

# West Plains Transit Center Project Updates

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## July 2015

On March 24, 2015, the Technical Committee completed their work preparing the IJR and recommended approval of the report to the Core Stakeholder Group. On May 20, 2015, the Core Stakeholder Group approved the report and recommended approval to the STA Board Planning and Development Committee. On June 3, 2015, the P&D Committee recommended approval to the STA Board of Directors. On June 18, 2015, the Board of Directors approved the report and granted the CEO authorization to submit the report to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), initiating the formal agency review process. On July 2, 2015, the IJR was submitted to WSDOT.

The findings of the Interchange Justification Report include:

- There is an identified need for the flyer stops that serve the transit center
- The best alternative is that proposed by STA
- Buses can safely exit and enter Interstate 90
- The access points and design are appropriately spaced and can be designed to full WSDOT standards
- The flyer stop locations are compatible with applicable land use and transportation plans
- The proposed modifications to Interstate 90 do not affect proposed or existing interchanges
- The project has been coordinated with appropriate agencies; funding for the completion of engineering has been obtained; partial funding for construction has been obtained, with future funding being sought
- There are no significant environmental concerns

In October 2014, Spokane Transit submitted a Regional Mobility Grant application requesting funding to complete engineering design and partially fund construction of the transit center. On June 11, 2015, with the Governor's approval of HB1299, the project was awarded an \$8.7 million grant.

Environmental clearance has been obtained for geotechnical, environmental and archaeological exploration within the Interstate 90 right-of-way to determine soil characteristics for future design work and ensure no environmental/archaeological resources are impacted by the project. Work is expected to be completed in the middle of July 2015.

Work is complete on the conceptual design and the project has moved into the preliminary engineering phase.

## March 2015

The Core Stakeholder Group and Technical Committee have met numerous times over the last several months. The focus of their work has been the development of the Interchange Justification Report (IJR), required for development of the proposed flyer stops within the Interstate 90 right-of-way. The report consists of eight (8) policy point chapters. Generally these chapters address the need for the flyer stops, reasonable alternatives, operational and collision analysis, consistency with local, state and federal transportation and land use plans, and environmental consistency. Once completed, the IJR report will be submitted to the Washington State Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration for approval.

On January 8, 2015, the Technical Review Committee conducted an alternatives analysis and reviewed three flyer stop location alternatives. The Committee conducted three (3) separate ranking exercises using various criteria agreed to by the Committee. In the end, the preferred alternative flyer stop location is that which was originally proposed. This recommendation was then forwarded to the Core Stakeholder Group.

On February 11, 2015, the Core Stakeholder Group considered the recommendation by the Technical Committee and agreed to forward the recommendation on to the Spokane Transit Board of Directors.

On March 4, 2015, the Spokane Transit Planning and Development Committee reviewed the preferred alternative and agreed to forward the preferred alternative selection to the Board contingent upon the completion of the Spokane County Essential Public Facilities (EPF) siting process.

On March 19, 2015, the Spokane Transit Board of Directors approved the preferred alternative flyer stop location contingent upon completion of the EPF siting process.

On March 24, 2015, STA held a joint open house and traffic impact analysis public scoping meeting. The purpose of this meeting was two-fold. First, information about the project was presented and attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions and provide input into the specific facilities to be included in the project. Second, information specific to traffic impacts of the facility were reviewed and discussed. The attendees were given the opportunity to present their recommendations for intersections to be included in the future traffic impact analysis for the project. Information from this meeting will be used to further define the project as we move forward through the design process.

## February 2015

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The Core Stakeholder Group and Technical Committee have approved Policy Point 1 (Need for the Access Point Revision), Policy Point 2 (Reasonable Alternatives) and Policy Point 3 (Operational and Collision Analysis). The Technical Committee is currently reviewing Policy Point 4 (Access Connections and Design), Policy Point 5 (Land Use and Transportation Plans) and Policy Point 6 (Future Interchanges). It is anticipated that these chapters will be forwarded to the Core Stakeholder Group for review and approval at their next meeting.

The Technical Committee also completed a required alternatives analysis of four flyer stop scenarios and based on several different scoring methods, the current alternative ranked highest. This

recommendation was then forwarded to the Core Stakeholder Group who will then make recommendation to the Spokane Transit Board of Directors.

The geotechnical and environmental review work has been completed on the project site with further work within the I-90 right of way beginning in the Spring of 2015. Refinement of the conceptual site plan is currently in process and it is anticipated that a final site plan concept will be completed by March 2015. Once the site plan is completed, the NEPA environmental review process will begin.

In March of 2012, an open house was held in partnership with Spokane Regional Transportation Council and the City of Spokane to inform the public of the STA Moving Forward planning process and to gather public input on the planning effort. The Spokane to Cheney corridor was identified as a top candidate for consideration as a future High Performance Transit (HPT) Network. In May 2012, an online survey was posted to the STA website to further gather public input on future HPT service. Again, the Spokane to Cheney corridor was one of the most popular choices for HPT service.

In September 2012, as a response to earlier planning efforts, a Corridor Advisory Panel was created to specifically evaluate the Spokane to Cheney corridor as a future HPT corridor. The panel met six times over the next seven months to further refine service and amenities for the corridor. The West Plains Transit Center was strongly supported by the panel as a way to connect the cities of the West Plains and serve as a park and ride for commuters in the area.

Open houses were held on March 27, 2013 to present corridor recommendations and to gather feedback. On April 10, 2013 a second open house was held on the STA Moving Forward planning project again gathering public input on corridor refinement recommendations. The West Plains Transit Center was identified as a necessary component of a successful HPT corridor.

During September, October and November of 2014, STA implemented an extensive public outreach campaign for the STA moving Forward plan. This 10-year plan, for more and better service includes the West Plains Transit Center as a major project. The outreach campaign included scientific polling, community presentations, telephone town halls, website notifications, and community open houses. In summary, over 75% of respondents support the construction of the West Plains Transit Center. The final public outreach report can be reviewed [here](#).

Work on the Interchange Justification Report (IJR) will continue throughout 2015. Approval of that report is anticipated in September of 2015. Development of the final site design is on-going pending final outcome of the geotechnical and environmental work. It is anticipated that 30% design will be completed in October of 2015. Work will also begin on the traffic impact study to be reviewed and approved by Spokane County.

Public and stakeholder outreach will continue throughout 2015. A project open house is anticipated in March with future open houses and public meeting to be scheduled at later dates.

## July 2014

On June 10, 2014, Spokane Transit contracted with H.W. Lochner, Inc. to provide preliminary design and engineering, right of way acquisition and construction management services for the West Plains Transit Center. The initial phase of the project will consist of the preparation of an Interchange

Justification Report (IJR) for the project in coordination with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). The purpose of this effort is to evaluate base conditions and proposed alternatives to ensure there are no significant impacts to the existing highway system. A Core Stakeholder Group and Technical Committee have been formed to provide overall direction and technical support for the project. The first project kick-off meeting of the stakeholder groups will be held on August 7, 2014.

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STA will continue to engage the community in this important project. Look forward to project updates and opportunities for input on the project.