

Moving Forward

Memo 1.01 – Long List of Conceptual Projects

Approved by:
Board of Directors

Final

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Introduction

Whether somebody is a frequent rider or one who sees buses through the windshield of their car, transit has the rare ability to capture the creative imagination of multitudes of people. “We should construct a monorail from Hillyard to Downtown Spokane!” “I need a bus shelter near my house.” “If only there was light rail from the airport to Coeur d’Alene...,” are just a few of the ideas submitted through notecards at the Plaza, e-mails to customer service, or comments made at a public open house. Spokane Transit has received countless suggestions for improved transit services throughout the region. Together, these thoughts make up the “Universe of Ideas”, a collection of views that have been used during visioning exercises, influenced planning documents at Spokane Transit and served as the starting point for this planning effort.

As Spokane Transit begins this phase of work to analyze and prioritize projects, it is important to recognize the immense range of possible transit enhancements. The opportunities to improve each route, add service during specific hours of the day, or construct a new facility are infinite; so, categorizing the suggestions into different groups help us better understand the types of desires as opposed to trying to address each of the thousands of comments received. We know that the universe is made up of elements found in the categories of space, time and matter; and in the same way, the Universe of Ideas for transit improvement can be classified as space (geographic ideas), time (service ideas), and matter (capital investment ideas). While not all of the ideas that have ever been conceived are listed in this memo, the categories described below summarize the different types of suggestions that we receive.

This memorandum offers examples for each of the categories within the “Universe of Ideas” and describes how these ideas have become organized in Spokane Transit’s Comprehensive Plan, *Connect Spokane*. Subsequently, a “Long List of Conceptual Projects” is presented that is proposed to be the starting list for screening, evaluating and prioritizing transit projects that could be implemented in ten to fifteen years.

Geography (Space)



New Cities/Areas

Expanding Spokane Transit's service area is often a topic that captures imaginations because it represents new opportunities for connections. To the north, south, east and west, ideas about connecting places like Deer Park, Tumtum, Rockford, Coeur d'Alene, Davenport, Nine Mile, Spangle, Reardan, Mead and Newport are often noted.

New Routing

Although Spokane Transit provides basic service to at least 85% of the PTBA population residing in urbanized areas, Spokane Transit occasionally receives requests to extend transit lines or deviate from the existing route to travel closer to a person's property or business. Most recently, the 2011 service change evoked ideas about modifying routes in Medical Lake, the South Hill, Latah Creek, the Spokane Valley and North Spokane.



Service (Time)

Frequency

Because frequency represents the level of freedom to transit customers, by far the most requested improvement for Spokane Transit is to increase the frequency of bus routes. When asked "If you could pick one thing to make STA's service better, what would it be?" in the 2010 *Behaviors and Perceptions of STA's Bus Riders* survey, 19% of respondents wanted more frequent routes in general. 10% wanted more frequent routes on the weekend and the next closest response was that the service was "fine as it is" at 6%. Most requests to increase frequency are associated with a specific route. Some also ask for the system to maintain the same daytime frequencies later into the evening.

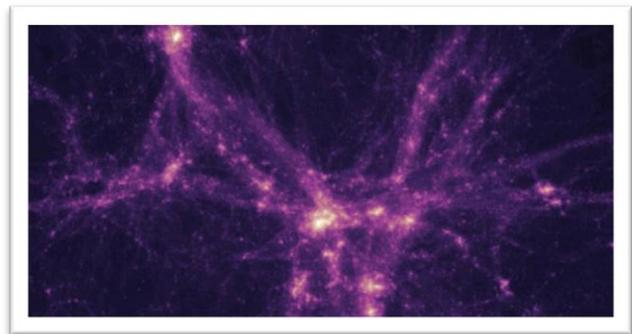
Span

Another common request is to have more service late at night and on the weekends. Currently, fixed route service operates between 6am to 11pm on weekdays, 6am to 10pm on Saturdays and 8am to 9pm on Sundays. “Night Owl” routes or the addition of low-frequency service from midnight until 6am is requested to provide transit opportunities for those who would like to travel later in the evening or into the early morning.

Express/Direct Service

As a request to save time or eliminate the need to transfer, customers request direct or express service from one area to another. Suggestions often ask for a connection between two parts of the city or region without having to transfer buses or travel out of direction. For example, to travel between Airway Heights, Medical Lake and Cheney today, one would have to transfer buses in Downtown Spokane. Adding regional express service to areas without one, like the South Hill, has also been recommended.

Capital Investments (Matter)



Passenger Interface Components

Passenger Interface Components include bus benches, bus shelters, informative signs, real-time passenger signs, improved lighting, bicycle facilities, pedestrian improvements, adjacent ADA accessibility, off board payment stations, etc. Placed strategically, these can dramatically enhance the customer experience for a relatively low cost. Several times a month Spokane Transit receives requests to put these in various locations throughout the region.

Major Connection Facilities

Major Connection Facilities include park and ride lots and transit centers. Park and Rides have the ability to serve large areas where basic transit service may not be feasible by allowing people to drive their cars for a portion of their journey and then continue on transit. This helps

people avoid parking and fuel costs. Transit Centers provide comfortable opportunities for customers to transfer to routes that converge at a particular location. Requests for Park and Rides include locations such as Moran Prairie, I-90 Exit 272, Seven Mile, Nine Mile, North Spokane Corridor.

Modes

Additional modes are often the topic of request and inquiry because they are such an intimate part of the transit customer's experience as well as a powerful visible impact for those not riding. From streetcars to light rail and magnetic levitated trains to aerial trams, people are interested in riding on a variety of different vehicle types.

Narrowing the Focus: The Long List of Projects



As presented above, the universe of comments, ideas and thoughts is too vast to begin any detailed analysis without ensuring that the ideas meet basic criteria. By narrowing the focus down to only the elements of the universe that are in direct alignment with the community's goals and vision, staff is more able to effectively determine which projects will best support the region's transportation needs. Adopted in September 2010, *Connect Spokane: A Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation* is the sextant used to guide the focus of ideas and create a draft Long List of Conceptual Projects. Every project in this list has been included in a transit planning document over the past two decades, particularly *Connect Spokane*. Projects that meet the screening criteria in Phase I will move on to Phase II for further analysis. If a project does not advance for further evaluation during this process, it does not mean that the project will not be considered in the future, but maybe that it is not in the top tier of projects that can be implemented within the next 10 to 15 years.

During Phase I, the Long List of Conceptual Projects will be evaluated based on the adopted screening criteria to create a List of Conceptual Projects for a more detailed analysis involving extensive public input and technical analysis. This list will eventually be prioritized and the projects readied for implementation in the event that future funding becomes available.

Draft Long List of Conceptual Projects

The following list represents a proposed starting point, established in Spokane Transit’s comprehensive plan, for planning for the next 10 to 15 years of transit investments. The list is divided by service and infrastructure categories.

High Performance Transit Corridors

The vision of High Performance Transit (HPT) Network is the foundation, framework and basis for future service investments. HPT service is defined as “all-day, two-way, reliable and frequent service which offers competitive speeds to the private automobile and features improved amenities for passengers.” (*Connect Spokane*) A preliminary draft network plan was adopted into the comprehensive plan after input from the public and jurisdictional partners.

HPT Blue Lines

Blue lines cover long distances quickly to connect major regional destinations. Typically the speed is higher but there are fewer stops. Frequencies for this service are between 15 and 30 minutes.

ID	Corridor	Draft Priority (from Connect Spokane)
B1	Cheney to Spokane via I-90, Downtown Spokane, SCC, North Spokane Corridor	Cheney – Intermediate NSC – Long Range
B2	Spokane Int’l Airport <> Coeur d’Alene, ID via Downtown Spokane, Spokane Valley Mall, Post Falls	Long Range

HPT Red Lines

Red lines offer direct service to major destinations within a metropolitan area. Both the speed of the vehicle and the amount of access for passengers is moderate. These lines have 10-15 minute frequency.

ID	Corridor	Draft Priority (from Connect Spokane)
R1	Airway Heights to Newport Hwy & Hawthorne via Sunset Blvd., Downtown Spokane, Division Street	Division – Near Term Airway Heights – Long Term
R2	Downtown Spokane to Liberty Lake via I-90 Corridor, Sprague Ave., Spokane Valley, Greenacres	Intermediate
R3	VA Hospital to Sprague and Sullivan via Wellesley Ave,	Long Range

	Hillyward, SCC, Millwood, Spokane Valley Mall	
R4	Holland and Division to South Hill Park and Ride via Nevada St, Francis Ave, Market Street, Freya St, 29 th Ave	Long Range

HPT Green Lines

Green lines support spontaneous travel, short trips and provide quick, easy access to other service types. A green line generally has a lower average speed but higher passenger access. The frequencies are the highest at 6-10 minutes.

ID	Corridor	Draft Priority (from Connect Spokane)
G1	Five Mile to Moran Prairie via Monroe St, Downtown Spokane, Grand Blvd, Lincoln Heights, Regal St	Near Term
G2	Browne's Addition to SCC via Downtown Spokane, Riverpoint Campus, Hamilton St, Mission Ave	Near Term
G3	Downtown Spokane to Valley Transit Center via Sprague	Near Term
G4	Indian Trail to Lincoln Heights via Shadle Park, Downtown Spokane, Perry District, Southeast Blvd	Intermediate
G5	14 th and Lincoln to Crestline & Francis via Downtown Spokane, Riverpoint Campus, Hamilton St, Euclid Ave, Crestline St	Intermediate
G6	Five Mile Park & Ride to Southside Medical District via Francis Ave, Nevada St, Hamilton St, Riverpoint Campus, South University District	Long Range
G7	SFCC to SCC via Maxwell Ave, Mission Ave	Long Range
G8	Millwood to South Valley via Argonne Rd, Valley Transit Center, Sprague Ave, Pines Rd	Long Range

Basic Fixed-Route Service Improvements

Spokane Transit refers to its conventional fixed-route bus route as "Basic Service" in the context of service planning and implementation. Currently, five routes have geographic or temporal gaps in service from the fixed-route policies of the Comprehensive Plan. They include:

- Route 23 Maple/Ash: Mid-day service is every 60 minutes (rather than 30 minutes) and there is no service north of Francis mid-day, nights and weekends
- Route 26 Lidgerwood: Route does not extend north of Francis late nights and Sundays

- Route 28 Nevada: Route does not extend north of Francis late nights and Sundays
- Route 62 Medical Lake: Service is less frequent than minimum frequency for interurban basic service and there is no service nights and weekend along route
- Route 44 does not serve Bernard Street nights and weekends

Most of these gaps were identified in the adopted 2011-2013 Service Implementation Plan as existing conditions that could not be resolved in the major service revisions implemented in September 2011. In addition to these gaps, there may be opportunities to make adjustments to schedules and routing if there are additional resources. These opportunities should be considered during Phase II.

Commuter Service Improvements

Commuter Peak service is focused on premium/express service to a major employment or education center on weekdays at peak periods for the destination. Such routes are typically one-way in each peak. It may be anchored by a park and ride facility or have a collection segment through residential areas before traveling limited stop to the employment/education center.

Connect Spokane calls for geographic allocation of fixed-route services such that each “travel shed partition” has at least one Commuter Peak route originating within the partition so long as it meets service performance standards. Currently the South Spokane travel shed partition does not have a commuter route. Possible route opportunities should be evaluated in this partition and opportunities to create additional corridors or augment existing service should be evaluated in Phase II.

Paratransit Service Improvements

Paratransit is a wheelchair-accessible shared-ride transportation service for individuals whose disability prevents them from using the regular fixed-route buses. The impact of implementing any HPT corridor or other project on Paratransit services will be considered during this planning process. Improvements to Paratransit services include identifying designated pick-up and drop-off locations for those areas which have high Paratransit activity or those locations which have multiple entrance and exit points should be evaluated and identified. Furthermore, STA could consider investigating a time-dependent Paratransit boundary or the implementation of additional programs or types of service related to Paratransit.

Rideshare Service Improvements

Rideshare services are made up of vanpool service, special use van agreements, and vanshare. Vanpool, the most common type of rideshare service offered by Spokane Transit, is a van provided by STA that is shared by people who live and work in approximately the same areas and can commute together to a place of employment. The driver is not an employee of STA. Improvements to Rideshare include the investigation of innovative strategies to more efficiently utilize rideshare resources.

System Infrastructure Improvements

Passenger Interface Components

Policies listed under SI-3.0 of Connect Spokane list components of the transit system that are important to passengers connecting by car, foot or bicycle to use transit. They include bus stops, benches, shelters and awnings, lighting, bicycle facilities and pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks. For the most part, these investments are relatively low cost when applied to a specific location; however, a program of improvements calls for an analysis of existing conditions and recommendations for improvements.

Major Connection Facilities

Park and ride lots, transit centers and other major facilities designed to connect multiple modes or routes are referred to as “Major Connection Facilities” in this document. Conceptual projects that have been identified in past official planning documents by STA are considered as part of the Long List.

Concept Description	Reference
Shadle Park Transit Center	1993 STA Comprehensive Plan Technical Report
Joe Albi Terminal and Park and Ride	2009-2015 Transit Development Plan
Nine Mile Road Park and Ride	2009-2015 Transit Development Plan
Farwell Road Terminal and Park and Ride	2009-2015 Transit Development Plan
Northeast Transit Center	2009-2015 Transit Development Plan/1993 STA Comprehensive Plan Technical Report
Upriver Transit Center (SCC)	1993 STA Comprehensive Plan Technical Report/2009-2015 Transit Development Plan
New Liberty Lake Park and Ride/Transit Center	2009-2015 Transit Development Plan
Argonne Road Park and Ride	1993 STA Comprehensive Plan Technical Report

Moran Prairie Terminal/Park and Ride	<i>Connect Spokane/2009-2015 Transit Development Plan</i>
West Plains Transit Center	<i>Connect Spokane</i>
Four Lake Park and Ride	1993 STA Comprehensive Plan Technical Report/2009-2015 Transit Development Plan
Exit 276 Transit Center	1993 STA Comprehensive Plan Technical Report
US 195/Hangman Valley Park and Ride	2009-2015 Transit Development Plan
Indian Trail Park and Ride	2009-2015 Transit Development Plan
Post Falls or Coeur d'Alene Park and Ride	2009-2015 Transit Development Plan

System Requirements

System requirements include additional vehicle maintenance capacity, bus layover sites and other infrastructure that doesn't directly interface with our customers. The scope of these requirements will vary based upon the improvements considered in Phase II of the HPT Network Development.