

September 2017 Service Revisions

Preliminary Proposal

Prepared for:
**Performance Monitoring and External Relations
Committee**

Draft

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Executive Summary

Based on years of input from citizens and technical preparation, the Spokane Transit Board of Directors approved a plan that aims to maintain the existing transit system while adding more resources where needed to improve service levels throughout the region. The *STA Moving Forward* plan, which is the basis of the voter approved Proposition 1 ballot measure, includes more than 25 projects to provide more and better transit service throughout the region.

With the approval of the 2/10ths of one cent incremental increase to Spokane Transit's tax rate to fund transit improvements, the multi-year implementation of the projects will begin immediately with some of the basic service improvements that are scheduled to be in operation by the end of 2017. Subsequent phases of the *STA Moving Forward* plan will be implemented throughout a ten-year plan horizon. More information on Proposition 1 projects can be found online at stamovingforward.com.

Development of the Preliminary Proposal

The *STA Moving Forward* plan, as amended, identifies a number of service changes and improvements that would go into effect in 2017. In order to accelerate improvements, some of these improvements are scheduled to go into effect in May while others are slated for September, a more typical time for major changes. Both rounds of service changes require approval by the STA Board of Directors after public outreach. Phase One of the 2017 service changes and modifications were approved by the STA Board of Directors on December 15, 2016 and will be implemented in May. This Preliminary Proposal will focus on Phase Two of the 2017 service changes and modifications scheduled to be implemented in September.

According to the *STA Moving Forward* plan, the following changes are planned to go into effect in September 2017 at the regular service change:

- Upgrade to HPT "Lite" service along I-90 between Spokane and Liberty Lake via Spokane Valley including new night and weekend service (First phase - introduce more mid-day weekday trips).
- Improve weekday reliability for bus service on North Division Street.
- Add Sunday service on North Nevada Street.

Fixed-route service design requires a robust examination of opportunities, feedback and consideration of policies and design principles. This Preliminary Proposal has been developed in

accordance with the principles and policies of *Connect Spokane*, STA's Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation, while meeting the commitments set forth in the *STA Moving Forward* plan. While these are rigorous requirements and policies, they still provide for ample room for public input, discussion and technical considerations. Indeed, transit planning has both elements of art and science with a heavy dosage of constraints introduced by the built environment. Given this, virtually every improvement in the *STA Moving Forward* plan will have an appropriately scaled public input process that precedes the implementation of the service or when specific design considerations are under evaluation. Voters' approval of the funding for *STA Moving Forward* represents more of a beginning to public input rather than the final decision.

This proposal also contains other individual route improvements not listed in *STA Moving Forward* in conjunction with ongoing scheduling adjustments as provided for in the board-adopted 2016 Transit Development Plan (TDP).

Members from the Planning, Operations, Customer Service, Communications, and Training Departments make up STA's internal Service Improvement Committee. This committee meets bi-monthly in order to discuss ideas, resolve route safety issues, and review proposed changes to STA's bus system. This committee was instrumental in the completion of this Preliminary Proposal.

Proposed Revisions

The proposed revisions, per *STA Moving Forward* and the Transit Development Plan (TDP), for September 2017 can be categorized as follows:

- More service on existing routes
- Modify/Add service
- Modify existing routes to improve service effectiveness

More service on existing routes

Route 28 Nevada – Saturday night and Sunday/Holiday Service

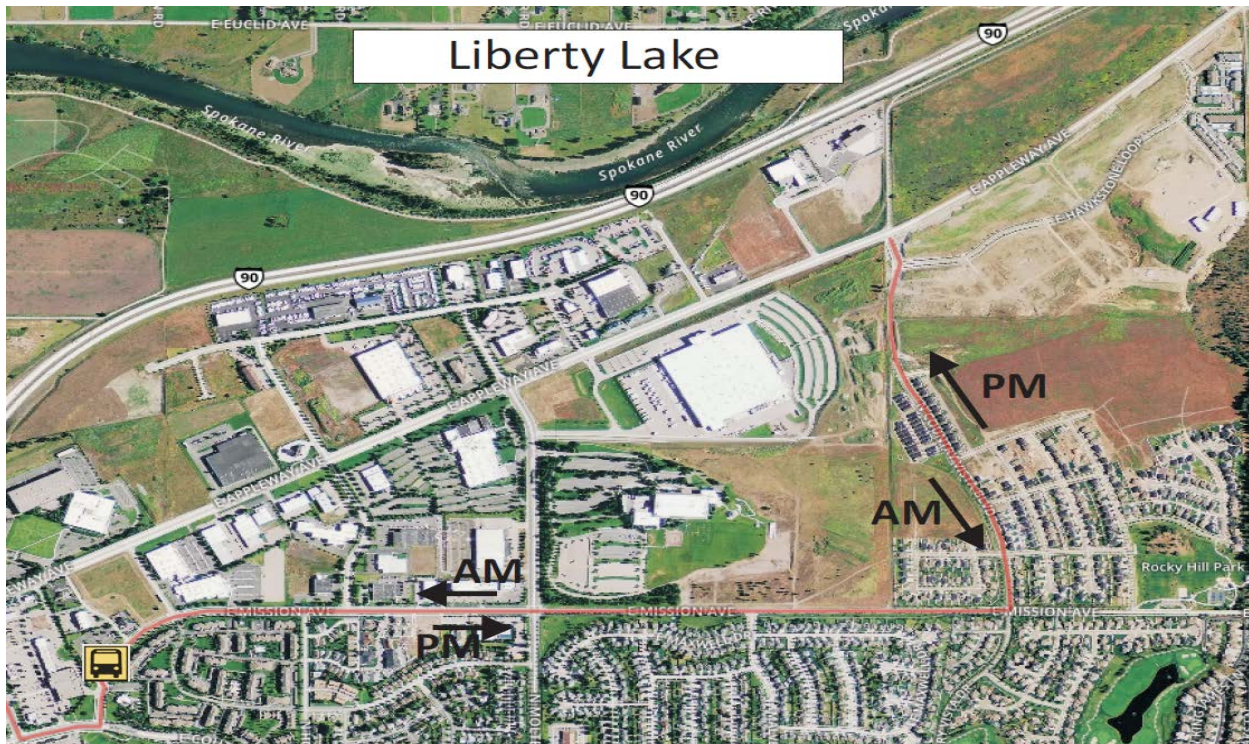
To meet Connect Spokane policy FR3.1, existing Route 28 requires service that lasts until 10pm on Saturdays and 9pm on Sundays. Per the *STA Moving Forward* plan, the route will be extended to the end of line Saturday nights and all day Sunday/Holidays. More than 9,700 people within ¼ mile of this route have regular bus service on weekdays but do not have

adequate weekend service. On Saturday nights and all day Sunday/Holidays, bus service is currently provided via a one-way loop that also covers a portion of Route 26 and service does not extend past Francis Ave. The one-way loop is subject to discontinuation.

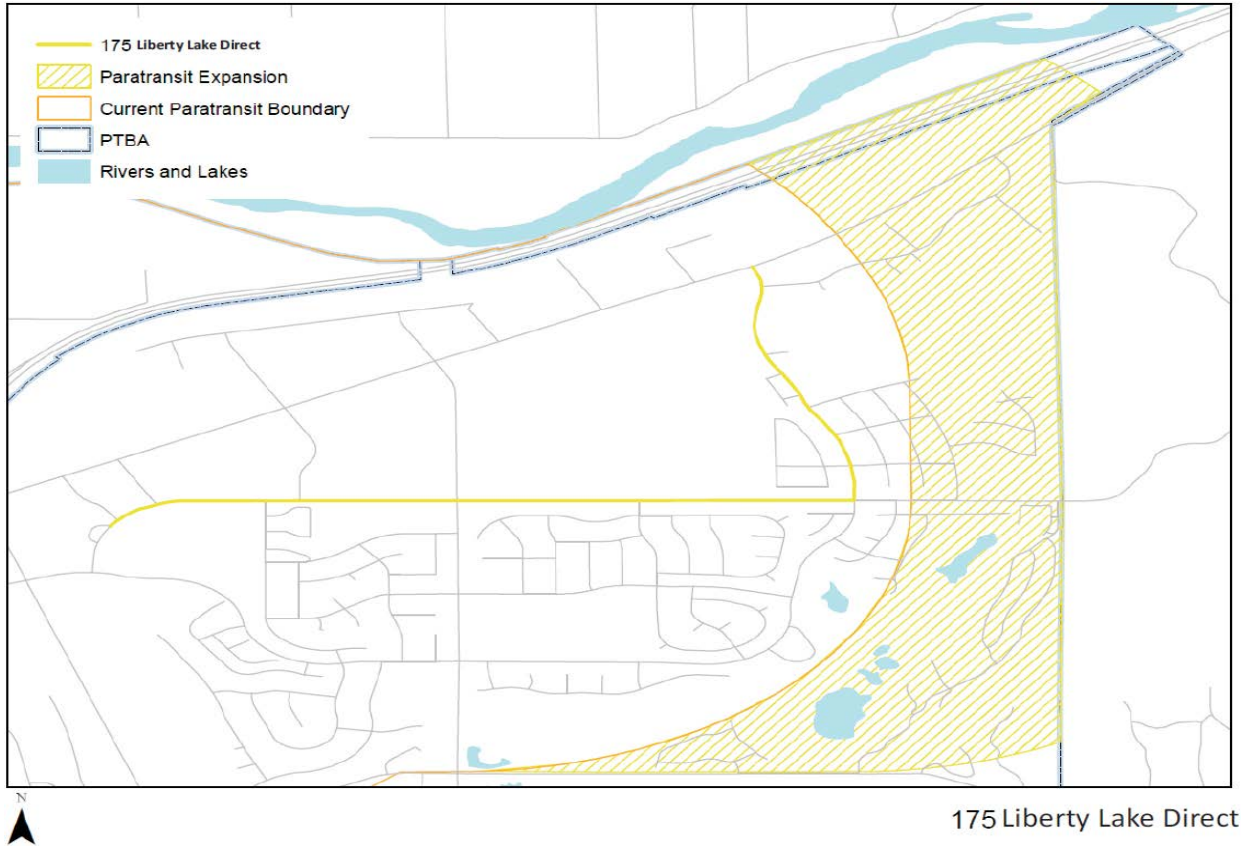
Route 174 Liberty Lake Express – More Weekday Service

The current routing is part of a designated future HPT corridor. The *STA Moving Forward* Plan phases in the improvements along the corridor which includes service on weeknights and weekends. The first phase is more weekday mid-day trips in order to fill the current two hour gaps in service.

Along with more weekday mid-day trips on Route 174, a new route would be introduced that would partially reinstate direct, non-stop service between Liberty Lake and Spokane during peak hours. This is listed as an *STA Moving Forward* project; however, it is not scheduled for full implementation until 2023. Three inbound trips would be offered in the AM peak from Liberty Lake and three outbound trips would be offered in the PM peak from Downtown Spokane to return to Liberty Lake. Currently Route 174 exits I-90 in order to serve Mirabeau Park & Ride and this new direct service would stay on I-90 between Downtown Spokane and Liberty Lake. The new route is proposed to serve new areas in Liberty Lake east of current service on Molter Road reaching the new Hawkstone development east of Country Vista Boulevard and Appleway Avenue. The new route would still serve the Liberty Lake Park & Ride. The current concept for service within Liberty Lake is depicted below.



It should be noted that the new route would expand the Paratransit boundary which would increase the number of households eligible for Paratransit service in Liberty Lake. The expansion of the Paratransit boundary is depicted below.



Modify/Add service

The TDP lists proposed plans for service revisions in North Spokane in order to address several operational issues. Per the TDP, Routes 25, 26, and 28 are all subject to revisions as follows:

Route 25 Division – explore alternative end of line locations in conjunction with changes with changes to Routes 26 and 28

Route 26 Lidgerwood – route may be restructured depending on the final Route 25 and/or Route 28 end of line locations or significantly modified to eliminate turning movements that negatively influence travel time and impact reliability.

Route 28 Nevada – reconfigure end of line to find a more suitable layover location as the current location does not provide a restroom for coach operators on weeknights and weekends.

Furthermore, 30 extra minutes of cycle time was added to Route 26 in September 2015 on weekdays (one extra bus in operation) in order to improve reliability, provide more coach operator recovery time, and provide more running time in both directions. This has resulted in excessive unproductive layovers and was deemed a short-term fix to Route 26 reliability issues. The goal is for the route to return to a more appropriate 90 minute cycle.

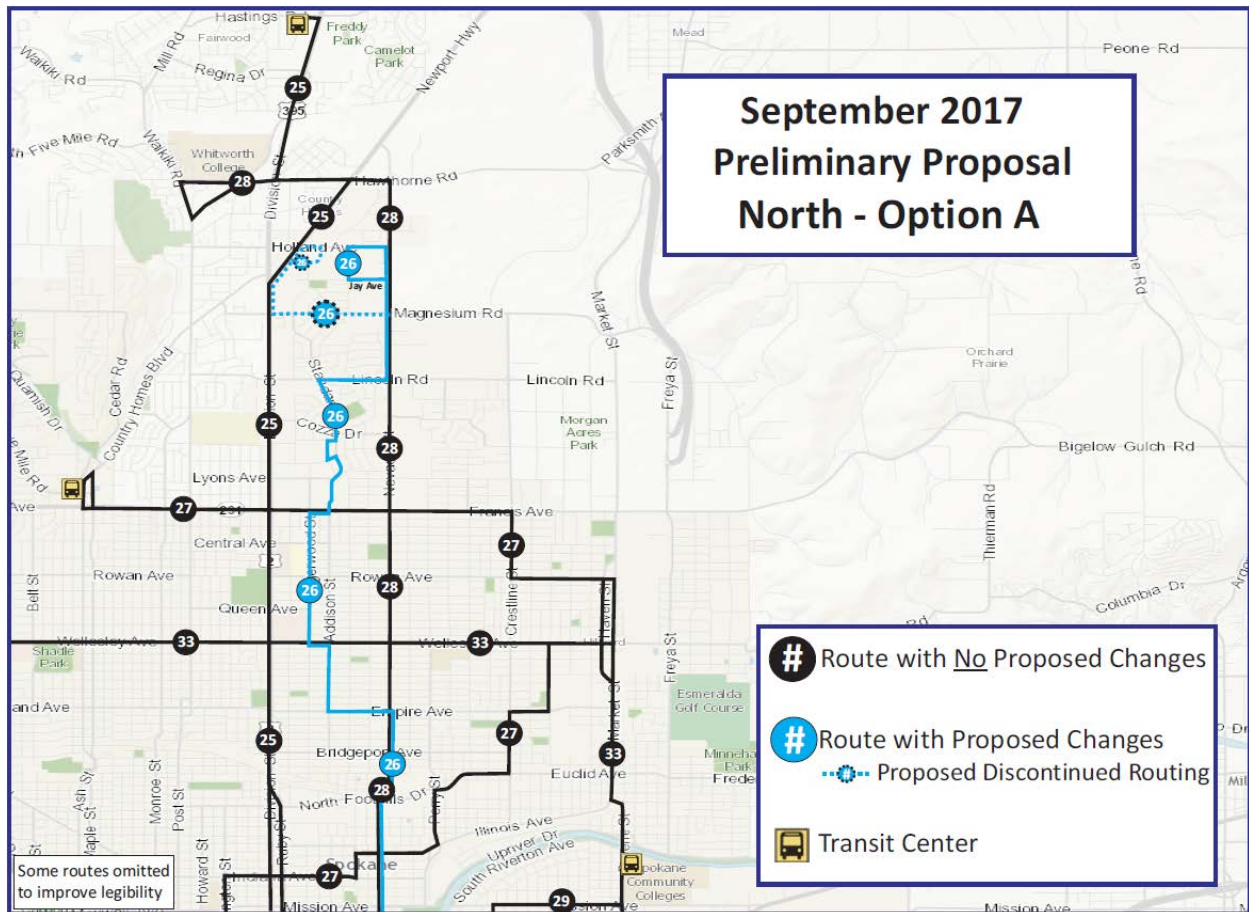
There are multiple options for accomplishing the TDP objectives listed above while also serving other transportation needs in the area. STA is beginning the public input process with two options of service for North Spokane. It should be noted that both options include extending Route 28 to the end of line Saturday nights and all day Sunday/Holidays per the *STA Moving Forward* plan.

North Proposal – Option A

Option A attempts to straighten out the last segment of Route 26 in order to improve reliability and improve productivity. In this option, no routing changes occur to Routes 25 or 28. Route 26 would be modified to end in the vicinity of Dakota Street and Jay Avenue between Walmart Supercenter and WinCo Foods. The exact layover location has not been determined. Currently, a total of five left turns at traffic lights are performed in the last segment and this option would reduce that to one left turn. In order to improve reliability, the cycle time was increased to 120 minutes (from 90 minutes) with one extra bus in operation starting with the September 2015 service change. This created 40 minute unproductive weekday layovers at the end of line but was a necessary and temporary service revision in order to improve reliability until a more permanent fix was developed. Furthermore, loss of service would occur on Magnesium Road between Division Street (Route 25) and Nevada Street (Route 28). This amounts to a loss of five

bus stops in both directions with an average of 48 daily weekday inbound boardings and one outbound boarding.

Although Route 28 would not experience any routing changes in this option, a capital investment would be necessary in order to construct a restroom at the end of line. Currently, coach operators can only access a restroom on weekdays during Whitworth University business hours.



North Proposal – Option B

Option B proposes the most change to North Spokane bus service impacting three routes. This option introduces a new route that would bring back bus service to some areas that was eliminated during the Great Recession while also introducing service to new areas of North Spokane. However, in this option the 15 minute frequency along Hamilton and Nevada Streets to Empire Avenue provided by Routes 26 and 28 would be subject to elimination. This option would provide transit access to 2,381 more people and connect people to 604 more jobs than current service. A route by route description of the changes is as follows:

Route 25 – In addition to the *STA Moving Forward* improvement of improving downtown departure reliability, the route would be modified to end in the vicinity of Hawthorne Road and Newport Highway instead of Hastings Park & Ride (see Route 28 below). This would improve reliability as the route currently experiences delays in route segment along and intersecting with Hawthorne Road. On weekends, the route could operate with a 90 minute cycle instead of 105-120 minutes thereby improving productivity and providing some cost savings. The route is proposed to turn around via Hawthorne Road, Nevada Street and Newport Highway; however, the exact layover location is yet to be determined. The loss of Hastings Park & Ride service amounts to an average of 156 daily weekday boardings.

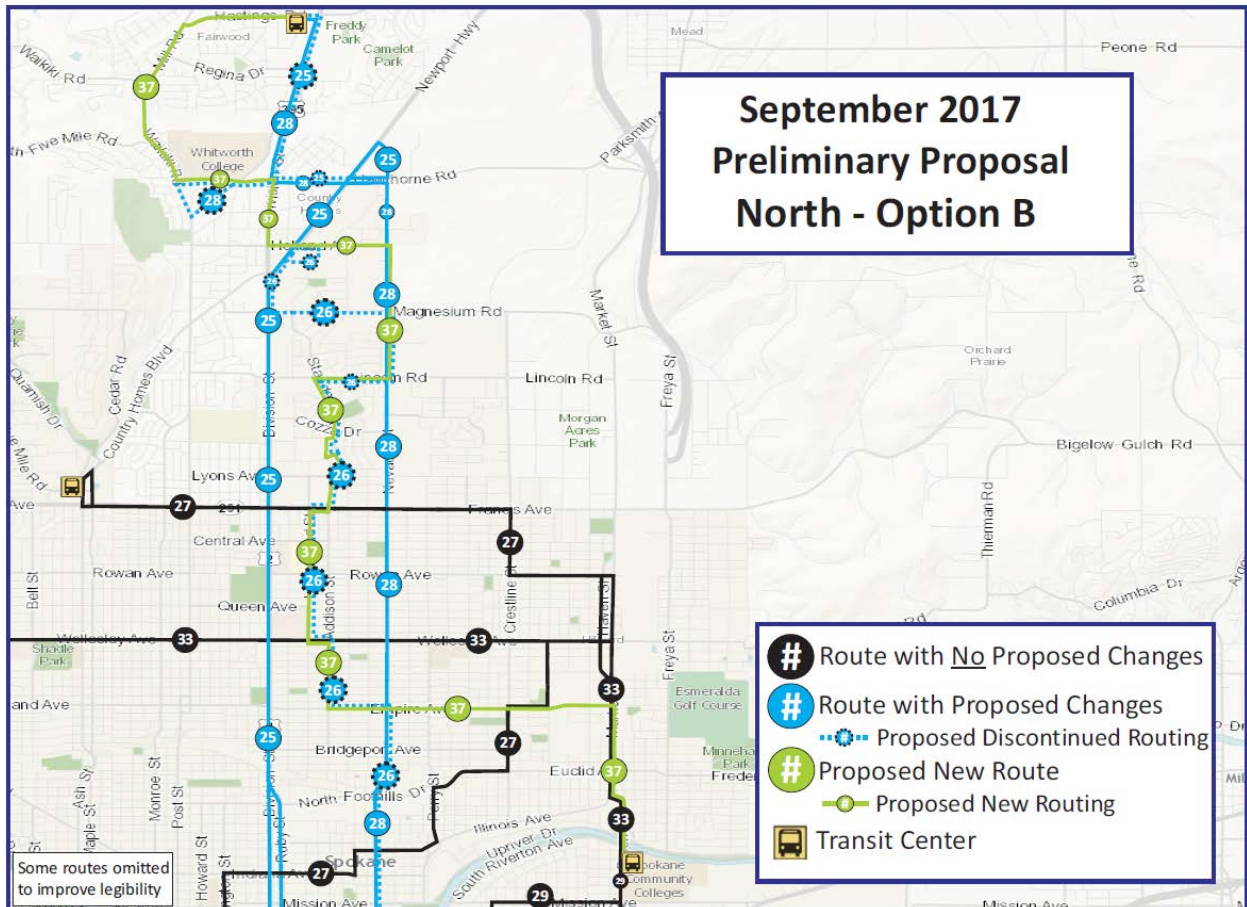
Route 26 – This route would be discontinued and replaced with new Route 37 that would operate along most of the current routing. A loss of service would occur on Magnesium Road like in Option A.

Route 28 – In addition to the *STA Moving Forward* improvement of extending the route to the end of line Saturday nights and all day Sunday/Holidays, the route would be modified to end at Hastings Park & Ride where there is a restroom for use by coach operators. A new restroom would not need to be constructed as in Option A thereby providing capital cost savings. The route would still operate with 30 minute frequency which means a reduction along Hamilton and Nevada Streets to Empire Avenue from the combined 15 minute frequency between Routes 26 and 28. Service at Whitworth University would be replaced with Route 37 and students would be required to transfer to Route 25 in order to travel downtown (an average of 17 daily weekday boardings).

Route 29 – Although Route 29 would not experience any routing changes in this option, the schedule would need to change in order the offset with Route 28 to keep the current 15 minute frequency of service through the U-District. The route would most likely be interlined with the new Route 37 at SCC.

Route 37 (NEW) – This new route would have terminals at SCC and Hastings Park & Ride. This route would partially restore service eliminated in the 2011 service reductions along Empire/Garland Avenue between Addison and Market Streets (old Route 31). The route would serve most of the existing Route 26 destinations along the current routing between Empire Avenue and Lincoln Road (Northtown Mall, Holy Family Hospital, and Lilac Plaza). The route would introduce new service on Division Street between Hawthorne Road and Holland Avenue while also providing new local seven day-a-week service north of Whitworth University along Waikiki, Mill, and Hastings Roads which would serve Mead High School. This area currently only has weekday peak service on Route 124 with limited bus stop access.

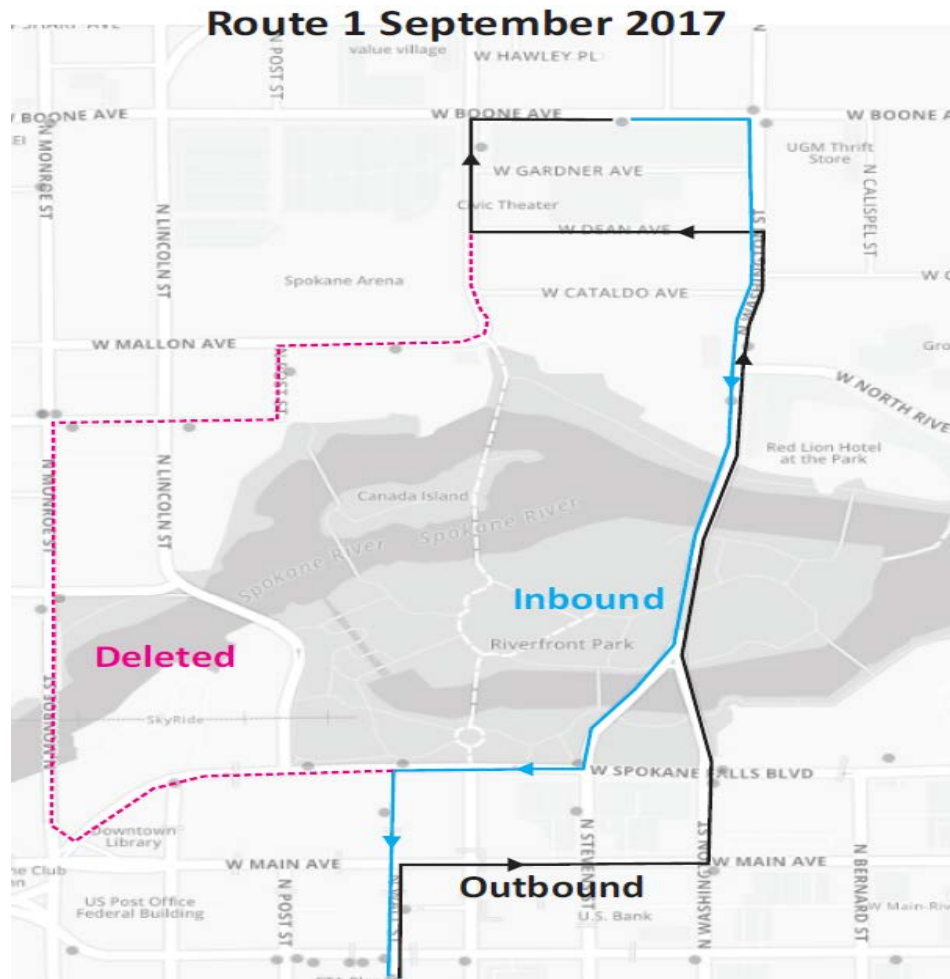
Option B also includes improving Sunday/Holiday frequency to 30 minutes on Wellesley on Route 33. This would match the May 2017 frequency improvement on Saturdays and improve connection wait times for this important crosstown route.



Modify existing routes to improve service effectiveness

Route 1 Arena Shuttle

While not specifically listed in *STA Moving Forward* or the TDP, STA is considering modifying the Route 1 routing in order to provide a faster return trip from Downtown Spokane to the Arena Lot and to eliminate the one-way loop routing. This change is also meant to increase productivity as the route has been underperforming for several years even though it operates with 10 minute frequency during weekday peak periods. The route has been on the Annual Route Report's out of compliance list for several consecutive years consistently not meeting the Ridership and Energy standards. It should be noted that the route will be on this "detour" routing in early 2017 when a major City of Spokane project closes a portion of Spokane Falls Boulevard; therefore, passengers will be acclimated with the proposed September routing which would convert the detour routing to permanent routing.



Route 25 Division – Improve Weekday Reliability

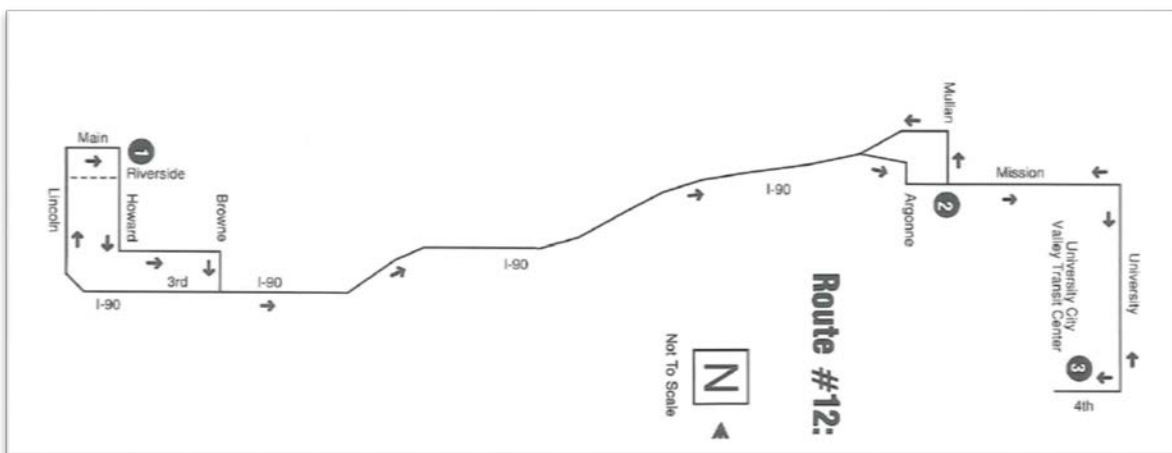
This *STA Moving Forward* enhancement would improve outbound departure reliability by introducing a layover location in Downtown Spokane other than the Plaza. Inbound arriving buses will be able to drop off passengers at the Plaza and then travel out of service to the layover location which would improve transit operations by significantly reducing early arriving bus dwell time in front of Spokane Regional Business Center (SRBC) on Riverside Avenue and Post Street.

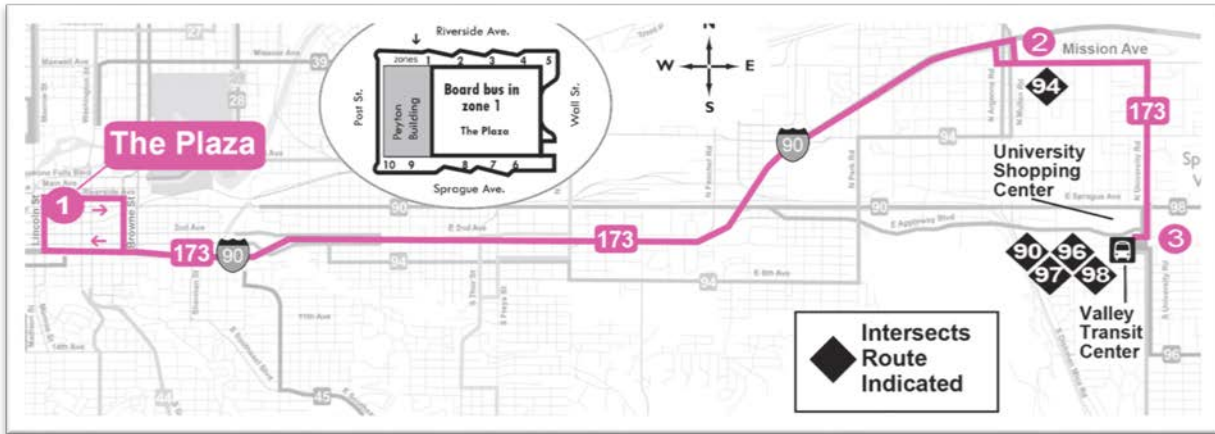
Route 173 VTC Express

While not specifically listed in *STA Moving Forward* or the TDP, STA is considering different ways to improve service effectiveness and efficiency on Route 173 Valley Transit Center (VTC) Express, which provides weekday service between the Valley Transit Center and downtown Spokane. *Connect Spokane* and *STA Moving Forward* call for ongoing review and optimization of bus service to maximize the community benefit and customer utilization. Furthermore, the route has not met the Ridership standard for several consecutive years and is currently on the Annual Route Report’s out of compliance list. This section provides historic context to this proposal as well as an analysis of ridership and demographic implications of the changes.

Historic Background

Route 173 VTC Express has experienced very little routing change since its antecedent Route 12 University City Express created over 30 years ago. Routing modifications have been limited to the method for accessing downtown Spokane. Below is a map from 1990 displaying the Route 12 University Express compared to the present day 173 VTC Express. A map of the #73 VTC Express which existed from 1998 to 2011 would match almost exactly, except for changes in the path to and from the Plaza.





While documentation on the rationale of the original route pattern is not readily available, one can assume that at the time, travel times using the Argonne/I-90 interchange were more reliable and faster than the Sprague/I-90 interchange. The generous lanes and coordinated traffic signals along Sprague Avenue and Appleway Boulevard were completed in late 2000 near the time major improvements were made to the Sprague/I-90 interchange by WSDOT. Since that time, the quickest travel time between downtown Spokane and the Valley Transit Center are decidedly achieved by using the Sprague Avenue/Appleway Boulevard couplet to I-90. Again, no documentation exists as to why the route did not reflect those improvements, but it is common that the impacts to existing riders receive more attention than the prospective benefits to existing and future riders. In the case of the stops along Mission Avenue and University Street, Route 173 provides geographic coverage, possibly an unintended side benefit (or obligation) of the historic route pattern. Changes to the pattern were discussed in 2010 in connection with the major service reductions of 2011. However, these changes were not presented to the public at the time as they neither reduced operating costs nor simplified the magnitude of change to which the board had directed staff to present for public review. Introducing the discussion of route modifications in Spokane Valley broaches the opportunity to re-address this issue.

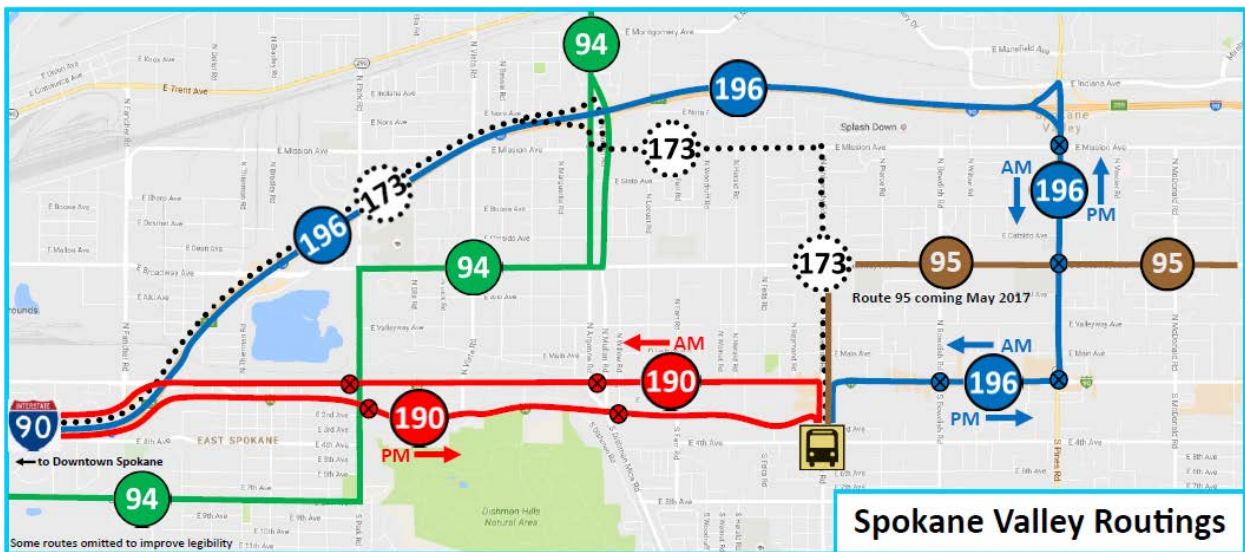
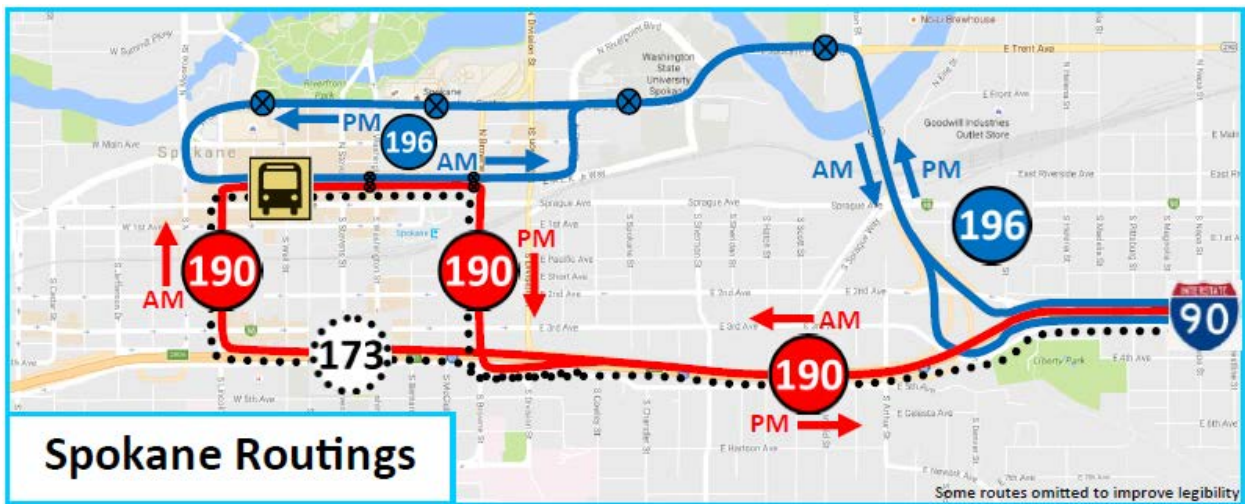
Policy Considerations

Fixed Route Policy 1.3 addresses the service levels of commuter peak service: “This is a service that is focused on premium/express service to a major employment or education center on weekdays at peak periods for the destination. **Such routes are typically one-way in each peak.** It may be anchored by a park and ride facility or have a collection segment through residential areas before traveling limited stop to the employment/education center.” Note the added emphasis of such routes typically being oriented in one way in each peak. This policy allows using buses in a reverse peak

direction for either quicker deadheading turnaround times (this is helpful if doing so will reduce transit coach requirements) or for serving travel markets and commute flows that are in the opposite direction.

Proposed Revisions

To continue the public input and discussion from the May 2017 Preliminary Proposal, STA is proposing to introduce two commuter peak routes in the stead of the current 173 VTC Express: the first (Route 190) oriented toward the job market of downtown and the connectivity to the Plaza (which provides good connections to other destinations such as the medical district and Spokane Falls Community College), and a secondary, or subordinate peak route (Route 196) that serves jobs within walking distance of Pines Road and Sprague. This creates a pathway back to the Valley Transit Center that features far more jobs than the current path.



As of 2014, there were over 4,500 jobs within ¼ mile of the the segment of Pines and Sprague that could be served by the 196. This compares to the approximately 2,000 jobs along the existing path of the 173 from Argonne Road at I-90, along Mission Avenue then to University Road to the Valley Transit Center. In both cases only a fraction of the employees lives within the City of Spokane; however, the number of employees commuting from the 99205, 99207 and 92208 zip codes (all zip codes with good transit service that connects at the Plaza) is nearly 100% greater in the case of Pines Road routing.

Proposed changes that reduce customer travel time from the Park and Ride to the Plaza will reduce travel time for the most number of riders. This will have the effect of increase service effectiveness, in terms of numbers of passengers per hour of service, both because of greater schedule efficiency and because it will become more attractive to use for more people. Similarly, creating new, direct transit service for denser employment areas should support added ridership. This change would impact a small segment of the existing ridership who enjoy the shortest travel times to Spokane from Spokane Valley. These include people who live or work near Argonne Road and Mission. On a daily basis, this affects 150, or approximately 1/3 of all riders on the 173. It is noteworthy that a third of those daily riders board or alight at Mission Avenue and Mullan Road, which is also served by Route 94 East Central/Millwood bus. It should be noted that new Route 95 is scheduled to begin service along University Road and Broadway Avenue from the Valley Transit Center on May 21, 2017 which would help minimize the negative impacts of the proposed Route 173 changes.

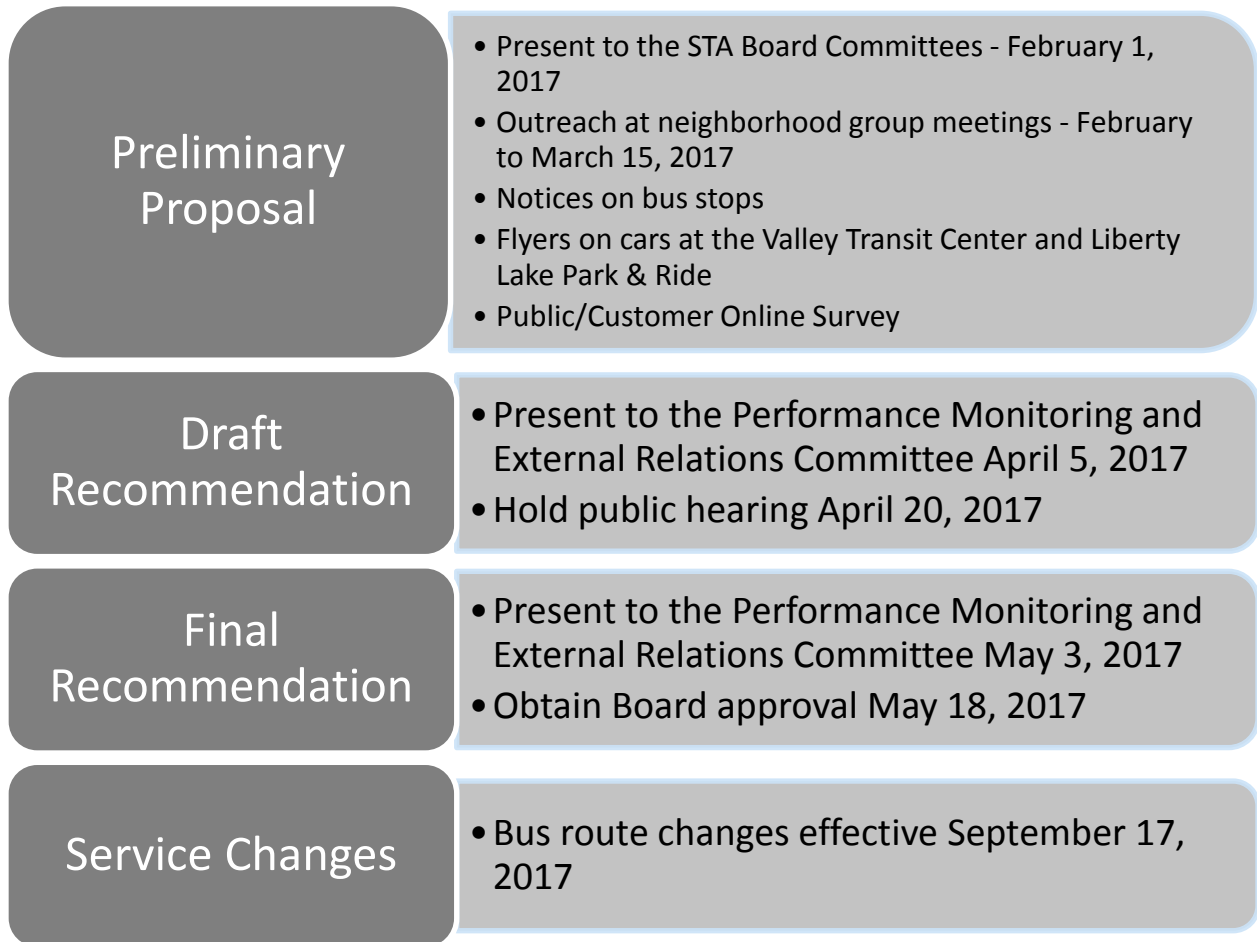
Public Process and Implementation Timeline

Although these concepts listed in this Preliminary Proposal have been outlined in the *STA Moving Forward* plan and TDP, the ideas for the September 2017 service change will be brought forward through the public process to receive public input before service can begin. The changes are considered moderate (1.0% up to 5.0% growth or reduction in revenue hours of service in any calendar year). The Communications and Public Input section of STA's Comprehensive Plan mandates that a public hearing take place and requires board approval.

While significant analysis and evaluation has taken place to prepare this Preliminary Proposal, public consideration and feedback is needed to refine the proposal. Key objectives of sharing the Preliminary Proposal with customers and the general public are as follows:

- Ensure broad input and education to achieve an understanding of concerns and constraints.
- Help our customers understand how the proposed service revisions could affect their travel choices.
- Obtain public feedback on every aspect of the proposal in order to develop a Draft Recommendation for a formal public hearing and consideration process to take place in April 2017 prior to a final decision by the Board on May 18, 2017.

The following chart shows how this phase fits into the decision-making and implementation process. A concise public outreach plan is appropriate due to the fact that the changes represent more trips throughout the service area and select routes would be subject to modifications or deletions.



Complete List of Proposed Changes

This section provides a complete list of the proposed changes to bus routes in the system. The chart below summarizes the proposed changes for each route. It is important to note that scheduling changes will likely occur to other routes not listed below.

Route	Proposed Changes	Rationale
1 Plaza/Arena Shuttle	Eliminate outbound one-way loop pattern from the Plaza via Wall St, Monroe St, Broadway Ave, Post St, Mallon Ave, and Howard St to the Arena lot in favor of two-way service on Washington St between the Plaza and Arena lot.	Provide passengers with a more direct trip back to the Arena lot from Downtown Spokane; Respond to long-term detour impacts; improve productivity.
25 Division	Explore alternative end of line locations in conjunction with changes to Routes 26 and 28; Improve weekday outbound departure reliability by adding a downtown layover location other than the Plaza.	End of line alternatives listed as an exploratory service revision in the TDP's Service Implementation Plan; Improving downtown departure reliability is an enhancement listed as an <i>STA Moving Forward</i> project.
26 Lidgerwood	Route may be restructured depending on the final Route 25 and/or Route 28 end of line locations or significantly modified to eliminate turning movements that negatively influence travel time and impact reliability. In Option B, the route would be discontinued and replaced with a new route.	Restructuring of route listed as an exploratory service revision in the TDP's Service Implementation Plan.

Route	Proposed Changes	Rationale
28 Nevada	Extend route to end of line Saturday nights with later service; Extend route to end of line all day Sunday/Holidays; Discontinue Nevada/Lidgerwood loop Saturday nights and all day Sunday/Holidays (depending on final changes to Route 26); Explore alternative end of line locations in conjunction with changes to Routes 25 and 26.	Weekend enhancements listed as <i>STA Moving Forward</i> projects; End of line alternatives listed as an exploratory service revision in the TDP's Service Implementation Plan.
29 SCC	Route may experience schedule and interline changes based on final option for North Spokane service.	If North Spokane Option B moves forward, the schedule for Route 29 would be offset 15 minutes with Route 28 in order to maintain 15 minute frequency to U-District and route may be interlined with new Route 37 at SCC.
33 Wellesley	Improve Sunday/Holiday frequency to 30 minutes (new trips may have terminals at Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute and SCC)	Improvement offered in conjunction with Option B (if it is the preferred choice for service in North Spokane); Route serves as an important crosstown connection for customers and the current frequency is inadequate to make many connections.
<u>NEW North Route</u>	Introduce new route (Route 37 in this report) with terminals at Hastings Park & Ride and SCC that would serve much of the current Route 26 routing.	Part of North Spokane Option B; maintain service for most of current Route 26 routing while also offering new connections, providing service to new areas, and restoring a portion of service eliminated during the Great Recession.
173 VTC Express	Modify route to improve speed and reliability. Route would be discontinued and modified into two new express Routes 190 and 196.	Improve speed and reliability; Connect more people to more jobs; Concept was introduced within the May 2017 Preliminary Proposal.

Route	Proposed Changes	Rationale
174 Liberty Lake Express	Add late-morning and mid-afternoon trips on weekdays in order to provide consistent frequency during off-peak hours.	Enhancement listed as <i>STA Moving Forward</i> project.
<u>NEW Liberty Lake Direct Route</u>	Partially reinstate direct, non-stop service between Liberty Lake and Spokane during peak hours. Route would operate with three AM peak inbound trips from Liberty Lake and three PM peak outbound trips from Downtown Spokane and serve new areas in east Liberty Lake.	Incrementally phase in an enhancement listed as an <i>STA Moving Forward</i> project not scheduled for full implementation until 2023; expand paratransit coverage in Liberty Lake.