



# Washington State Transportation Commission

## Spokane Meeting Summary September 21 & 22, 2021

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### September 21, 2021

Chair Roy Jennings opened the meeting at 1:00 pm with introductions by commission members and staff, an overview of the agenda, and virtual meeting protocols.

### Agenda Item 2: Mayor's Welcome

#### Presenter:

- Nadine Woodward, Mayor, City of Spokane

Mayor Woodward welcomed the Commission to Spokane.

**Presentation:** There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 2, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:03:05, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

### Agenda Item 3: Transportation 101

#### Presenters:

- Reema Griffith, Executive Director, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Carl See, Deputy Director, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Tamara Jones, Senior Policy Analyst, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Aaron Halbert, Financial Analyst, Washington State Transportation Commission

Commission staff provided an overview on the fiscal and policy framework of the statewide transportation system.

**Presentation:**

[Transportation 101](#)

For more detail on agenda item 3, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:06:17, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Agenda Item 4:**

**Washington State Department of Transportation Regional Overview**

**Presenter:**

- Mike Gribner, Regional Administrator, Eastern Region, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

Mr. Gribner provided an overview of WSDOT’s eastern region, including planned and active projects, as well as maintenance and preservation challenges in Spokane and the surrounding area. The greater Spokane area’s \$30 billion economy is solely dependent on its current infrastructure. As such, maintenance and preservation investments are needed to support the growing area and create a state of good repair.

**Presentation:**

[Eastern Region-Overview](#)

For more detail on agenda item 4, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:34:27, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Agenda Item 5:**

**Spokane Regional Transportation Issues: The Big Picture**

**Presenters:**

- Ben Wick, Chair, Board of Directors, Spokane Regional Transportation Council and Mayor, Spokane Valley
- Lois Bollenback, Executive Director, Spokane Regional Transportation Council

The Commission was briefed on some of the transportation challenges that the Spokane region has faced, as well as some opportunities and successes that have been achieved. Spokane County has experienced significant growth in recent years: from 2010 to 2020, population grew 14.5% to nearly 540,000. As the area continues to grow, the Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) faces three primary community challenges: growth and development; equity; and funding constraints.

In response to these challenges, SRTC has undertaken several planning activities, such as their US 195/I-90 Area Study, which looks at local connectivity and safety to improve conditions for residents. SRTC also received a grant award from the Department of Commerce to fund the installation of electric vehicle charging stations across 51 locations throughout their planning area, beginning January 2022. With limited financial resources, SRTC must be strategic in their approach going forward by developing funding strategies, utilizing data collection, and leveraging partnerships and technology.

**Presentation:**

[Spokane Regional Transportation Council](#)

For more detail on agenda item 5, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:19:41, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Agenda Item 6:**

**Spokane County: Transportation Issues, Challenges, and Successes**

**Presenter:**

- Chad Coles, County Engineer, Spokane County

Mr. Coles briefed the Commission on Spokane County's transportation network and the unique mix of rural and urban environments that are served by the largest county road system in the state. Spokane County has over 2,500 total roadway miles, nearly half of which are unpaved. By the end of 2021, Spokane County Public Works will have completed approximately 245 lane miles of crack seal, 130 miles of chip seal, and 44 miles of overlay throughout the year. In 2022, 13 capital projects are planned with an estimated cost of about \$22 million. Spokane County Public Works is facing four main issues: deteriorating pavement; number of roadways; utilization of roads; and declining revenue. Strategies to address these issues include: an arterial focus or best first approach; encouraging private road development; a gravel road stabilization pilot project; and to focus investments.

**Presentation:**

[Spokane County](#)

For more detail on agenda item 6, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:39:21, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

## **Agenda Item 7:**

### **City of Spokane: Transportation Issues, Challenges, and Successes**

#### **Presenter:**

- Marlene Feist, Director, Public Works, City of Spokane

Ms. Feist provided an overview of the City of Spokane's 20-Year Plan to improve its transportation system, which relies on local, state, and federal support, as well as utility dollars. Spokane's transportation system has over 2,000 lane miles, about a third of which are arterial. Over 90% of miles traveled occur on those arterial streets, and thus the city has taken an arterial focus in their approach to improving the system. Projects are prioritized based on several considerations, such as current pavement conditions, safety impacts, multi-modal components, integration with utilities, and opportunities for economic development.

From 2015 through 2019, nearly \$100 million has been spent on street rehabilitation and maintenance. The city has intentionally distributed the money evenly across their three council districts, and incorporated utility bill payment heat maps, in order to address equity concerns. If grant opportunities are missed, the city has committed to invest pledged local match dollars into street maintenance. This approach added \$10 million in street repair work in 2020 and 2021. \$21 million in state and federal grants has been awarded for several new projects, such as a local bridge program, safe routes to school, and ped-bike safety.

#### **Presentation:**

[City of Spokane](#)

For more detail on agenda item 7, please refer to the TVW Meeting Recording, starting at 02:10:18, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

## **Agenda Item 8:**

### **Spokane International Airport: Issues, Challenges, and Successes**

#### **Presenter:**

- Larry Krauter, Chief Executive Office, Spokane International Airport

Mr. Krauter provided an overview of the Spokane International Airport, the second largest commercial service airport in Washington State with an economic impact of \$1.8 billion. In 2019, the airport had passenger traffic of over 4.1 million, and nearly 70,000 tons of cargo. In April 2020, the airport experienced a 92% reduction in passenger traffic, which has since been improving each month. Cargo activity, on the other hand, has increased by about 8%.

Mr. Krauter also updated the Commission on some of the airport's current and planned projects which will support regional growth, increased demand for air services, and drive economic development. Their Terminal Renovation and Expansion (TRES) Project, which is currently in the planning phase, looks to accommodate estimated passenger growth.

Phase 1 of the project will focus on enhancements to one of the airport's terminals, is expected to cost about \$96 million, and will begin construction in 2022. Phase 2 includes improvements to the central hall, baggage claim area, consolidated security checkpoint area, and terminal connectivity between concourses. Phase 2 of the project is estimated to cost about \$104 million.

Mr. Krauter proposed three policy needs to support aviation: remedy the revenue diversion related to aviation fuel taxes; increase funding for the Community Aviation Revitalization Board (CARB) and Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB); and develop an air service development program to help incentivize airlines begin service.

**Presentation:**

[Spokane International Airport](#)

For more detail on agenda item 8, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:36:51, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Agenda Item 9:**

**Connecting Transportation and the Economy**

**Presenters:**

- Gary Ballew, Vice President of Economic Development, Greater Spokane Inc
- Lance Beck, President/Chief Executive Officer, Greater Spokane Valley Chamber

The Commission was briefed on transportation economic developments within Spokane County. Commercial aviation is a leading factor for economic growth by opening up trade routes, and supports major industries such as life science, aerospace, and higher education. Railways, freight mobility, and workforce participation are other leading factors for economic growth in the area. In 2019, the Spokane Regional Transportation Coalition (SRTC) was created to maintain the Spokane area's current transportation system by bringing together government entities, private businesses, and associations. A chief goal of the SRTC is to create a narrative around transportation needs and to create a path forward for transportation projects in Spokane County.

**Presentations:**

[Greater Spokane Inc](#)

[Greater Spokane Valley Chamber](#)

For more detail on agenda item 8, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 03:23:41, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

Chair Roy Jennings reminded the Commission that the meeting will continue Wednesday, September 22, 2021, and recessed the meeting.

## **DAY 2: September 22, 2021**

Chair Roy Jennings opened the meeting at 9:00 am with introductions by commission members and staff, an overview of the agenda, and virtual meeting protocols.

### **Agenda Item 11:**

#### **Public Transit Issues, Challenges, and Successes**

##### **Presenter:**

- E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer, Spokane Transit Authority

Ms. Meyer updated the Commission on some of Spokane Transit Authority's (STA) current issues, challenges, and successes, as well as their 10-year plan. Fixed-route ridership is about 50% of 2019 pre-COVID levels. In response, STA reduced services by 11%; however, no drivers were furloughed. As well, STA installed barriers, suspended fare collection for three months, provided riders with masks, and altered their meals on wheels service to include trips to vaccination appointments. Ridership increased by about 11% in August 2021, however STA does not expect a return to 2019 levels until there are fewer or no COVID-related restrictions.

In 2016, voters approved STA Proposition 1, which authorized an increase in local sales and use tax to help fund *STA Moving Forward*, which is their 10-year plan to maintain, improve, and expand public transit. STA is about halfway through the plan, which has about 24 discreet projects and service improvements. City Line, which will be Spokane's first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route, is perhaps STA's boldest undertaking. Built on the vision of providing a streetcar-like experience, the six-mile route will run between Spokane's historic Browne's Addition and Spokane Community College, and will connect through downtown and the University District. City Line will help energize the corridor, and is expected to begin service in 2022.

**Presentation:** There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 10, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:03:09, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

### **Agenda Item 12:**

#### **Public Development Authorities**

##### **Presenters:**

- David Guthrie, Executive Director, Northeast Public Development Authority
- Todd Coleman, Executive Director, S3R3 (Western Plains Public Development Authority)
- Juliet Sinisterra, Interim Chief Executive Officer, University District Public Development Authority

Mr. Guthrie briefed the Commission on the Northeast Public Development Authority (PDA). Formed in 2019, the Northeast PDA region faces many challenges, including high poverty and crime rates, as well as the highest concentration of unpaved roads in Spokane.

Localized infrastructure improvements through the design and construction of Complete Streets will help support small businesses, reduce maintenance costs, increase safety, be environmentally sound, and increase social equity. A 2020 Economic Impact Assessment showed that local road improvements and the completion of US-395 could lead to over 500 new industrial jobs, \$16.5 million in new improvement value, and \$1.2 million in combined city and county property taxes.

Mr. Coleman briefed the Commission on the West Plains PDA, or S3R3 Solutions. Formed in 2017, S3R3's mission is to marshal the resources of public and private service providers to recruit new and existing businesses into the area and drive economic prosperity through the creation of jobs. S3R3 is strategically positioned as a logistics hub due to its size and its access to downtown Spokane, I-90, U.S. Route 2, railways, and the Spokane International Airport. S3R3's model is focused in three key areas: working with partners to support infrastructure developments; marketing to those outside of the region; and to build economically impactful infrastructure when the private sector cannot or will not.

Ms. Sinisterra briefed the Commission on the University District PDA, which leverages education, research, and commercial resources to create a collaborative, healthy, and prosperous region. Formed in 2015, the University District PDA is made up of six major universities, two medical school programs, a center for energy innovation, and a smart-city living laboratory. Some of their transportation focus points include Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) planning, Complete Streets, bike-ped planning, and regional high-speed rail.

**Presentations:**

[Northeast Public Development Authority](#)

[S3R3 Western Plains Public Development Authority](#)

[University District Public Development Authority](#)

For more detail on agenda item 11, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:44:53, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Agenda Item 13:**

**Kalispel Tribe of Indians: Transportation Issues, Challenges, and Successes**

**Presenter:**

- Sev Jones, Senior Manager of Planning, Kalispel Development Company, Kalispel Tribe of Indians

Mr. Jones informed the Commission on how transportation can influence and determine the opportunities and needs of the Kalispel Tribe of the Indians. Due to the tribe's geographic isolation, tribal members are challenged to access essential services. Many tribal members are unable to make the one-hour drive to Spokane, which created the need for their Kaltran public transportation service.

Kaltran provides daily routes to and from Spokane, is free to ride, and receives federal, state, and local contributions. The road system within the reservation is in dire needs of improvements, which experiences high accident and fatality rates. The tribe's 2021 Draft Master Plan emphasizes the relationship between land use planning and transportation improvements, relies on a robust and interconnected transportation network, and focuses on connections and design of streets.

**Presentation:**

[Kalispel Tribe of Indians](#)

For more detail on agenda item 12, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:38:18, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** Highway Naming Proposal to Designate SR 165 “The Glacier Highway.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Agenda Item 14:**

**US 395 – North Spokane Corridor (NSC) Project**

**Panel Moderator:**

- Commissioner Kelly Fukai

**Panel Members:**

**Project & Process Overview:**

- Mike Gribner, Regional Administrator, Eastern Region, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Charlene Kay, Regional Planning & Strategic Community Manager, Eastern Region, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Dr. Kerry Brooks, Professor, Urban & Regional Planning, Eastern Washington University
- Bob Hilmes, Project Engineer, Washington State Department of Transportation

**Local Partner Perspectives:**

- Marlene Feist, Director, Public Works, City of Spokane
- Jon Swett, Principal, Shaw Middle School

The Commission was briefed on the North Spokane Corridor (NSC) project, its impact to the area, and how communities have been involved in the design and advancement of the project. The NSC is a 10.5-mile limited access facility that will connect to I-90 on the south end and to US 2 and US 395 on the north end. It will reduce travel times, clear up congestion on local roadways, and improve the economic vitality of the region. Over 5.5 miles of the corridor is currently open to traffic, with completion of the full corridor anticipated in 2030.

WSDOT, along with Eastern Washington University, has engaged in “placemaking” for the project, which is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces. It capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being. By utilizing census data, performing outreach, and connecting with community organizations, the teams feels

that placemaking has allowed abundant opportunities for the community to influence the outcome of the project. Through the placemaking process, program summaries were developed, which populated focus areas of the project with conceptual layouts.

**Presentation:**

[US 395 - North Spokane Corridor](#)

For more detail on agenda item 13, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:02:01, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Agenda Item 15:  
Public Comment**

Mr. Ryan Packer (Seattle) stated that all of the major decisions have already been made on the NSC Project, which is not placemaking. Mr. Packer drew a parallel between the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) project, which touts equity engagement while the NEPA process limits capabilities.

For more detail on agenda item 14, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 03:20:48, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Agenda Item 16:  
Commission Business**

- Commissioner Reflections and Recommendations
- July Meeting Summary
- August Hearing Summaries - **ACTION**
  - o August 10<sup>th</sup> – Ferry Hearing
  - o August 24<sup>th</sup> – Toll Rates Hearing
- 2022 Commission Meeting Schedule & Locations Discussion
- Annual Report Development

**Commissioner Reflections and Recommendations**

- WSDOT’s approach to collaboration and community engagement may help strengthen some of the work we do, such as the policy work in our comprehensive plan.
- One of the benefits of local meetings is to see how each community operationalizes high-level policies and guiding principles.
- Progress has been made when it comes to collaboration within communities. Getting out of our transportation silo, but still a long way to go.

- Trends from the Spokane International Airport presentation indicating that many people are leaving bigger cities for smaller cities or rural areas. Interested to see where this trend goes – a trend for us to watch.

### **July Meeting Summary**

There were no revisions requested for the July meeting summary.

### **August Hearing Summaries**

There were no revisions requested for the August 10<sup>th</sup> Ferry Hearing summary or the August 24<sup>th</sup> Toll Rates Hearing summary.

**ACTION:** Vice-Chair Young moved the approval of the August 10<sup>th</sup> Ferry Hearing Summary. Commissioner Litt Seconded the motion. The motion was approved, 6-0 (1 excused). Digital signatures will be applied to the final version.

Commissioner Litt moved the approval of the August 24<sup>th</sup> Toll Rates Hearing Summary. Commissioner Batra Seconded the motion. The motion was approved, 6-0 (1 excused). Digital signatures will be applied to the final version.

### **2022 Commission Meeting Schedule & Locations Discussions**

Ms. Jones provided a recap of the discussion from the July Commission Meeting surrounding 2022 meeting locations. Commissioners felt that small town summits would require a large amount of work, and suggested a standard approach to the meetings for 2022. Statewide Commission meetings are planned to be held virtual in January, February, and March. Local meetings in Union Gap (April) Battleground (September) and Anacortes (November) are planned to be held in person. As well, the Tri-State meeting in Eugene, OR (September) is planned to be held in person. One remaining local meeting location in eastern Washington will need to be selected, for which a poll will be sent out via email.

### **Annual Report Development**

Ms. Jones provided a recap of the 2020 Annual Report, as well as suggestions for the 2021 Annual Report. Commissioners liked the proposed new additions, but want to make sure we do not lose any recommendations from the prior year that are still relevant. Commissioner Batra expressed the need for recommendations surrounding the ferry system.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

For more detail on agenda item 14, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 03:23:44, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Next meeting: October 19 & 20, 2021**