



April 2024

## City Line Hits 500,000 Rides



*Above: A City Line bus waiting at STA Plaza at night*

In early April, STA's first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route, City Line, reached a monumental milestone of 500,000 rides since its launch on July 15, 2023.

"This milestone demonstrates the success of the new BRT service in connecting riders to and through downtown Spokane," said E. Susan Meyer, CEO of Spokane Transit. "People want convenient, frequent service and connections to major routes and destinations. City Line ridership shows that the new, higher level of service accomplishes what it set out to do."

City Line has quickly become one of the busiest routes in STA's system. While Route 4 Monroe-Regal is the top ridership route, City Line has the highest ridership per route mile. That means that City Line stops, on average, pick up more passengers than other stops in the system, including the busiest routes, like Routes 4, 25 Division, and 90 Sprague. The volume of activity demonstrates the value City Line provides for mobility to multiple key destinations in Spokane.

The original projection for City Line's first year of ridership was 1,000,000. Due to COVID, public transit ridership across the entire US suffered significantly, but STA

has recovered its ridership faster than larger transit agencies in Washington state and across the U.S.

“System-wide ridership growth has exceeded expectations,” pointed out Karl Otterstrom, Chief Planning & Development Officer at STA. “In fact, our 2023 ridership was 35% higher than 2022. That growth was twice the national average.”

By December 2023, STA was one of nine agencies in the entire US to return to and exceed 2019 ridership for certain months. City Line’s ridership is a significant component of STA’s strong recovery.

Currently the route offers service every 7.5 minutes on weekdays from 7 - 9 am and 3 - 6 pm and 15-minute service most other times, including Saturdays and into the late night, six nights a week. Sundays feature 30-minute frequency.

Next month on May 26, as part of the May Service Change, midday service (9 am - 3 pm) will increase to every 10 minutes, and buses will run every 15 minutes on Sundays. These changes will bring City Line to its full, planned service levels.

“The full implementation of City Line has involved the dedicated effort of many people,” said Otterstrom. “It’s a very exciting time.”



## Increased Service & Promotional Fare for Route 11 Downtown/North Bank Shuttle



*Above: A Route 11 bus featuring the new Expo '74 livery*

In addition to service increases on City Line, STA will be updating Route 11 in May to make it easier for riders to get between downtown Spokane and sports and entertainment venues just north of Riverfront Park, an area known as the North Bank.

The revised Route 11 Downtown/North Bank Shuttle will now offer extended service into weeknights as well as offer weekend service. The change goes into effect Friday, May 3.

“We believe the added service will be very helpful,” commented STA Principal Transit Planner & Service Development Manager, Emily Poole. “The route was updated based on extensive feedback from the public as well as conversations with STA partners and local businesses.”

To promote the expanded hours for the Downtown/North Bank shuttle in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of Expo '74 occurring in Riverfront Park this summer, STA is offering 50-cent fare on Route 11 on weekdays from May 3 - July 5. And in further celebration of the Expo '74 Anniversary, ride free on all STA routes on Saturdays and Sundays between May 4 - June 30, including Route 11.

For more information, [click here](#).



## STA Releases Limited Edition



# Expo '74 Connect Card



*Above: The limited edition Expo '74 Connect card*

This May will mark the 50th anniversary of the 1974 World's Fair, which was hosted in Spokane and is commonly referred to as Expo '74. To celebrate, STA will release a limited edition, commemorative Connect card with visual elements that hearken back to the World's Fair held in Spokane.

"We're very excited to offer this special card in coordination with the kickoff celebrations for the Expo Anniversary," said STA's Chief Communications & Customer Service Officer, Carly Cortright. "It's not only something fun and aesthetically special for our riders but useful."

There are several new elements to the limited edition card compared to the standard Connect card, including the Spokane Pavilion, which was covered during the fair, a more detailed Riverview Park clock tower, hot air balloons, butterflies, and the Expo '74 lettering to mark the occasion and the limited edition nature of the card. Lastly, whereas the original Connect card is entirely glossy, the Expo '74 card has a matte feel with the Expo elements in gloss.

Expo '74 was the first environmentally themed World's Fair and marked a huge turning point for Spokane's development, which was the smallest city at the time to host such a momentous affair.

What is now known as Riverfront Park was formerly a rail yard, but the World's Fair provided the catalyst to radically transform the space. During the fair, large, colored butterflies were set up to mark the different exhibits, and the Spokane Pavilion was built as a gift from the United States government. The park clock tower is the only remainder of what that area used to be before the Expo.

“We wanted to tie in those well-known landmarks which were elements in the exhibition while also ensuring the card was still recognizably within STA’s brand,” Cortright explained. “Many people don’t know that there’s an interesting historical relationship between Expo and STA’s brand.”

The colors for STA’s logo were drawn from Expo ’74. That visual inspiration also influenced several other major decisions for the agency, like the traditional green and blue livery on STA’s diesel buses. The environmental associations with the blue and green colors have continued to impact STA with the newer blue-wave liveries for the battery-electric buses and markers.

STA has also designed and released a new livery for the updated Shuttle Routes 11 and 12 that feature Expo elements.

“Projects like this really make STA a fun and unique staple of our community,” Cortright said. “They add an element that we can associate with ‘home’ for many who grew up in the area and some of whom were at Expo themselves.”

Only 1,000 Expo ’74 Connect cards will be available when they go live.

Expo ’74 Connect cards will be available while supplies last through the following:

- At the STA booth at the **Bloomsday Trade Show** on Friday, May 3 and Saturday, May 4.
- **Online Connect card orders** from May 4 through July 4 will be Expo ’74 cards.
- At the customer service window at STA Plaza upon request, beginning May 4.



## May 2024 Service Change



*Above: Riders boarding a bus at STA Plaza*

The May 2024 Service Change is coming on Sunday, May 26. Here are some notable highlights:

- The introduction of 10-minute weekday service for City Line during middays (9 am - 3 pm); the span of service on weekdays and Saturdays will extend to 1 am; and there will be 15-minute service on Sundays. These changes will bring City Line to its full, planned service levels.
- Construction at the VA Medical Center will require that a bus stop be moved and the route adjusted accordingly. After construction, the stop will be located just northwest of its current location on Independence Drive. This minor change will not affect service or accessibility to and from the hospital.

Other routes will receive smaller routing and scheduling adjustments. For example, Route 33 eastbound will have an extra bus assigned to accommodate students at Shadle Park High School better when afternoon classes get out. Also, Route 12 will be adjusted near Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center.

Service changes demonstrate the steady progress STA makes to improve its service.

“When you step back to look at those improvements over time, it’s great to see how beneficial they are to our system and especially our riders,” highlighted Karl Otterstrom, STA’s Chief Planning & Development Officer.

For more information on the May 2024 Service Change and affected routes, [click here](#).



# Bloomsday 2024



*Above: An STA bus with "Bloomsday" displayed on the reader board*

Bloomsday is fast approaching, and once again STA is getting ready to move thousands of spectators and participants to and from the race.

STA is the official transportation provider for Bloomsday. Each year, an estimated one fourth of the runners and spectators coming to Bloomsday use Spokane Transit, either by riding an Express Bloomsday Shuttle, regular bus service, or Paratransit. Riding STA is an easy and stress-free way to get to and from the race and skip traffic and parking hassles.

Visit STA's Trade Show booth at the Convention Center on Friday, May 3 or Saturday, May 4. STA staff will be present to answer all of your race-day shuttle questions.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Expo '74, the STA Board of Directors has approved free fare on all STA routes on weekends between May 4 and June 30. Get to and from Bloomsday this year for free by taking STA!

If you pre-purchased bus fare when you registered for Bloomsday, STA will mail a refund to the address provided at registration. Please allow 4-6 weeks to receive the refund. If a registrant has not received their refund by June 15, please email [businessaccounts@spokanetransit.com](mailto:businessaccounts@spokanetransit.com).

Express Bloomsday Shuttle lots are located at Northtown Mall, Spokane Valley Mall, West Plains Transit Center, Ferris High School, and Cheney by the Red Barn. Shuttle buses run about every ten minutes between 6:30 to 8:45 am, leaving when

the bus is full.

## Helpful Tips for Riding the Bus on Bloomsday

- Strollers are accepted on buses if they can be folded. Plan to arrive early if you are boarding with a stroller to allow time to fold the stroller before you get on the bus.
- Backpacks are allowed on STA's buses, but they are prohibited on the racecourse.
- Please plan to arrive at your bus two hours before your race time.
- Note the downtown location where the Express Shuttle drops you off. This is the same location where you will board for your return trip up starting at 10:30 am until 2 pm.
- From 2 - 4 pm, use regular bus service at the **Alternate Downtown Boarding Bays**. Check your corresponding shuttle lot for details on which bus number to look out for.
- After 4 pm, buses will resume boarding at STA Plaza at their normal bays.

We hope you stop by and see us at the Bloomsday Trade Show! Find out more about STA's Bloomsday service by [clicking here](#).

For information on the Trade Show, [go here](#).



# Upcoming Public Engagement for Connect 2035





Above: Table displays on STA's strategic plans, featured at an open house

A series of four regional, transportation open houses just concluded, and additional community engagement opportunities are on the horizon for interested members of the public to provide feedback for STA's next 10-year strategic plan, *Connect 2035*.

Between March 14 and April 9, STA hosted four open houses in collaboration with regional partners. The goal of the open houses was to foster community engagement around key transportation projects in the region and provide interested residents a venue to learn more about current STA projects, future initiatives, and upcoming developments. Representatives from local jurisdictions and other key stakeholders were also present to answer any questions about infrastructure investments in the vicinity of the open houses.

"The open houses went well," said Brian Jennings, Deputy Director for Community Development at STA. "It's always a benefit to be out in the communities that you serve, and STA serves a large area."

Six interactive displays were present at all the open houses, inviting the public to provide feedback on various aspects of STA's transit service and the rider experience. Questions ranged from trip planning, waiting at bus stops and transit facilities, riding, and more.

Following the conclusion of the open houses, the displays will remain at STA Plaza for the public to continue offering comments. The responses will inform future transit initiatives, capital projects, routes, and programs to improve and expand service to the region through 2035.

Gathering input from the broadest representation of the community is a key goal of the engagement strategy for *Connect 2035*.

"We are continuing our outreach with community-based organizations, employers, and employees," said Jennings. "We also have focus groups and will host rider forums."

There is also a new survey that is open to the public. The Transit Priorities Survey will help flesh out *Connect 2035* and focuses on what the community would like to see STA invest in over the next 10 years. The survey is open until May 22. If you'd like to take the survey, click [here](#).

Jennings encouraged the public to keep their eyes open for future opportunities to participate. "Get involved," said Jennings. "We're out in the community presenting at a variety of locations over the coming months and will continue to be seeking input."

To stay up to date on the latest developments and outreach efforts for *Connect 2035*, sign up for emails at [spokanetransit.com/connect2035](https://spokanetransit.com/connect2035). Any questions, suggestions, or feedback to share about *Connect 2035* may also be directed to [connect2035@spokanetransit.com](mailto:connect2035@spokanetransit.com).



# STA Celebrates Earth Day



*Above: STA's battery-electric bus being charged at Moran Station Park & Ride*

Every year on April 22, communities celebrate Earth Day to raise awareness about environmental issues and encourage sustainable practices.

Public transportation plays an important part in sustainability. At Spokane Transit, sustainability means providing transportation services in ways that optimize the Agency's ability to meet the needs of present and future generations through investments that benefit the region's economic, environmental, and social well-being.

"STA does its part to safeguard and improve both the community's current and future quality of life," noted STA's Chief Operations Officer, Brandon Rapez-Betty. "We do that by being strategic in how we expand service for the future as well as considering its effects on the natural environment and local economy."

STA's progress towards sustainability isn't new. Incorporated into STA's Comprehensive Plan, *Connect Spokane*, and policies over 10 years ago, these principles of sustainability and good stewardship guide STA daily. Moreover, they help ensure efficient, fiscally responsible use of taxpayer dollars and resources.

In addition to its purchase of hybrid buses beginning in 2007, in 2013 STA began to undertake energy savings projects, working with McKinstry and Avista.

STA's commitment to sustainability was further demonstrated by transitioning a quarter of its fleet to battery-electric buses (BEBs) and coordinating with Avista to develop charging infrastructure for the new vehicles. The region's first Bus Rapid Transit service, City Line, was launched last July and uses an exclusive fleet of 11 BEBs. Federal, state, and local leaders praised the bus line for championing clean

energy while improving the quality of life for the Spokane region.

Currently STA is working to comply with the 2019 Clean Buildings Bill, which places Energy Use Intensity targets on existing Washington-state commercial buildings over 50,000 square feet. The path to compliance is two-fold. First, it involves incorporating system modeling and automating electrical systems to save energy use. Second, STA is upgrading older equipment with high-efficiency systems that will save tens of thousands of dollars each year in energy costs while playing a critical role in preparing STA for the future.

Thanks to those compliance efforts, STA reduced electricity and gas consumption across its five facilities by \$121,000 in 2023 alone.

STA's next 10-year strategic plan, Connect 2035, will continue to incorporate these principles as it addresses emerging needs and continued investment in equity, sustainability, and community growth.

"Whether it's day-to-day operations or long-term planning, it's certainly something every department looks at," Rapez-Betty added. "It plays an important role at STA."



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