



December 2024

January 2025 Service Change



Above: STA Plaza at night

The next service change will take effect on Sunday, January 19, 2025. Riders are encouraged to review the changes for their route(s) and plan accordingly. Notable updates include:

- **City Line Peak Period Adjustment:** Morning peak service will now be between 7 am - 8:15 am. Afternoon peak service will run between 3 pm - 4:30 pm. Peak service will remain at seven-and-a-half minutes with midday frequency at 10 minutes between 8:15 am and 3 pm. Following the afternoon peak, City Line will return to 10-minute frequency until 6:42 pm departing from SCC and 7:09 pm from Browne's Addition, when 15-minute service resumes.
- **Fairchild Air Force Base Routing Change:** Following the completion of construction at the main gate, Route 61 will no longer be on detour from construction along with some minor adjustments to regular routing on the base.
- **Mirabeau Transit Center Opening:** Mirabeau Transit Center is set to begin in-service operations in early March. This new hub will enhance connectivity for riders in the Spokane Valley area and provide additional rider amenities. Schedules will reflect new bus bay assignments, with routes continuing construction detours until March.

- **Better Connections at West Plains Transit Center:** Several route and schedule adjustments at the West Plains Transit Center will improve connections at select times of day.

Riders can find more details on the January Service Change at spokanetransit.com/change.

STA Board Adopts *Connect 2035*



The STA Board of Directors has officially adopted *Connect 2035*, the agency's next 10-year strategic plan aimed at enhancing transit services and infrastructure throughout the region. The plan outlines several transformative projects and initiatives designed to meet the needs of a growing region while embracing innovation and sustainability.

"*Connect 2035* represents STA's vision to connect everyone to opportunity," said Karl Otterstrom, STA's Chief Planning & Development Officer. "We're not only building on the successes of our previous strategic plan, *STA Moving Forward*, but also ensuring our transit system evolves to meet the changing needs of our community."

Among the plan's major core initiatives is the Division Street Bus Rapid Transit project, which targets one of STA's highest ridership corridors. This investment is expected to improve service efficiency and support Transit-Oriented Development along the corridor.

Another key feature is STA's green energy campus, a project to address the agency's growth and transition to zero-emission vehicles over the next 35 years. Current charging infrastructure is maxed out, and the new master facilities plan will play a pivotal role in addressing physical and facility requirements.

Other initiatives include exploring mobility-on-demand services for areas without regular bus service, piloting a low income-based reduced fare program, and enhancing service in Spokane Valley through route optimization.

STA is also maintaining its focus on High Performance Transit (HPT) routes, with plans to improve Route 33 Wellesley and for additional HPT routes, such as Route 61 to Airway Heights, and improvements along Sprague and Appleway, east of the Valley Transit Center.

The Board will meet in the first quarter of 2025 to develop the sequencing of the specific projects and initiatives over the next decade.

To stay up to date on the latest developments 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.

E. Susan Meyer Retires From STA



Above: E. Susan Meyer receiving a crystal vase for her retirement

After over 19 years of serving the region as STA's CEO, E. Susan Meyer is retiring at the end of the year. In total, Meyer's career spanned 36 years as a business leader in the Pacific Inland Northwest.

Inspired by her mother's hardworking example, Meyer pursued and earned her MBA from Eastern Washington University (EWU) in 1981. When she started working in business, Meyer noted that there were only four women CEOs in the entire state of Washington. Her career took her from EWU as director of external relations, to Momentum where she served as executive director, then to Pacific Gas and Electric, and then as vice president of human resources and corporate communications at Telect.

When she transitioned to the public sector in 2005 as STA's new CEO, Meyer approached her work with openness yet also the good judgment and finesse that she had acquired from her previous business experiences.

"It has been a profound privilege to be the chief executive officer at Spokane Transit," Meyer said. "Nineteen years ago, I didn't expect my career would take me to the public sector or to transit, but I am grateful that it did. I found the perfect place to serve the community I love alongside people who are passionate about our mission."

During her tenure, Meyer has collaborated with over 60 elected officials from Spokane County and the cities of Spokane, Spokane Valley, Cheney, Liberty Lake, Airway Heights, Medical Lake, and Millwood, who have served on the STA Board.

Over her nearly two-decade career at STA, Meyer has overseen the initiatives and projects that have shaped the STA system into what it is today. Highlights include the development of several transit centers, including the West Plains Transit Center and the SCC Transit Center, the construction of the Boone Northwest Garage, achieving 25% electrification for the Fixed Route fleet, and the launch of the region's first Bus Rapid Transit line, City Line.

Meyer has been recognized for her focus on financial stewardship and executing a ten-year strategic plan, including launching the region's first Bus Rapid Transit route, City Line, without incurring debt. City Line also has the distinction of being the first five-door, all-electric BRT route in the US. Meyer successfully navigated two sales tax measures to support and enhance public transit in the Spokane region, and she provided key assistance for the passage of the Move Ahead Washington transportation package. Under Meyer's tenure, the STA team secured a historic \$53.4 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration and a \$15 million grant from Washington State for the City Line and its zero-emission buses.

"Everywhere I go, I hear about how Susan has left her mark," commented City of Spokane Valley Mayor Pam Haley. "Even my city manager has spoken highly of her, how she handles meetings, how she communicates, and how she approaches challenges. Under Meyer's leadership, STA has become an example of efficient and effective local government."

Meyer also had to face an issue few CEOs have ever had to deal with: a global pandemic. COVID-19 was not only a major health risk for employees and riders, but it also severely crippled transit ridership at both STA and transit agencies across the country. Despite this, Meyer's steadfast leadership enabled STA to serve the region

effectively while prioritizing the safety of employees and riders. Once the effects of COVID-19 started to taper off, STA was one of the first agencies in the country to recover its ridership to pre-pandemic levels.

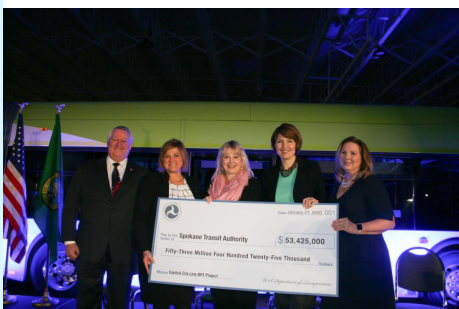
“Susan’s service has extended beyond county lines and has reached across the state, the Pacific Northwest, and the country,” remarked Justin Leighton, Executive Director of the Washington State Transit Association.

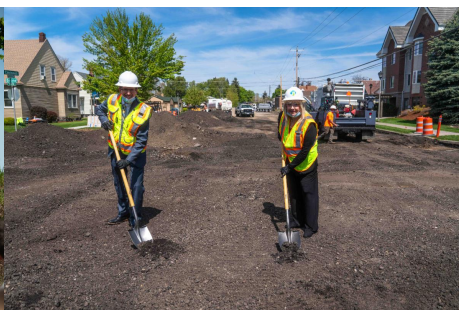
“Susan’s leadership spanning nearly 20 years has made STA what it is today. An innovative, zero-debt, financially healthy, and all around rock-solid public transit agency,” said Spokane County Commissioner and STA Board Chair, Al French. “Her legacy and community impact will inspire continued agency growth and success.”

Throughout her career at STA, Meyer has laid the foundation for the agency to prosper and continue to be a service that the region can depend on. As she enters retirement, everyone at STA wishes her the best, and the community will never forget the contributions she has made to better public transit.

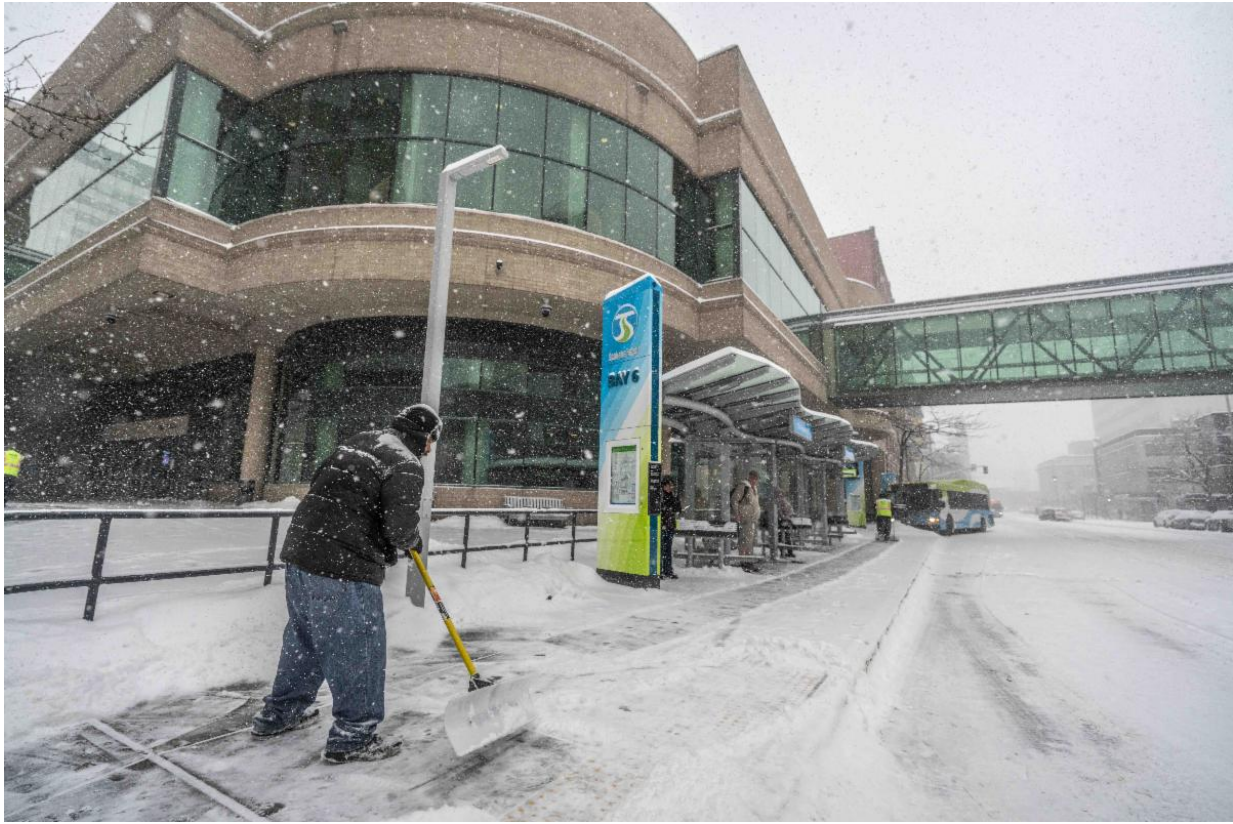


Above: City of Spokane Valley Mayor Pam Haley presents a crystal vase to Meyer for her retirement





Snow Clearing at STA Bus Stops



Above: Snow being cleared in front of STA Plaza in downtown Spokane

Many people rely on STA for their transportation needs, whether that is commuting to work or school, getting groceries, or going out for entertainment and leisure. During the winter months, keeping bus stops clear of snow becomes a priority.

At STA's larger transit facilities, such as the downtown Plaza, a transit center, or park and rides, STA's Facilities & Grounds crew is deployed to clear snow and apply de-icer proactively as needed.

STA crew clears snow from bus stops with shelters between the shelter to the sign pole.

For bus stops that have only a pole and bus flag, snow clearing follows local regulations for sidewalk maintenance, where codes typically assign responsibility for routine maintenance, including snow clearing, to the adjacent property owner.

STA understands that contacting property owners may be difficult, and our staff is happy to assist in ensuring that stops are cleared and maintained during the winter months and to ease the burden of travel for its riders as much as possible.

If there is a stop that needs attention, please reach out to STA Associate Transit Planner Drew Redman at dredman@spokanetransit.com or (509) 343-1665.



New Holiday Service Hours



Above: The new holiday service hours in a printed bus schedule

STA is updating its holiday service hours beginning in 2025 to better accommodate ridership demand and working schedules on specific holidays.

“We know many of our riders, particularly those employed in health care and retail, work these holidays and were negatively impacted by the Sunday service hours,” said Carly Cortright, STA Chief Communications & Customer Service Officer.

STA consolidated ridership numbers for holidays from previous years as well as rider feedback requesting improved service on specific holidays. Previously Sunday service hours were offered on holidays. Beginning in 2025, holidays that had ridership levels equivalent to or close to typical Saturday levels will now have Saturday service to make travel easier. Sunday service will continue to be offered on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s since these holidays historically have had low ridership.

STA will operate on **Saturday service** on the following holidays in 2025:

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January 20)
- Memorial Day (May 26)
- Juneteenth (June 19)
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day (September 1)

And the following holidays will operate on **Sunday service** in 2025:

- Thanksgiving Day (November 27)
- Christmas Day (December 25)
- New Year’s Day (January 1, 2026)

This information may be found in a table in STA’s latest printed route schedules. It is also available online at spokanetransit.com/holiday.

Santa Visits STA for Photos



Above: A family has their photo taken with Santa at STA Plaza

Santa made his annual visit, but this year he and his helpers brought a merry surprise when they arrived at STA Plaza. On Saturday, December 14, the red carpet was rolled out for families and children to meet Santa, share their holiday wishes, and pose for free Polaroid photos.

The festive event was a great success, and approximately 300 people showed up. Families expressed their gratitude for the opportunity, and some even half-jokingly pointed out that STA saved them \$40 to \$60 on Santa photos that they could then spend on other Christmas shopping!

“The photos with Santa at STA Plaza were a wonderful way to celebrate the season, and we’re proud to support our community with a no-cost option for families to enjoy holiday cheer,” said Carly Cortright, Chief Communications & Customer Service Officer.

Thank you to all the families who stopped by to share smiles and make the day merry and bright.



Santa at STA Video



Above: Click the thumbnail to watch a video of Santa's yearly visit to STA



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