The updated approach also distinguishes between larger regional centers and smaller neighborhood or rural centers, with scoring adjusted accordingly.

Staff is also proposing to increase the weighting of the operations maintenance and preservation category and the safety and security category from 30 points to 50 points each. These adjustments reflect feedback that these areas represent key regional priorities and have shown concerning trends in recent years. Additional questions were added to the operations maintenance and preservation category to better recognize projects that improve mobility on corridors with unreliable travel times and projects that implement strategies identified in the region's congestion management process.

The safety and security category was also expanded with new questions aligned with the Regional Safety Action Plan. These include awarding points to projects that address issues on the high-injury network and projects located in areas with high severity-weighted crash rates. The goal is to better identify projects that address safety concerns, even when fatal or serious-injury crashes have not yet occurred, but crash patterns indicate potential risk.

During discussion, board members suggested potential improvements to the scoring criteria. One member noted that the framework could better recognize the safety benefits of projects that encourage people to shift to safer modes of travel, such as transit, walking, or biking. He explained that transit travel is significantly safer than driving and that increasing transit use could reduce risk across the transportation system. Staff acknowledged the suggestion and indicated they would explore ways to incorporate that concept into the safety criteria.

Mr. Fletcher also responded to questions about the updated classification of activity centers introduced through Horizon 2050. The revised system identifies both larger regional centers and smaller neighborhood or rural centers, allowing the scoring criteria to recognize projects that improve access to these areas while also considering whether the type of project is compatible with the activity center's function.



He concluded by noting that the proposed updates reflect work completed through several recent planning efforts, including the congestion management process, the Regional Safety Action Plan, and Horizon 2050. The draft criteria will be presented to the technical and advisory committees in April for recommendation and will return to the Board in May for approval before the project submittal period begins.

## **# 7 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) Update**

Ms. Paparazzo presented an update on the development of the 2026–2030 Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan. She explained that the HSTP is required by both state and federal governments and must be updated every four years to remain eligible for certain transportation grants. The plan is intended to coordinate transit funding and resources across the region and provide a framework for prioritizing transportation investments that support people who rely on transit for mobility.

The plan is developed jointly by SRTC and the Spokane Transit Authority (STA) because many of the programs addressed in the plan are closely connected to STA services, including the federal Section 5310 program. Although SRTC does not directly operate transportation services, the HSTP helps guide regional priorities and funding decisions for programs that support mobility. The plan focuses on understanding how transportation services can better serve populations with the greatest mobility needs, including seniors, youth, people with disabilities, and individuals experiencing poverty. It also helps identify gaps in the current transportation network and opportunities for agencies and community partners to pursue funding that improves services.

Ms. Paparazzo explained that the planning process includes several key components. These include community outreach, collection of geographic and demographic data to understand regional transportation needs, and an assessment of existing transportation services across the region. The plan also identifies strategies to address service gaps and improve coordination among providers. Ultimately, stakeholders, SRTC committees, and the Board will review the findings and help determine regional priorities for improving transportation access.

Public outreach is a central part of the planning process and is designed to gather input from a wide range of community members and service providers. Outreach efforts include stakeholder meetings with organizations representing diverse populations, engagement activities that reach both urban and rural communities, public surveys to gather feedback from residents, meetings with transportation and social service providers to understand operational challenges, and mapping efforts to better understand where people travel from and where they need to go.

Ms. Paparazzo noted that SRTC staff are leading development of the plan in coordination with STA, including STA staff member Emilio Bustos, who manages the Section 5310 program. STA is assisting in compiling the regional inventory of transportation services and in coordinating outreach and stakeholder engagement.

The plan is currently in the early stages of development, with drafting and public outreach underway. The final plan is expected to be completed and adopted in July. Once completed, the plan will provide a comprehensive overview of transportation services, needs, and strategies for Spokane County and ensure the region remains eligible for federal and state transportation funding that supports mobility.



programs.

Board members asked questions about how outreach is being conducted outside of the Spokane Transit Authority Public Transportation Benefit Area. Ms. Paparazzo confirmed that the plan covers the entire county and described outreach efforts already conducted in areas such as Colbert, where staff gathered feedback from residents about transportation needs and service gaps.

Additional discussion highlighted the plan's importance in identifying transportation connections between rural communities and services in Spokane. Staff noted that programs such as Section 5310 funding have supported transportation services linking rural areas to medical and other services in the urban area, sometimes in partnership with WSDOT. Board members also suggested additional areas for outreach, including the East Valley area, which remains outside the transit benefit area and may have unmet transportation needs. Ms. Paparazzo responded that staff are actively engaging with service providers and agencies serving those areas to better understand barriers and opportunities for expanding transportation access.

## **# 8 Legislative Activity (Federal)**

Ms. Bollenback provided an update on federal legislative activity related to transportation funding and policy. She explained that federal transportation programs operate under multi-year acts, which typically cover about five years. These acts establish funding levels, programs, and policy priorities that guide transportation investments across the country. However, when a new authorization is delayed, Congress utilizes continuing resolutions to temporarily extend existing programs. While these extensions keep funding in place, they create uncertainty for transportation agencies because program rules, funding levels, and priorities may change once a new authorization is passed.

She noted that the current federal transportation authorization, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), will expire on September 30<sup>th</sup> of this year. The IIJA represented the largest federal transportation investment in history, providing roughly twice the funding of the previous FAST Act over its five-year period. The law also created several new programs intended to address infrastructure needs, particularly in areas such as safety and system improvements. However, much of the funding came from remaining COVID-related federal funds rather than from a new long-term revenue source, and the Highway Trust Fund continues to face long-term solvency challenges.

Ms. Bollenback explained that Congress has been working on the next transportation authorization bill for the past year. In the House of Representatives, the effort is being led by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, chaired by Sam Graves, who has emphasized the need to streamline the federal permitting process and reduce regulatory delays that can slow project delivery. Senator Shelley Moore Capito is leading similar discussions in the Senate and has also expressed a desire to pass a new authorization bill before the current one expires. Draft proposals are expected to circulate in the coming months, and there will be opportunities for agencies and organizations to provide feedback as the legislation develops.

She highlighted several key policy topics that are expected to shape the next authorization. One ongoing issue is the financial stability of the Highway Trust Fund, which has required regular transfers from the federal general fund because federal fuel tax revenues have not kept pace with transportation spending. Although the gas tax has not been increased in decades, there has been little



political support for raising it, leaving long-term funding solutions uncertain. Another issue receiving attention is the balance between discretionary funding programs and formula funding. Formula funding is generally easier for agencies to plan around because it provides predictable allocations, while discretionary grants are competitive and awards are less certain. Although the IIJA significantly expanded discretionary grant programs, federal agencies have faced challenges distributing the funds quickly enough to keep projects moving.

Ms. Bollenback also noted that there is broad support for continued federal investment in infrastructure and safety improvements. Many parts of the nation's transportation system, particularly bridges, remain in poor condition and require sustained funding to address maintenance and replacement needs. Safety improvements are also expected to remain a major focus of future federal transportation policy.

She then discussed the BASICS Act, a proposal supported by a coalition of local government and transportation organizations known as the Local Officials Transportation (LOT) Coalition. The proposal aims to address what supporters describe as a growing mismatch between the share of transportation infrastructure managed by local governments and the amount of federal funding they receive. Nationally, local roads carry roughly one-third of vehicle travel but receive a much smaller share of federal transportation funding.

The BASICS Act includes several recommendations intended to shift more resources and flexibility to local and regional transportation agencies. These include continued investment in bridge and safety programs, increased funding for metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to support regional planning, and new base funding for rural transportation planning organizations that currently receive no dedicated federal funding. The proposal also calls for increasing funding for the Surface Transportation Block Grant program, one of the most flexible federal transportation funding sources that allows local governments to address their highest transportation priorities.

Additional recommendations include streamlining funding distribution, potentially allowing some federal funds to be provided more directly to local project sponsors, expanding collaboration among state departments of transportation, MPOs, and regional agencies, and increasing transparency in how transportation funding is allocated. She stated that many of these positions are consistent with those of the SRTC Board.

Ms. Bollenback emphasized that the purpose of the presentation was to keep the board informed rather than to request action. She encouraged board members to work with their respective associations to understand their positions regarding items to be advanced as part of reauthorization. She also encouraged members to stay engaged in the federal reauthorization process, as the decisions made in the next authorization bill will determine transportation funding programs and priorities for the next several years. She noted that staff will continue to monitor developments and share updates as draft legislation becomes available.

## **# 9 Public Participation Plan (PPP) Workshop Results**

Ms. Creasey presented a summary of findings from recent workshops related to SRTC's Public Participation Plan update. She explained that the PPP is a federally required document that outlines how SRTC engages the public in its planning and decision-making processes. The plan both informs



the public about opportunities to participate and guides staff in meeting the agency's outreach commitments.

Since the previous update to the board, staff have begun drafting the plan and conducting outreach activities. These efforts include an online public survey and participation in community events such as the Lunar New Year celebration. Additional outreach is planned in March at El Mercadito and the Equity Working Group. Staff also conducted interactive workshops with SRTC's Technical and Citizens committees and met with regional communication professionals to gather feedback on effective outreach strategies.

Ms. Creasey summarized key themes that emerged from the Technical Committee discussion. Members noted that partner agencies refer to the Public Participation Plan when preparing their own outreach efforts, emphasizing the importance of making the document practical and easy to use. Committee members also discussed common challenges with public engagement. These include limited public understanding of how transportation agencies operate and how projects are funded, which can lead to frustration or confusion during outreach. Another challenge is helping the public understand the roles of different agencies, as organizations are sometimes confused with one another. Members also noted that individuals may attend a single outreach event and assume their perspective is the only one considered, without recognizing that staff gather input from many different events and audiences. These challenges highlighted the importance of incorporating education and clear communication into outreach efforts. Committee members also expressed interest in SRTC serving as a central forum where the public could find information about transportation projects and engagement opportunities across the region.

Feedback from the Citizens Committee emphasized the importance of using multiple communication channels to reach different audiences. While some people prefer traditional communication methods such as newsletters, others—particularly younger audiences—are more likely to receive information through social media. Committee members also identified barriers to participation, including survey fatigue, limited time, and competing personal responsibilities. They encouraged the use of simple, low-barrier outreach strategies, such as short surveys or quick-response opportunities, to make participation easier. Members also stressed the importance of demonstrating how public input influences decisions so participants can see the value of their engagement.

Ms. Creasey also shared feedback from a meeting with communication professionals from partner agencies. Participants expressed a strong interest in increased collaboration and information sharing to help expand outreach efforts and reach new audiences. Agencies noted that they often engage the same group of participants and are interested in strategies to reach new community members. Participants identified several communication tools that have been particularly effective, including social media, e-newsletters, and hybrid meetings. They also suggested that sharing ready-to-use content between agencies would help partners promote each other's work more efficiently.

Based on these discussions, staff identified several actions moving forward. SRTC has begun developing a new e-newsletter using MailChimp to share agency updates and highlight partner projects and events. Staff is also exploring ways for SRTC to serve as a central hub for transportation information, potentially through a website page that highlights regional transportation projects and engagement opportunities. In addition, SRTC is exploring opportunities to collaborate with partners



at public events by sharing outreach space or hosting joint engagement events. Staff is currently planning a pair of outreach events in May, including both an in-person and a virtual open house featuring multiple organizations and presentations.

Following the presentation, board members participated in a brief activity to provide feedback on how to measure outreach success and which engagement strategies to prioritize. Board members emphasized the importance of early engagement in planning processes and ensuring participation from diverse communities. Members also noted that demonstrating how public input influences decisions helps build trust and encourages continued participation.

During discussion, members highlighted the value of collaboration among agencies and the importance of reaching new audiences rather than relying on the same participants repeatedly. Several members also emphasized the value of in-person engagement, noting that face-to-face conversations often lead to more meaningful feedback and stronger community relationships. Others noted that social media plays an important role in driving people to websites, newsletters, and other sources of information.

Ms. Creasey concluded by thanking the board for their feedback and noting that staff will continue incorporating the input received into the draft Public Participation Plan. A draft of the plan is expected to be presented to the committees in April and to the board in May for review.

## **INFORMATION**

### **# 10 Executive Director's Monthly Report**

Ms. Bollenback shared two announcements during the Executive Director's Report. She noted that she typically recognizes funding awards received by member jurisdictions in the Director's Report, as it is important to celebrate these accomplishments across the region. She announced that the City of Airway Heights recently received a \$2 million award for the Sandy Williams Connecting Communities US 2 Phase 1 project and offered her congratulations to the city.

Ms. Bollenback also announced that SRTC has once again received the WellCity designation, which recognizes organizations that support employee wellness and provides the agency with a discount on its insurance.

### **# 10 Transportation Technical Committee & Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting Summaries**

No questions or comments.

### **# 11 Board Member Comments**

Ms. Kay shared several updates related to regional transportation and WSDOT staffing. She reported that bids were opened for the Stage 2 project that will provide another connection between the North Spokane Corridor (NSC) and the local street network at Trent Avenue. The apparent low bidder for the project is Max Kuney.

Ms. Kay also announced that Matt Beattie will be taking over the role previously held by Mike



Frucci. Mr. Beattie comes from WSDOT's Olympic Region, where he served as the maintenance engineering manager and held several maintenance and operations positions.

Finally, she noted that the region's communications manager, Ryan Overton, has been promoted to deputy communications manager statewide. Although he has taken on a new role, Mr. Overton will remain in the region and continue supporting programs such as WSDOT's mentorship program. Recruitment for the communications manager position will begin soon.

## **# 12 Chair Comments**

Chair Kaminskis reminded the board that the April meeting has been canceled. The meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

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Anadia Grier, Clerk of the Board