



May 2024

City Line Reaches Full Service



Above: A City Line marker and digital display

With the May Service Change, City Line’s midday service (9 am - 3 pm) has increased to every 10 minutes on weekdays; buses now run every 15 minutes on Sundays; and service now runs past 1 am Monday through Saturday. These changes bring City Line to its full, planned service levels.

“We’re very pleased to deliver on the promised service for City Line,” said Brandon Ropez-Betty, Chief Operations Officer at STA. “Its full implementation has involved the dedication of many people.”

City Line now offers the following frequency of service:

- 7.5-minute service on weekdays during peak hours (7 – 9 am and 3 – 6 pm)
- 10-minute service during middays (9 am - 3 pm) on weekdays
- 15-minute service during weekday mornings and evenings
- 15-minute service for most of Saturdays and Sundays
- 30-minute service for early mornings and nights

City Line has quickly become one of STA’s busiest routes, having reached 500,000 rides in early April 2024 after its launch last July. The route is Eastern Washington’s

first Bus Rapid Transit line, combining frequent service and efficiency in a modern streetcar-like experience.

The six-mile route between Spokane's historic Browne's Addition neighborhood and Spokane Community College connects through downtown and the University District, including Gonzaga University. The route features zero-emission buses and distinctly branded stations with enhanced rider amenities, such as near-level boarding, off-board ticketing, and monitors displaying real-time estimates of departure times. City Line also brought significant streetscape and road improvements along the route.

To learn more about City Line, visit spokanetransit.com/cityline.



Upcoming Open House for STA's Transit Development Plan



STA will present to external stakeholders and the public over the next several weeks the different projects contained in its *2025 - 2030 Transit Development Plan (TDP)* and answer questions regarding the document. Following these meetings, STA will present a draft of its TDP to the Board of Directors in June and July and present the draft for adoption at the July 25 Board meeting.

STA develops and maintains multiple policy documents outlining goals, objectives,

and initiatives for public transportation in the geographic area known as the Spokane County Public Transportation Benefit Area. At the highest level, STA's comprehensive plan, *Connect Spokane*, sets out the vision and policy framework to guide decisions made by STA's Board of Directors over a 30-year period. More intermediary, its strategic plan, *STA Moving Forward*, outlines strategies and objectives over a 10 - 15 year range. Finally, its TDP establishes a "mid-range tactical framework," which translates those policies, strategies, and objectives into an implementation plan for capital improvement projects and service developments over the next six years. The TDP also reviews STA's financial forecast in order to anticipate more accurately the services that the Agency can provide in the short term. Washington state law requires transit agencies to renew their TDPs annually, which is then shared with the Washington State Department of Transportation for reporting purposes.

For this year's update to the TDP, STA has pursued expanded outreach efforts with external stakeholders and the public in order to more thoroughly assess regional needs, trends, and proposals to improve transit service. Another goal of these outreach efforts is to raise awareness of projects and service improvements outlined in the TDP. Some of these projects include the Division Street Bus Rapid Transit project, a new Argonne Station, future I-90/Valley service, and Airway Heights service changes.

"We hope that our increased engagement with the public will yield productive feedback and aid STA in improving transportation in the region," commented STA's Chief Planning & Development Officer, Karl Otterstrom.

On Wednesday, May 22, STA presented a summary of the draft TDP to the Spokane Regional Transportation Council's Transportation Technical Committee and their Transportation Advisory Committee.

STA will also meet with the Washington State Department of Transportation on Tuesday, June 4, to discuss the TDP.

On Thursday, June 6, STA will hold a virtual open house for the public. This virtual meeting will explain what the TDP is and offer an opportunity for local residents to have their questions answered regarding the different projects contained in the document. A meeting link with the meeting details will be posted on the TDP webpage as the date approaches: spokanetransit.com/tdp

On Monday, June 10, STA will also offer an in-person open house at STA Plaza on the TDP, covering the same topics as the virtual meeting. The open house will feature displays and handouts with additional information on the TDP and its projects. STA staff working on these projects will be present to answer any questions related to them.

STA will include a presentation on the TDP to its Citizens Advisory Committee on Wednesday, June 12.

Lastly, there will be a public hearing for the draft TDP at the STA Board meeting on Thursday, June 20.

For more information and the latest updates on the TDP, please visit spokanetransit.com/tdp.

STA Develops Preliminary Initiatives List for *Connect 2035*



STA is preparing a preliminary list of potential initiatives as part of its next strategic plan, *Connect 2035*. Once complete, the strategic plan will outline initiatives, capital projects, routes, and programs that will improve and expand transit service to the region over the next 10 years.

The initiatives are formed around the three goals of the strategic plan:

1. Elevate the customer experience.
2. Lead and collaborate with community partners to enhance the quality of life in our region.
3. Strengthen our capacity to anticipate and respond to the demands of the region.

The list is being drawn from multiple channels of input: outreach to STA's partners and other external stakeholders, ongoing community engagement, feedback within STA, and a comprehensive assessment of STA's current system and capacity.

The draft initiative list will be reviewed by the STA Board of Directors on Wednesday, June 5, where the Board will have the opportunity to provide feedback. This step marks the beginning of a screening and sorting stage that evaluates initiatives based on the various analyses STA has conducted and feedback received.

STA anticipates that the evaluation of initiatives will be completed by mid-August. The list will then be prepared into several possible "packaged lists." These packaged

lists will present different possible arrangements of initiatives, providing context and analysis on the impact, cost-effectiveness, and other success criteria for each listed initiative. The Board will then review these packaged lists at their September meeting before determining the final initiatives list.

Community engagement has continued to play an important role in the process. Engagement with the public has involved open houses, surveys, rider forums, meetings with community-based organizations, and interactive display boards at STA Plaza. Every piece of public feedback has been logged by STA for review and consideration.

An ongoing transit priorities survey is open to the public and will close on Tuesday, June 4. That survey may be found here: spokanetransit.com/survey/transit-priorities-survey/

In early fall, STA will seek public feedback on the proposed packaged lists.

“STA listens to its riders,” emphasized STA’s Deputy Director for Community Development, Brian Jennings. “Community feedback forms a critical part of shaping how STA improves its transit service since everything is done ultimately for the benefit of the public.”

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



Division BRT Survey Results



STA held an online survey from February 5 to March 5 inviting public feedback on

station locations for the Division Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. The survey divided the proposed route along Division into four segments: Division north of the “Y,” the north stretch of Division between Lincoln and Wellesley, south Division between Empire/Garland and North River, and downtown.

The survey collected feedback from 200 unique respondents. Overall feedback was positive. For example, respondents expressed anticipation for improved accessibility to numerous destinations along Division, including shopping, schools, recreation, restaurants, and getting to and from downtown.

“There was a trend among the responses we particularly noticed that STA will focus on moving forward,” observed STA’s Chief Communications & Customer Service Officer, Carly Cortright. “Many people expressed interest in improvements for pedestrian use on Division. There’s a real opportunity to transform Division from a commuter highway into a more enticing place for pedestrians and other modes of transportation, such as bicycling.”

Another commonly expressed theme was regarding safety, with respondents asking for more shelters and security for those shelters.

A third positive theme that emerged was improved bus frequency. STA is planning for Division Street BRT to operate at 10-minute frequencies during weekdays with 15-minute-or-less frequencies on nights and weekends.

Survey results also included constructive feedback and concerns about other aspects of the project. For example, some respondents expressed worry about delays in the completion of the North Spokane Corridor and how that might affect Division Street BRT. Others showed concern for how construction would impact traffic and businesses along the corridor. Finally, respondents wished for easier access to businesses and wondered how the BRT project would improve accessibility.

“These were common points of feedback that we heard when STA planned for City Line,” replied Don Skillingstad, Senior Project Manager at STA. “STA will work very closely with our design team to ensure this feedback is incorporated into the station designs. We’ll also be working with businesses, organizations, and residents during construction to minimize the impact on both travel times and access to area businesses.”

Division Street BRT is still early in its design phase. STA will continue to seek community feedback, which will help refine design decisions as the project progresses.

“We’ve seen great success with City Line,” said Cortright. “Given the extent of community engagement and analysis that STA is also conducting with this project, the community can confidently look forward to how Division BRT will improve its quality of life, accessibility, and travel times along the corridor.”



STA Conducts Fleet Transition

Workshop for Board



Above: STA Board members, staff, and representatives from the Center for Transportation and the Environment at the Fleet Transition Workshop

On Friday, May 3, the STA Board of Directors participated in a “Zero-Emission Fleet Transition” workshop at the CenterPlace Regional Event Center in Spokane Valley. The workshop was presented by STA Chief Operations Officer Brandon Rapez-Betty, Fleet Transition Manager Christian Bigger, and two members of the Center for Transportation and the Environment: Kylie McCord, Director of Planning & Deployment, and Jaimie Levin, Director of West Coast Operations.

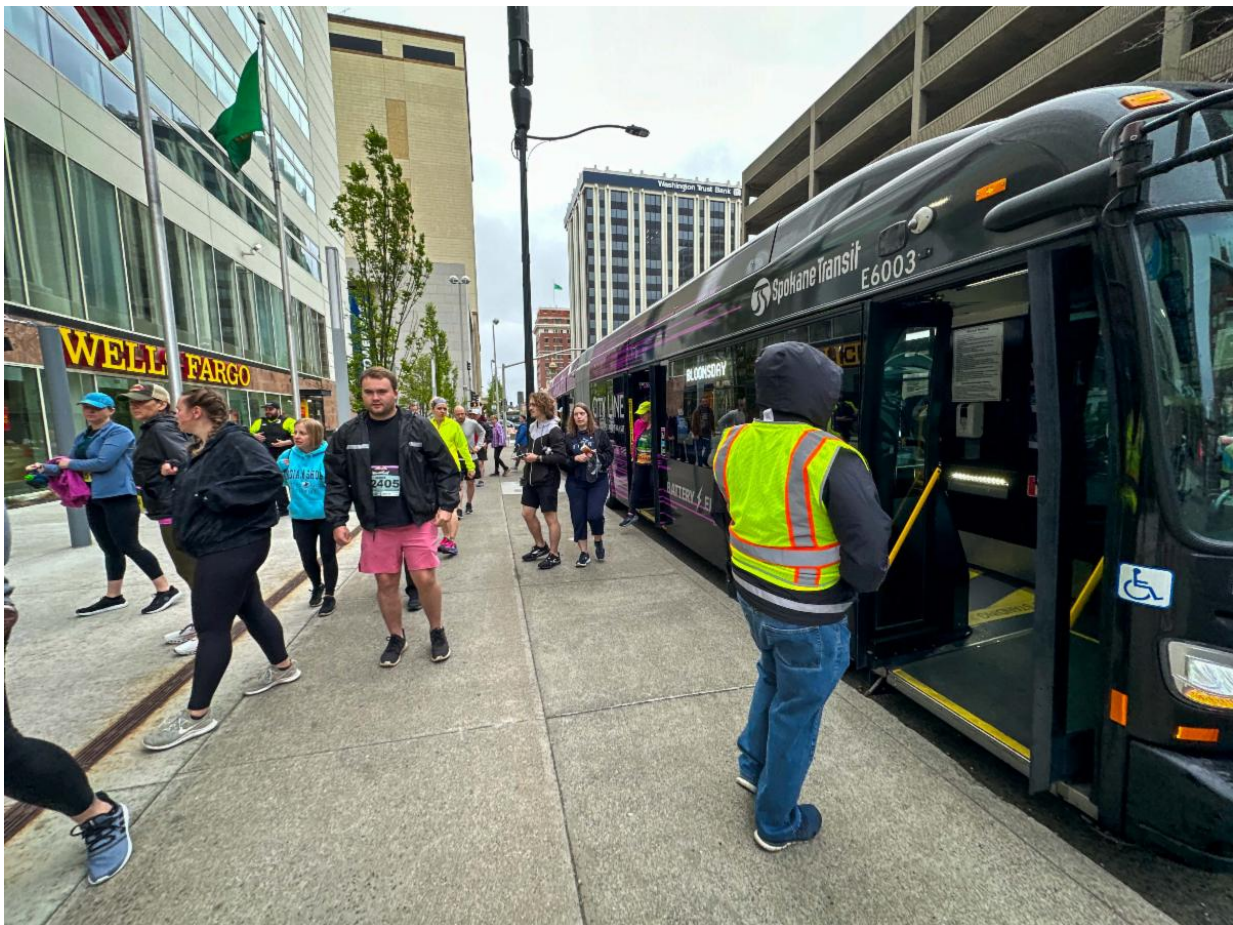
Longer-serving Board members were given a refresher while newer members received an introduction to the current status of STA’s Fleet Transition Plan and potential paths forward. The workshop was divided into three sections: the background of fleet transition including Washington state policy and legislation, the state of the industry for zero-emission technology, and STA’s journey through electrification, beginning with the Agency’s first hybrid bus purchases in 2007 and most recently the deployment of battery-electric buses (BEBs) on City Line and Route 4 Monroe-Regal. In all, STA’s 40 BEBs make up about 25% of the fleet of 164 buses.

The workshop concluded by examining potential paths forward for STA, including alternative fuels, such as renewable diesel and hydrogen fuel cell technology, the electrification of other STA routes, and the development of charging infrastructure to support the continued transition to a zero-emission fleet. Based on the 15-year lifespan of buses and expected improvements in zero-emission propulsion technology, the Agency is targeting a full transition of its bus fleet between 2040 and 2045.

“The objective of the workshop was to bring Board members up to speed on the wide range of complex subjects and years of planning that have gone into this initial phase of the fleet transition, as well as the necessary resources to continue expanding zero-emission transportation,” commented Rapez-Betty. “We are anticipating adoption of STA’s Fleet Transition Plan by the Board at their June meeting.”



Bloomsday in Review



Above: Bloomsday participants exiting a City Line bus.

On Sunday, May 5, STA staff successfully transported Bloomsday participants to and from the race. This year, STA moved 9,932 riders, an 11.5 percent increase from last year and the highest post-pandemic Bloomsday ridership yet. Despite the cold, rainy weather on the day of the race, bus service operated smoothly and efficiently throughout STA’s system.

Above: STA promotional material for the 50th anniversary Expo '74 celebrations and the limited edition Expo Connect card

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Expo '74, STA is offering 50-cent fare on Route 11 on weekdays from May 3 - July 5. 50-cent fare on Route 11 will also be in effect on the weekend of July 6 and 7. Furthermore, ride free on all STA routes on Saturdays and Sundays between May 4 - July 4, including Route 11.

STA increased service for Route 11 in early May to include nights and weekends. The updated route will 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 route was updated based on extensive feedback from the public as well as conversations with STA partners and local businesses.

Come enjoy the **Expo celebrations** or explore new destinations with this limited-time fare promotion.

STA has also produced a commemorative Expo '74 Connect card. These Connect cards are available while supplies last and may be obtained at the following:

- Online Connect card orders from May 4 through July 4 will be Expo '74 cards.
- At the Customer Service window at STA Plaza during **operational hours** upon request.



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