



RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES PILOT (RCP): DIVISION STREET BRT CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION GRANT



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. OVERVIEW | 1 |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Project History | 2 |
| Transportation Needs | 3 |
| Proposed Improvements | 4 |
| 2. LOCATION AND MAP | 5 |
| 3. RESPONSE TO MERIT CRITERIA | 6 |
| 1. Equity and Justice40 Initiative | 6 |
| 2. Access | 7 |
| 3. Facility Suitability | 9 |
| 4. Community Engagement and Community-based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships | 10 |
| 5. Equitable Development | 12 |
| 6.1 Climate Change Mitigation and/or Adaptation and Resilience | 14 |
| 6.2 Workforce Development and Economic Opportunity | 15 |
| 6.3 Planning Integration | 15 |
| 4. PROJECT READINESS | 17 |
| Planning and Constructability | 17 |
| Proposed Schedule | 17 |
| NEPA and Permitting | 18 |
| Project Support | 18 |
| Risk and Mitigation | 19 |
| 5. BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS | 20 |

1. OVERVIEW

Introduction

This \$50 million **capital construction grant** seeks to convert the existing Spokane Transit Authority (STA) Route 25 to bus rapid transit (BRT) service, extending from downtown Spokane, Washington along the Division Street corridor for approximately 10 miles to the Mead area north of the “Y” where Highways 2 and 395 diverge. The Division Street BRT route will move along streets in downtown Spokane (North Brown Street, West Sprague Avenue, South Howard Street, West 2nd Avenue, North Lincoln Street, and West Riverside Avenue); the couplet north of the Spokane River (where traffic travels southbound on North Division Street and northbound on North Ruby Street); along North Division Street (which is both Highways 2 and 395); and finally in the northernmost part of the alignment continues onto East Hastings Road/East Farwell Road in Spokane County. These streets constitute “the corridor” for the project. This grant application is requesting funding for the portion of the corridor between downtown Spokane and East Hastings Road.

Historical redlining practices in Spokane segregated people of color on the east side of Division Street through the 1960s. In the 2000s, the University of Washington’s Washington State Racial Restrictive Covenants Project uncovered that at least 50,000 properties still had restrictive covenants on their deeds, despite these covenants being no longer legal or enforceable.

[The Division Street BRT project](#) will be the second BRT line in the region, adding new stations and roadway modifications that will provide faster, safer, reliable, and more frequent bus service. STA currently operates the Route 25 bus along Division Street between downtown Spokane and Hastings Park and Ride, carrying nearly one million passengers each year – **the second highest ridership of any route in the system**. This project supports the

Reconnecting Communities program goals by improving the travel experience for all transportation users. Much of the Route 25 and Division Street BRT alignment are on Division Street, a seven-lane corridor with high traffic speeds and volumes, making transit trip times unreliable and the first/last mile connections to transit uncomfortable and unsafe.

Division Street handles significant traffic and connects homes, jobs, and services; it serves as a vital north-south corridor in Spokane County and has a [rich history](#) beginning with the provision of streetcar service in the late 19th century. Spokane’s extensive streetcar network expanded the city, connecting new homebuyers in residential areas to downtown. In 1910, streetcar ridership soared to almost



Figure 1. Proposed Division Street BRT Corridor

38 million riders a year region-wide as it became the favored form of transportation over foot- and horsepower. Division Street had its own streetcar line, which was infamous for an accident on the Division Street Bridge in 1915. Division Street remained a critical transit corridor after streetcars gave way to buses, with heavy ridership along Division Street as a key commercial corridor and linkage to Hillyard, where over a thousand workers were employed in the train yards of the [Great North Railroad](#).

As private automobiles grew in availability, Division Street was designated a state highway, bringing new commercial opportunities but also more traffic, prompting multiple efforts to expand its vehicular carry capacity. Today, Division Street is living up to its name, acting as a barrier to east-west travel, particularly for cyclists and pedestrians. However, improvements like the BRT can revive the corridor's transit-supportive roots. The Division Street BRT project will provide vital mobility connections and support the region's significant anticipated residential and job growth by 2045.



Passengers waiting to board the existing Route 25 bus at the Hastings Park and Ride (Credit: Parametrix)

Project History

Development of STA's Division Street BRT project has been a highly collaborative process with partner agencies for several years. In 2019, STA and the Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) — in partnership with the City of Spokane, Spokane County, and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) — led a study to look at how the Division Street corridor could be improved and enhanced. This planning effort, known as [DivisionConnects](#), represented the first phase of the development of high-performance transit along the Division Street corridor, consistent with the vision for transit outlined in STA's Comprehensive Plan, [Connect Spokane](#). Undertaken over two years, this joint transportation and land use study focused on the current challenges with Division Street and the opportunities that would come from the completion of the parallel North Spokane Corridor (NSC), a north/south limited access facility that will connect to US 395, US 2, and I-90. The NSC will run parallel to the project corridor, and its completion will likely result in trip diversion from Division Street, freeing up street capacity for BRT.

The DivisionConnects study identified what future BRT on Division Street could look like. The Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the corridor between the Spokane River and the Y

was adopted in spring 2021 by STA’s board of directors and other project partners as a vision for the conversion of the existing Route 25. Phase 1 of the project was completed with the identification of the LPA and the northern and southern routings. The project is now under design.

Transportation Needs

One of the busiest streets in Spokane County, Division Street is the main north-south roadway connecting communities between downtown Spokane and Mead. The Division Street BRT project will respond to several existing challenges.

Access to Services, Destinations, and Employment

The Division Street BRT corridor is diverse and, as compared to Spokane County, is characterized by a greater number of populations who experience greater mobility challenges and are more likely to use and rely on transit. This includes significant populations without cars and those under 16 and over 55. Thousands of people are using transit every day in the corridor, including transfers to and from other routes. While vehicle traffic in the corridor shows high southbound and northbound volumes during the morning and evening peak periods, transit ridership shows strong all-day ridership in addition to peak hour commuter travel.

Division Street BRT will provide reliable service to and from major destinations along and near the corridor, including the University District, Whitworth University, the Spokane Arena, the Spokane Convention Center, Northtown Mall, Providence Holy Family Hospital, downtown Spokane, and several high schools. Division Street is primarily characterized by commercial land uses and the corridor is home to numerous retail shops, grocery stores, restaurants, and service providers.

Safe Mobility

A majority of the alignment is on Division Street, which is currently a seven-lane arterial roadway (see typical sections for Division and the couplet, Figure 2) that creates an uncomfortable environment for people walking, bicycling, and/or using a mobility device, due to high traffic speeds and volumes. There are several locations where sidewalk gaps are present, or sidewalks are in poor condition. Bicycles are only permitted to travel on sidewalks on Division Street.

Parallel Routes and Diversion

Forecasted growth along the corridor and in areas to the north is expected to contribute to an increased demand for transit service along this already busy bus route. The completion of the NSC will provide a new, parallel roadway that is expected to draw some of the traffic that currently uses the project corridor, freeing up existing roadway capacity to develop infrastructure that will support fast, frequent, and reliable BRT service. Capital improvements included as part of Division Street BRT will provide new crossing opportunities and sidewalks, and will facilitate faster and more reliable transit travel through business access and transit (BAT) lanes (which will also permit right turns for other vehicles).

Proposed Improvements

Improvements along the corridor will focus on enhancing access to transit, as well as transit speed and reliability. It will convert the existing Route 25 to BRT service, with 43 new BRT stations and roadway modifications that will provide faster and more reliable bus service. Key features of Division Street BRT include fixed guideway BRT; zero-emission buses; the potential for 15-minute bus service frequency or better; side-running, dedicated BAT lanes for the majority of the alignment; protected bicycle facilities along Ruby Street; a new transit center at the northern terminus; and a new downtown layover and charging area.

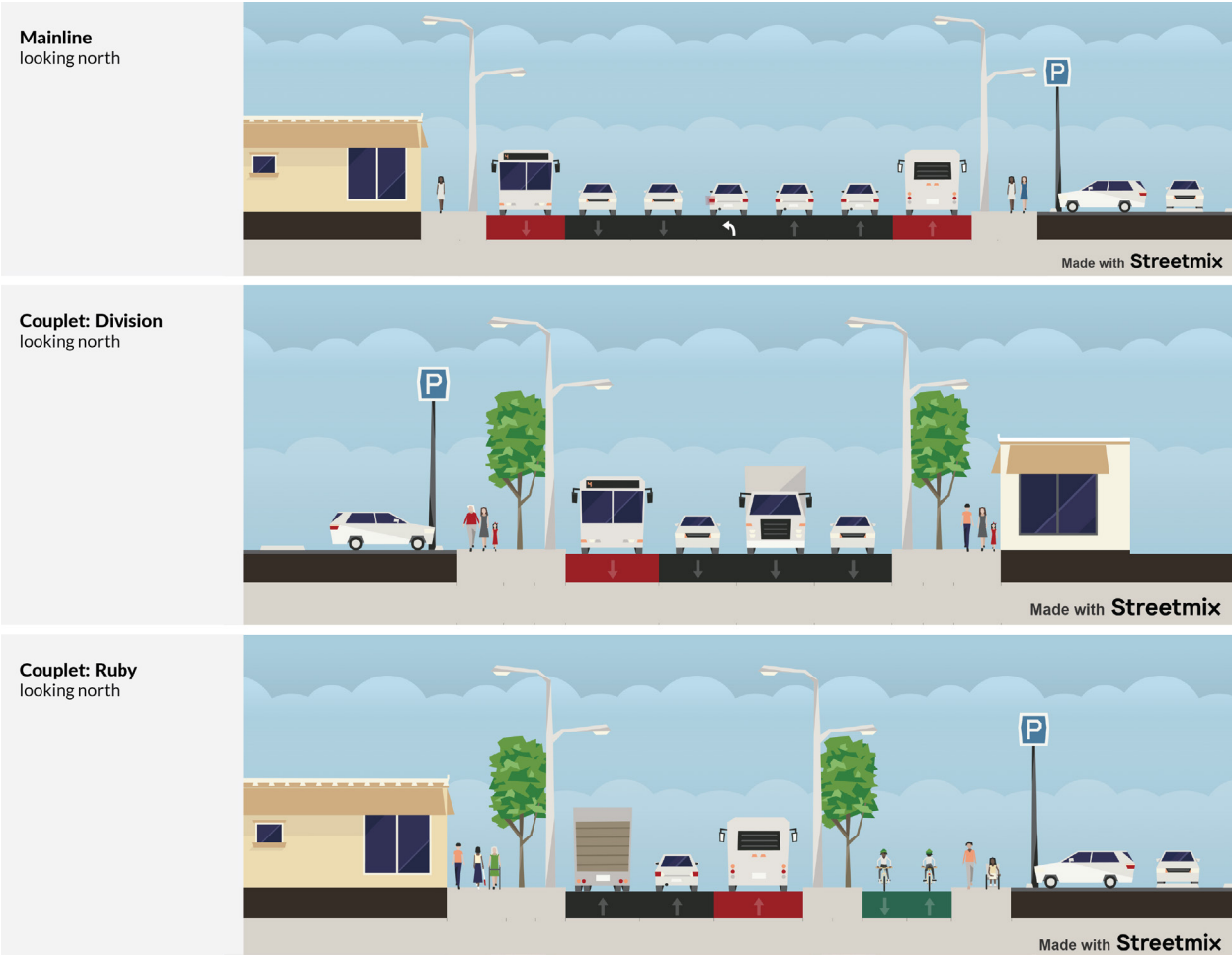


Figure 2. Proposed Project Typical Section (layout may change slightly during completion of design)

Curbside BAT lanes for BRT will run along the project corridor between downtown and the Y. New stations will be outfitted with STA's BRT kit of parts, which will include passenger amenities such as new shelters, seating, and lighting. Sidewalk gaps along the corridor will be addressed at specific locations and several new signalized crosswalks will be added. In addition, a layover and bus charging facility in Downtown Spokane will provide a new comfort station for operators and serve as the southern terminus for the route.

2. LOCATION AND MAP

This project is a proposed north-south BRT corridor in Spokane County, Washington (see Figure 1, page 1). The corridor connects unincorporated communities north of the City of Spokane to downtown Spokane. The BRT line will run for approximately ten miles between downtown Spokane and the Mead area.

Land uses in the corridor exhibit an urban to suburban to near-rural gradient from the southern end of the corridor in downtown Spokane north to the intersection with US 395 in unincorporated Spokane County. In general, the southern end of the study area is urban. North of the Spokane River, development transitions to more auto-oriented commercial uses. Moving north toward the unincorporated communities, land use transitions to retail and commercial uses, characterized by big-box commercial, strip malls, offices, and pockets of multifamily housing along the corridor, with large parking lots and frequent driveway accesses. Holy Family Hospital, located a few blocks east of the corridor, includes a cluster of medical facilities that provide important health and wellness services in north Spokane. Small lot single-family homes are present to the east and west along the length of the corridor. There are two city parks abutting the west side of Division Street between Garland and Empire Avenues and Francis Avenue: B.A. Clark Park and the larger Franklin Park.

These varied land uses reflect the many communities, destinations, and services along the corridor. The high ridership of the current Route 25 reflects the large populations traveling to and from the area to live, work, and visit destinations. However, the existing Division Street is a wide-laned, auto-oriented roadway that enables vehicles to travel at higher speeds. This does not create a comfortable environment for people walking or biking, or those who are taking transit and waiting at bus stops. Additionally, Division Street is a barrier to mobility due to a history of crashes. The BRT project can support reliable and more comfortable travel for all modes.

3. RESPONSE TO MERIT CRITERIA

1. Equity and Justice40 Initiative

Disinvestment in safe and comfortable transit and active transportation facilities on Division Street affects all users of the corridor, but particularly its most vulnerable residents. Historical redlining practices in Spokane segregated people of color on the east side of Division Street through the 1960s. In the 2000s, the University of Washington's Washington State Racial Restrictive Covenants Project uncovered that at least 50,000 properties, including many in the City of Spokane, still had restrictive covenants on their deeds, despite these covenants being no longer legal or enforceable. These policies may still affect residents today - several census tracts within the study area (tracts 53063000400, 53063014500, and 53063002400) are considered to have historic underinvestment and historically high barriers to accessing home loans.

The Division Street BRT study corridor is notably diverse and, compared to Spokane County, has a higher concentration of populations facing greater mobility challenges. These communities are more likely to depend on and regularly use transit services. These include minority populations,¹ low-income populations,² low-income populations with low food access,³ populations with disabilities, populations under 16, and populations over 55. Results from the FHWA [Screening Tool for Equity Analysis of Projects](#) show that benefits from improvements will directly impact more than 26,840 disadvantaged residents within a half-mile buffer of the corridor.

Within a half-mile walkshed of the project, 23 percent of the population identifies as a minority, with some census tracts reaching as high as 60 percent. Additionally, 22 percent of the population within the project walkshed is low-income, significantly higher than the 8 percent in Spokane County overall. At the southern end of the corridor, two census tracts rank in the highest index of low income residents, at 91-100 percent. Overall, 62 percent of the population within the project walkshed are low-income with limited access to food, and 18 percent of residents in the corridor walkshed have a disability.

According to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool ([CJEST](#)), the majority of census tracts adjacent to the project area are considered disadvantaged based on health factors (including risk of asthma), pollution, poverty levels, housing cost, traffic proximity and volume, unemployment levels, and paired with socioeconomic conditions.

According to the [USDOT Equitable Transportation Community \(ETC\) Explorer](#), households in four census tracts within the study area allocate, on average, over 30 percent of their income to transportation costs. In one of these tracts, nearly 65 percent of household income is spent on transportation. This factor further underscores the critical need for improved transit and active transportation connections.

“STA is partnering with the City and the County to position the Division Street corridor for greater inclusion, housing, and transit equity as well as improved economic vitality.”

*- E. Susan Meyer
Spokane Transit CEO*

¹ “Minority” refers to people who identify as non-white as defined in the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS).

² “Low-income” refers to people who are below the federal poverty threshold as defined in the 2020 ACS.

³ “Low food access” refers to people who live far from a supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture Food Access Research Atlas.

Division Street is an important connection between communities but is also currently a transportation barrier for users who rely on transit and active transportation modes. **Its lack of safe and comfortable connections to transit and active transportation facilities creates a significant barrier, negatively impacting residents and disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations.** Improvements along the corridor will directly benefit historically underserved residents by enhancing access to key destinations, boosting safety in the corridor, and increasing overall vitality and livability.

Capital Construction Considerations

STA and project partners are committed to working with property owners and businesses to develop staging plans for construction activities and to mitigate any construction impacts that may occur. To prevent displacement directly associated with construction of the Division Street BRT project, STA plans to minimize the acquisition of housing or businesses as almost all planned developments will occur within the public right-of-way.



Existing conditions along Division Street near Buckeye Avenue (Credit: Google Street View)

2. Access

Mobility and Accessibility Improvements

The project will provide improved transit service along the project corridor, while enhancing the ability to use non-motorized modes of transportation. Although the existing bus route along Division Street—Route 25—is one of the City of Spokane’s highest-ridership routes, walking, bicycling, and waiting at transit stops along the corridor is currently uncomfortable and sometimes unsafe, largely due to the volume and speeds of vehicular traffic. Although sidewalks are present along much of the corridor, they are typically attached, leaving no buffer between pedestrians and fast-moving vehicular traffic. There are also limited crossing opportunities for pedestrians, which can result in inconvenient, out-of-direction travel, and unsafe crossing behaviors. There are currently no bicycle facilities along the corridor.

Proposed improvements include three additional signalized crossing locations with pedestrian accommodation (i.e., crosswalks and pedestrian signals), and a new bicycle facility along Ruby Street, in the northern section of the corridor.

With the proposed improvements in place, the corridor will have the potential to support even higher levels of alternative mode usage. Safer and more comfortable bicycle facilities

and pedestrian crossing opportunities will make using alternative modes more inviting for both new and existing users.

Public Health Benefits

Enhanced safety and comfort for users of non-motorized modes, including walking or bicycling to transit, also brings public health benefits. In 2022, 33 percent of adults in Spokane County were classified as obese, and in 2023, 30 percent of youth were considered overweight. The prevalence of overweight and obesity are higher among those who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Black, and those with [lower income levels](#). These same populations tend to have mobility challenges associated with limited car ownership, making access to alternative modes even more important.

Improving opportunities to walk, bicycle, and use transit for daily transportation is also an important way to help residents become healthier and more active. Incorporating physical activity into daily routines is especially important for individuals and families who may not have the time or the means to engage in a formal exercise program, such as going to a gym. Being able to safely and comfortably walk or bicycle to work, school, or shopping is a convenient way to incorporate recommended levels of physical activity into a lifestyle that may not otherwise support it.

Capital Construction Considerations

STA, in partnership with SRTC, the City of Spokane, WSDOT, and Spokane County, completed the DivisionConnects study in 2022. The study was completed in two Phases, with Phase 1 identifying the LPA, and Phase 2 outlining a Vision and Implementation Strategy. The final reports for both phases emphasize the importance of improving mobility and accessibility along Division Street, particularly for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

The Phase 2 report presents an identification methodology and selection criteria for active transportation projects associated with the BRT project based a suite of criteria related to safety, user comfort, and equity. This report also discusses the potential role of BRT in spurring development, redevelopment, and other land use changes along the corridor. It presents a series of case studies, along with a land use node analysis for the project corridor. According to the case study research, a number of notable BRT projects across the United States have spurred desirable land use impacts along their respective corridors, including:

- Increased residential property values
- An increase in new office space, including an office rent premium for locations within a half-mile of a BRT corridor
- These corridors attracted job growth away from areas without BRT
- An increase in employment related to information, real estate, management, administration, education, health care, and lodging/food
- Positive shifts in higher wage jobs, including during periods of economic recovery
- Some lines were successful in leveraging investments in TODs

The City and County are examining opportunities to modify permitted land uses along the corridor that would provide for a greater TOD focus. Along with STA, the City and County will be conducting a Division Street study to determine a TOD vision along the BRT corridor through economic analysis, land use recommendations, multimodal recommendations, and policy framework. The study will create a community-based vision to support historically underserved communities and foster future land use that aligns with major infrastructure investments.

3. Facility Suitability

Barriers to Mobility

Route 25, the existing bus route along the project corridor, is one of the City of Spokane's highest-ridership routes. However, current pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities along the corridor are subpar, impeding access to transit and the use of active modes of transportation.

Key mobility and accessibility challenges along the existing corridor include:

- High vehicular speeds, creating a hostile environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, and those accessing transit
- Curbside sidewalks and gaps in the sidewalk network
- Lack of ADA accessibility, including sidewalk and clear space obstructions and noncompliant curb ramps
- Lack of dedicated bicycle facilities along much of the corridor

This section of Spokane includes a number of transit- and active transportation-supportive land uses, including the University District in the southern portion of the corridor. This District contains multiple higher education institutions (Gonzaga University, Eastern Washington University, University of Washington, Washington State University Medical Schools and Whitworth University) and relatively high-density, mixed-use development. Universities are notorious for generating walking, bicycling, and transit trips, as many students either do not have access to a personal vehicle or prefer to use alternative modes for health or environmental reasons. Thus, the current state of the project corridor is particularly poorly suited to the individuals living, working, and/or traveling along the corridor.

Facilitating the safe and convenient use of alternative modes of transportation can also help reduce transportation costs for households. In many sections of the corridor, residents have an H+T index (i.e., combined housing and transportation costs) of over 40 percent, meaning they are [disproportionately burdened](#) by the costs of housing, transportation, and essential services.

Improving the safety and comfort of making trips via walking, bicycling, and transit will provide much-needed mobility for some of the City's most vulnerable users, while providing all residents with additional choices about how to travel. These benefits will extend well beyond the corridor itself, as the BRT line will intersect with multiple other bus routes, including STA's City Line BRT service, and serve transit centers and park and ride lots that

provide regional connectivity. **The proposed improvements will improve transportation choice and allow residents to move freely and safely via the mode they need or want to use.**

Capital Construction Considerations

Division Street is a WSDOT-designated T-2 freight corridor (carrying between 4 million and 10 million tons annually) between I-90 and the Y, and a T-3 freight corridor (carrying between 300,000 and 4 million tons annually) north of the Y.

The final link of the NSC is anticipated to be complete in 2030, coinciding with the opening of the Division Street BRT line. The potential synergy between these projects is important to the success of each. Because the NSC is expected to draw a considerable volume of traffic from the project corridor, including through freight traffic, it becomes more feasible for Division Street to function as a transit- and active transportation-supportive corridor. Meanwhile, the NSC will also provide faster and more efficient through movement for freight and passenger vehicle travel.



College students walking (Credit: Flickr)

4. Community Engagement and Community-based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships

Community Engagement

Public outreach is essential to the development of the Division Street BRT project, significantly influencing the route and station locations. The project’s strategic goals guide public engagement and involve strategies to ensure that STA reaches and connects with as diverse a group of community stakeholders as possible, especially vulnerable community members.

The process began with the development of the LPA during the DivisionConnects study. STA engaged with the community to raise awareness, gather feedback, and involve stakeholders in decisions about routing alternatives, design, and operational plans. Public engagement

included virtual presentations, with a focus on neighborhood councils, as well as an interactive web map and survey that provided project information and collected specific feedback on corridor options, including route and station locations.

Continued engagement occurred to define the Refined LPA. An online survey was developed to solicit feedback and paper surveys were distributed at neighborhood council meeting presentations. A website was established to be the primary portal for distributing project information such as the purpose of the project, timeline, estimated costs and funding, contact information for the project manager, and common questions about BRT.

From November 2023 through March 2024, thirteen events were facilitated and attended, including seven neighborhood council meetings, two open houses, a policy committee meeting, and other events. 178 attendees participated in the events. Each neighborhood and community group expressed specific concerns based on their individual location. Public outreach for the project focused on meeting people where they are, and events were hosted at locations such as libraries, senior centers, community centers, and churches.



STA staff met with several Neighborhood Councils during Fall 2023 (Credit: STA)

Community-Based Stewardship

During the planning phase, Division Street BRT project partners actively engaged with community organizations and advocates to ensure that proposed improvements aligned with community goals and needs. SRTC staff briefed the City of Spokane Bicycle Advisory Board (BAB) on the DivisionConnects study, including an overview of Phase 1 efforts and the identification of the LPA for Division Street BRT. STA provided two presentations and updates on the Division Street BRT project to the Downtown Spokane Partnership (DSP). Additionally, the project team sought input from property owners, managers, and developers along the corridor. One-on-one outreach was conducted with property stakeholders, and a letter along with a project factsheet was mailed to over 70 station-adjacent stakeholders, offering personal conversations to discuss the project in detail.

Partnerships and Advisory Committees

The Division Street BRT project is a coordinated effort between STA, WSDOT, the City of Spokane, Spokane County, and the SRTC. Letters of Support from project partners can be found in Attachment A.

Three advisory committees provided oversight, guidance, and counsel during the DivisionConnects study. These committees—composed of technical staff, agency leadership, and regional elected officials—provided guidance to the project team throughout the study. The Steering Committee identified areas of concern and provided strategic insight and feedback as the planning and preliminary design phase progressed. They were also responsible for approving outreach plans and the Title VI approach. The Executive Committee reviewed values, data, and public input to make recommendations on projects and programs. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) provided feedback on the LPA, termini options, and preliminary station locations. The TAC also provided feedback on preliminary engineering activities, strategized public outreach, and helped to coordinate the project schedule.

Upon completion of the DivisionConnects and the advancement into more detailed planning and design, these membership and roles committees were refined. Participants continued to guide Division Street BRT, providing insight and direction into key project elements.

Capital Construction Considerations

The project's success will be supported by various partners and funding sources at the state, federal, and local levels. These include Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, Washington State Move Ahead WA funds allocated through the state transportation budget, and local funds from STA generated by sales tax revenue, among other sources.

5. Equitable Development

Transportation barriers place a disproportionate burden on underserved communities.

Although sidewalks are present along much of the corridor, their curbside placement and traffic speeds and volumes contribute to an uncomfortable environment for people walking and using mobility devices. Bicycles are prohibited in much of the corridor, requiring cyclists to share the sidewalk with pedestrians. Limited signalized crossings along the corridor present challenges for east-west travel, as it can be difficult for people walking, using mobility devices, and biking to cross.

Division Street BRT improvements will increase transportation options. Division Street BRT will offer expanded mobility options for traditionally transit-dependent populations. This project aims to enhance transportation access for riders who face disproportionate challenges in the current mobility system and to minimize negative impacts on vulnerable communities. The provision of fast, frequent, and reliable transit improves access between residential areas

“We are enhancing the Division Street corridor as a critical part of better meeting how our city lives, moves, and works. This includes addressing attainable housing and transit equity considerations to support a healthy, active, and thriving future for our community.”

*- Former Spokane Mayor
Nadine Woodward*

and key destinations, benefiting populations that have historically been underrepresented and underserved.

In addition to expanded transit services, the Division Street BRT project includes three new signalized crossings of the corridor, new sidewalks where gaps exist, and a new dedicated bicycle facility along Ruby Street. These investments will improve access for people walking and cycling. Increased accessibility and safety will revitalize the area and improve the quality of life along the project corridor by fostering vibrant, walkable and bike-friendly communities. Active transportation improvements will address substantial travel barriers including long distances between signalized crossings, sidewalk gaps, and further development of the City's bicycle network.

Improvements along the Division Street BRT corridor will increase accessibility for

all. Providing more transportation options also results in more equitable access for all. Throughout the Division Street BRT planning process, a primary goal for evaluating potential routes was ensuring equitable and inclusive access to transit. Key considerations included the route's ability to enhance access to housing, employment, healthcare, education, and social services. Improved transit routes and stations make traveling accessible and convenient for those who cannot rely on cars to get to their destinations. At BRT stations, raised near-level platforms increase accessibility for riders with strollers, carts, or mobility devices to board and alight. All stations will meet ADA accessibility requirements, offer shelter from the weather, and provide real-time information on schedules and routes.

Capital Construction Considerations

Project partners have already undertaken preliminary activities to address potential displacement in the area. A case study conducted during the DivisionConnects project indicated that property values along BRT corridors may rise along with renewed development interest in more mixed uses near transit stops. This can have the impact of elevating residential and commercial rents, sometimes displacing households or businesses who were there prior to the advent of BRT. This case study also identified proactive strategies that can be implemented to minimize the impacts of displacement. As a project partner, the City is investing in strategies to mitigate the risk of displacement and keep housing along the corridor accessible to those who live there now. According to the [Spokane Housing Action Plan](#), fourteen census tracts in Spokane are identified as having the highest risk of vulnerability and displacement. The majority of these census tracts are located in Northeast Spokane and close to downtown, where much of the historic redlining occurred. Five of these census tracts are adjacent to the study corridor.

STA was awarded a \$405,000 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) [Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development \(TOD\) Planning](#) grant in Fiscal Year 2021. A goal of this project is to increase participation and decision-making by racial and ethnic minorities, low-income populations, indigenous and tribal communities, women, renters, and gender-marginalized populations. All outcomes will have special consideration for identifying negative impacts on these populations and recommending mitigating efforts.

What is Transit-Oriented Development?

TOD includes a mix of housing, shopping, employment, and entertainment centered around or located near a transit station. Dense, walkable, mixed-use development near transit attracts people and adds to vibrant, connected communities

This grant will support the City and County in engaging with the local community to develop transit supportive land use plans and policies that leverage STA's investment in high-frequency transit along the corridor. These plans will build upon the integrated transportation and feasibility analysis completed under the [DivisionConnects Study](#).

The City and County zoning requirements applicable to the land within a half-mile walkshed of the corridor permit a wide array of uses, including higher density options. Of the land that permits residential use, 100 percent allows higher density options such as duplexes, accessory dwelling units, triplexes, or quadraplexes (or higher unit count) by right. Additionally, 75 percent of land within the same walkshed that permits residential use has no minimum parking requirements.

Division Street BRT represents a generational opportunity to foster equitable TOD, maximizing the benefits of this major transit investment. It aligns with City and County goals for managing anticipated growth and supports existing residents, businesses, and communities. This regional initiative to plan for TOD will help direct future investments in a way that better supports historically underserved communities.

6.1 Climate Change Mitigation and/or Adaptation and Resilience

Dedicated transit lanes enhance rider appeal and contribute to reducing carbon emissions. A 2024 study by University of Minnesota researchers explored the impact of transit right-of-way on ridership and emissions. The [findings](#) revealed that transit routes with minimal interference from other traffic attract significantly more passengers, and that improving the operating environment has a substantial effect on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Division Street BRT's designated BAT lanes can result in dramatic cuts to emissions by reducing traffic congestion (and idling vehicles) and reducing the number of cars on the road by enticing motorists to shift to transit. Additionally, Division Street BRT's zero-emission buses will further reduce emission reductions and help improve air quality.

Better transit services encourage mode-shift. BRT can help reduce emissions by encouraging travelers to switch from higher-emission transportation modes to more sustainable options, primarily by offering more convenient alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles. This can be achieved by offering a faster, more frequent, and more reliable transit service compared to traditional buses. Enhanced passenger amenities, such as pay-before-you-board technology, real-time bus arrival information, and raised platforms for quicker and easier boarding, also contribute to a better overall experience for potential riders.

Additionally, active transportation improvements included as part of the project will improve access to stations, including filling sidewalk gaps along the corridor, adding several new signalized crossings, and dedicated bicycle facilities on Ruby Street. Reduced traffic volumes on the roadway makes it more pleasant for people walking, biking, and taking transit on the corridor. Several Division Street BRT improvements will provide direct connections to existing active transportation facilities, further encouraging people to bike, walk, or use public transit.

6.2 Workforce Development and Economic Opportunity

Good Paying Jobs

STA's standard contracting language includes anti-discrimination and anti-harassment language. It also states that projects will pay state and federal prevailing wages, and that wages will be posted at the job site. STA creates weekly certified payroll reports to ensure that the appropriate class of wages are paid correctly.

Worker Training and Education

WSDOT has a 15 percent apprentice utilization requirement for any contract estimated to cost above \$2 million, per the Washington State Legislature, [RCW 39.04.320](#). Apprentice utilization requirements are tracked using Labor & Industry's Prevailing Wage Intents and Affidavits (PWIA) system. WSDOT also maintains the [Pre-Apprenticeship & Supportive Services \(PASS\)](#) Program to provide funding for specific supportive services and pre-apprenticeship training for females, minorities, and socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. On federally funded projects, STA adheres to these requirements passed down from FTA.

Inclusive Policies & Hiring and Retention of Underrepresented Workers

STA outlines nondiscriminatory and equal opportunity hiring practices in its [Policy Manual](#) (2024). STA's [Disadvantaged Business Enterprise \(DBE\) Program and Goal](#) outlines the agency's intention to provide DBEs with "the maximum practicable opportunity to participate in the performance of work relating to all of STA's activities." The agency's DBE Policy outlines six key elements for achieving this participation, which focus on removing barriers to participation and supporting small businesses. The agency also has a dedicated DBE Liaison to oversee and facilitate the program.

The agency's overall goal for FFYs 2023, 2024, and 2025 is 0.75 percent for federally assisted contracting opportunities – exclusive of FTA funds – which equates to an estimated \$210,707. The agency has developed more detailed categories for DBE consideration, including Construction; Professional Services; and Materials, Supplies, and Equipment. The agency also works to encourage participation by small businesses by providing education about contracting procedures and bidding opportunities.

6.3 Planning Integration

SRTC serves as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the area covered by Spokane County, Washington. SRTC, in partnership with Spokane Transit, the City of Spokane, WSDOT, and Spokane County, completed the DivisionConnects study in 2022, which concluded with adoption of the LPA for Division Street BRT.

Phase 1 of the study was informed by a robust public and stakeholder engagement effort, including a series of advisory committee meetings, focus groups, property owner interviews, and online/social media activities. The study included screening of eight preliminary scenarios. These scenarios were developed to be distinct from one another and represent

a wide spectrum of options for consideration. They included left and right side and center-running configurations for the mainline, left and right-side running configurations in the couplet, and various active transportation facilities configurations. Four alternatives, including center-running BRT, and three different side-running options, were advanced for additional analysis. The evaluation of these four alternatives was based on seven main factors, each with several specific measures, including transit performance and user benefit, corridor mobility, equitable and inclusive access to transit, responsiveness to community goals, implementation feasibility, capital and operating costs, and funding competitiveness.

The DivisionConnects study included assessment of All Ages and Abilities facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, which are safe, comfortable, and equitable. The study noted the importance of providing safe, well-maintained pedestrian and bicycle facilities, particularly for low-income communities and communities of color who have been disproportionately affected by poor or inadequate infrastructure in the past. Further, one of the screening criteria for active transportation projects within the study was Advance Social Equity, meaning the project “Improves access to residential locations and destinations serving populations who are historically underrepresented and underserved.”

The Division Street BRT LPA was jointly adopted by the STA Board (2021), the SRTC Board (2021/2022), and the City of Spokane (2022), showing strong support for the project. The [DivisionConnects](#) study is also mentioned in [Horizon 2045](#), the region’s Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and Division Street is shown as part of the Regional Transit Priority Network.

Continued planning and preliminary design for Division Street BRT began in the spring of 2022. This analysis focused on the identification of routing and station locations for the northern and southern termini, as well as confirmation of station locations between North River Drive and the Y. Multiple options were screened for each terminus, examining multiple aspects of transit service performance and capital improvement needs. Station locations along the Division Street BRT mainline and couplet that were identified as part of the original LPA were also revisited and refined. The recommended modifications were adopted as the refined LPA by the STA Board of Directors in May 2023.

Letters of support from partner agencies are included in Attachment A, further indicating broad support for this project at a local, regional, and statewide level.



Left: Wide auto-oriented corridor as seen from Empire Avenue; Right: Construction of a new City Line island station and bicycle lanes in Downtown Spokane near Howard Street. (Credit: Parametrix)

4. PROJECT READINESS

Planning and Constructability

Division Street BRT [Project Development and Construction and Implementation](#) are programmed in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) (pages 1303 and 1305). The [Project Development phase](#) is listed as a Completed Project (fully obligated funding) in SRTC’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for 2023-2026 (page 12). For the 2024-2027 program, the SRTC also includes the Division Street BRT [Construction and Implementation phase](#) (page 23). This TIP listing can be found in Attachment B.

Minimal property acquisition or additional right-of-way will be required as part of this project, most notably at BRT stations and the corridor termini. Limited “sliver” purchases are anticipated at BRT stations and full parcel acquisition is anticipated for the Downtown Layover and Charging facility. Temporary Construction Easements (TCEs) will be needed in several locations. Exact property impacts will be determined during the ongoing design phases. There are no buildings to be purchased nor businesses or residences expected to be displaced. Construction is expected to go through multiple phases and be delivered as design-bid-build.

Proposed Schedule

The project is currently in the design phase, with 30 percent design expected to be completed in Spring 2025. Additional key milestones are shown in Figure 3. Construction is estimated to begin in 2027 and be substantially complete by September 2029. STA is seeking funds for construction and engineering services during construction under this grant submittal, beginning in 2028 (see unshaded Construction phase in Figure 3).

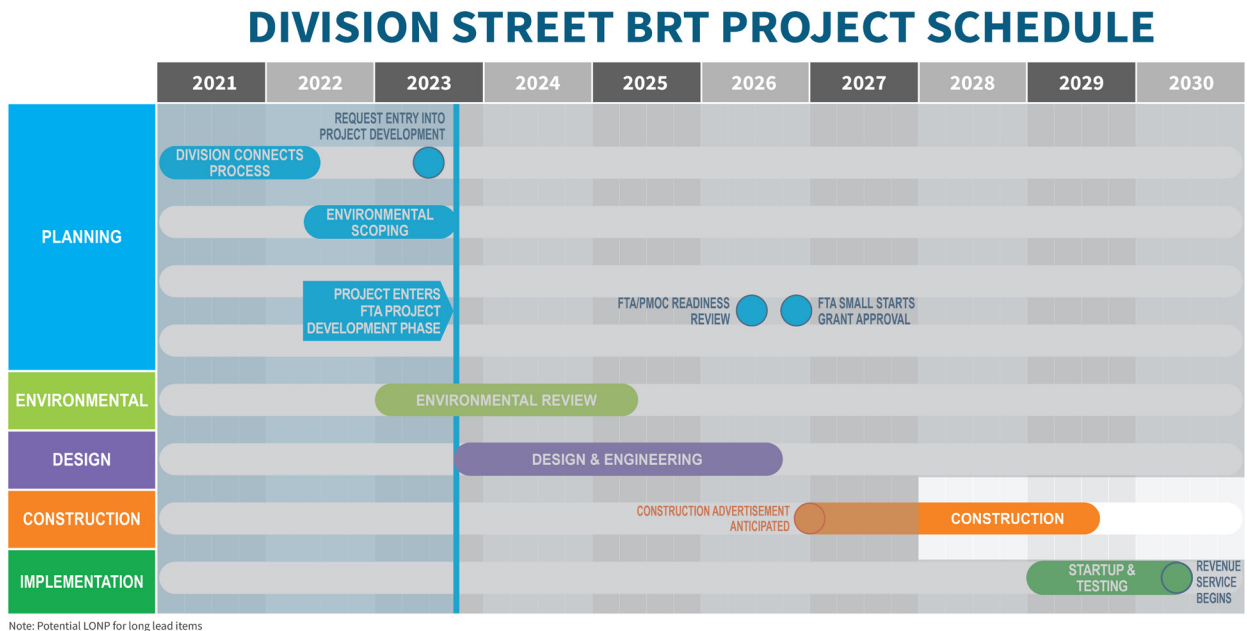


Figure 3. Project Schedule

NEPA and Permitting

The Division Street BRT project is expected to qualify as a Documented Categorical Exclusion (DCE) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), specifically under 23 CFR Part 771.118(d)(8). This designation is given to projects that typically do not have significant environmental impacts but require additional documentation to confirm that no such impacts will occur. STA, in collaboration with the FTA, has begun the NEPA process, which will extend through the project's design phase. For projects classified under 23 CFR Part 771.118(d), there is a need to prepare specific documentation that demonstrates compliance with the conditions and criteria required for the DCE, ensuring that the project will not result in significant environmental effects. The necessary documentation currently under development includes:

- Cultural Resources Report
- Hazardous Materials Technical Memorandum
- Traffic Report
- Noise and Vibration Technical Memorandum
- Air Quality Technical Memorandum
- Environmental Justice Technical Memorandum
- Section 4(f) Technical Memorandum (including de minimis impact concurrence from the City of Spokane)

For construction activities along and within the project corridor, including at stations, the new transit center location, and the downtown charging and layover facility, numerous permits will be required from the City of Spokane and Spokane County. Access permits will be acquired from WSDOT, as needed.

Project Support

Past Engagement

Stakeholder and community engagement has been a priority since the DivisionConnects study, completed in 2022, and has continued throughout the Division Street BRT project. Stakeholder engagement has included various advisory committees to provide oversight, guidance, and counsel; these have included a Steering Committee, Executive Committee, and TAC. These teams have been comprised of staff and elected officials from partner agencies (such as Spokane County, City of Spokane, SRTC, and WSDOT), STA staff, and the consultant team.



February 2024 neighborhood meeting in East Central (Credit: STA)

Community engagement has occurred through a range of methods, such as:

- Maintaining a project website as the primary portal for distributing information such as the project purpose, opportunities for involvement, schedule, project documents, and contact information
- Distributing surveys using web maps to solicit public feedback associated with potential changes to land uses, active transportation, and later station locations
- Sharing information at community events, neighborhood council presentations, and agency meetings both in-person and virtual
- Conducting property owner interviews in the format of one-on-one interviews
- Holding partner agency workshops to discuss land use and travel demand
- Executing social media campaigns via Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn to promote event opportunities, questionnaires, and general project information
- Sending e-newsletters to share project updates, the questionnaire, and survey results
- Mailing postcards to promote general information about BRT, the project, and the online questionnaire

Future Engagement

Future engagement work will continue several of the methods described above, including surveys, presentations, and events to continue conversations with community members and/or focus on specific project features as needed. It will also include more one-on-one engagement with station-adjacent stakeholders via letters and in-person meetings.

Letters of Support

Letters of support can be found in Attachment A.

Risk and Mitigation

While Division Street BRT will vastly improve mobility and access to destinations and services along the corridor, the project team has accounted for possible project risks and mitigation strategies. A risk register is maintained and updated on a monthly (previously quarterly) basis. During updates, existing risks are revisited, reevaluated, and removed. New risks are added as applicable.

The register rates the potential for risks to impact cost and schedule as low (small cost/delay), medium (modest cost/delay), or high (large cost/delay) depending on the likelihood of occurrence. In addition, risks are assigned urgency ratings which consider mitigation timing. These categories are low (>6 months), medium (3-6 months), and high (within 3 months). Currently identified (as of September 2024) risks with the highest combined scores are described on the following page.

FTA Processes: FTA’s heavy project load and lack of senior staff may result in lengthy decision making and review times. The project team actively mitigates this risk by establishing regular communication with FTA and clearly communicates and coordinates schedules with their staff.

Constituent Opposition: Constituent opposition could result in stopping, changing, or adding elements to the project. Additional time may be required to manage responses, which could cause delays and potential significant changes. In response, the project team has developed a robust public outreach plan to inform and gather feedback from the public. They maintain close coordination with public agencies via regularly scheduled meetings to maintain their support for the project direction.

City and County Staff: There is potential for City staff to move to new roles or leave the City, which would lead to slowing progress, revisiting decisions, and slowing communications. Although most of the project is within the city limits, there is also a risk associated with County staff as the northern part of the corridor is in Spokane County. These risks are mitigated via signaling the importance of key staff to the City and County and maintaining active technical and leadership work groups.

NEPA Evaluation: If FTA determines the project’s scope warrants more than a DCE, this could delay the project and add costs. In response, the project team is providing information to FTA on project details and why it is likely a DCE.

Facilities Master Plan: STA’s Facilities Master Plan has identified a new operations and maintenance facility be in operation before the Division Street BRT fleet is delivered. The facility will accommodate buses that are displaced by Division Street BRT. The Division Street BRT fleet will park in the existing Boone Northwest Garage. To mitigate this risk, STA is developing a parallel schedule for delivery of the new facility that meets the needs of the expanded STA fleet.

5. BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS

STA has completed a Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) for this project using information and recommended methodologies from the latest version of the [Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs](#) released in January 2024.

This project has a benefit-cost ratio of 2.49.

The BCA incorporates all related costs and calculates a series of potential project benefits, including such items as safety, vehicle operating cost savings, emissions, livability and productivity, health, and pedestrian mobility, among others. This grant application includes two independent attachments that detail the BCA. This includes a narrative with the assumptions and methodology used, sources of data, and monetized outcomes of the project. Additionally, a detailed Excel workbook includes assumptions and independent calculations to arrive at the final benefit-cost ratio.