

# Transportation

The Transportation workshop was held on January 30 from 2-4pm at the Trailhead Golf Course in Liberty Lake, WA. In addition to the staff and consultants on the project team, there were 4 attendees from partner organizations that work with, are affected by, and/or have the ability to influence policy that impacts transportation in Liberty Lake.

## Agenda

- Introductions & Workshop Goals
- Workshop and Climate Element introduction
- Emissions inventory results & forecast
- Goals and policies to reduce transportation emissions
  - Reduce VMT
    - Land Use (denser housing, mixed zoning)
    - Active Transit (paths, safer streets, bike infrastructure)
    - Public transit
  - Reduce Emissions
    - EVs (public fleet conversion and charging)
    - Alternative Fuels (renewable diesel)

## Attendees

Name	Organization
Bryce Eschenbacher	Avista
Ben Turner	City of Liberty Lake
Brian Jennings	Spokane Transit Authority
Greg Figg	Washington State Department of Transportation

## Discussion summary

### Land use – increased density and mixed use

Existing or ongoing efforts that support increased density and mixed-use development:

- Examples of successful mixed-use developments in Liberty Lake include the River District and Orchard Park.
- Most of the remaining developable land in Liberty Lake is designated for mixed-use.

Opportunities:

- Removing parking minimums could support increased density.
- Introducing small-scale commercial spaces within residential zones (e.g. coffee shops, salons) could be a strategy for the Planning Commission.

#### Barriers:

- Lack of affordable housing for service workers and lower-income residents means that many people commute into Liberty Lake for work.
- Negative public perception around/resistance to more multi-family housing in Liberty Lake.
- For small-scale commercial within residential zones, certain Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) restrict rezoning residential areas to include small businesses (coffee shops, salons, etc.). There are also concerns about increased traffic and parking issues if a business becomes too popular.
- 60% of roads in Liberty Lake are privately owned. This complicates planning.

### Active transportation

#### Existing or ongoing efforts that support active transportation:

- High community value placed on active transportation.
- There is an existing Bike/Ped Connectivity Committee.
- Design changes have been made to improve bike infrastructure (e.g., protected bike lanes).
- There are planned updates to make Liberty Lake Road more bike/pedestrian friendly.

#### Opportunities:

- Popularity of roundabouts and flashing beacons for pedestrian safety.
- Increasing use of e-bikes and e-scooters suggests potential for dedicated infrastructure.
- Possible expansion of bike rack requirements to include e-bike/e-scooter charging.

#### Barriers:

- Conflicts between golf carts, bikes, and pedestrians.
- Some safety concerns with roundabouts, particularly for cyclists.
- Policies restricting e-bikes and e-scooters from sidewalks, arterials, and collectors.
- Seasonality/weather strongly influences the use of active transportation between summer and winter.
- Balancing the benefits of trees with the infrastructure impacts and maintenance needs of trees (e.g., trees provide shade, but roots also damage sidewalks).

### Public transit

#### Existing or ongoing efforts that support public transit:

- Spokane Transit Authority (STA) is implementing a high-capacity transit line connecting Liberty Lake to the Spokane airport.
- The City recently adopted a Commute Trip Reduction Plan.
- Spokane Transit Authority offers free transit for kids.

#### Opportunities:

- Free transit for kids can help to foster a cultural shift toward public transit use as kids use it and educate their parents and families about the bus system.
- Expanding transit options into the NE corner of Liberty Lake (higher-density residential area) could help to increase access and ridership.
- Increased public engagement (e.g., surveys on bus stop locations) could improve ridership.
- Potential to include transit education in new developments, workplaces, and schools.
- “Free” transit passes could be offered through schools, workplaces, or rental agreements.
- Increasing service frequency to 15-minute intervals would increase reliability.

Barriers:

- Ridership is low, and offering a higher frequency of service (15-minute intervals) is crucial for increasing use. The current frequency is about every 30 minutes for most routes.
- Safety concerns persist, though STA has been proactive.
- Bus capacity exceeds ridership, making it difficult for STA to justify expansion.
- Pedestrian infrastructure around transit stops needs improvement.
- Negative public perception around transit, including concerns about the unhoused population.

## EVs – public fleet electrification

Existing or ongoing efforts that support public fleet electrification:

- STA already has around 40 battery-electric buses.

Opportunities:

- The city received \$100k in grant money from the state for Climate Element implementation planning. This money could be used to conduct a feasibility study for EV adoption in the city fleet.
- Avista offers financial support and consultation services for fleet electrification.
- Right-sizing the fleet (e.g., reducing large vehicle use for work tasks that don’t require a large vehicle).

Barriers:

- Concerns about EV viability for police and emergency services vehicles.
- Concerns about the costs of maintenance and battery replacement, as well as grid capacity.
- Limited knowledge and experience with EV fleets in local government.

## EVs – increasing access to EV charging

Existing or ongoing efforts that support increasing access to EV charging for the community:

- New multifamily developments are required to include EV charging.

- The River District includes a large bank of Tesla charging stations and Liberty Lake has a high number of chargers per capita compared to other cities.

#### Opportunities:

- State energy codes allow developers to meet requirements with EV charging and solar.
- Opportunity to encourage multifamily housing developments to expand EV charging access.
- Potential for EV car share programs (e.g., ZEV GO at Gonzaga) to increase exposure to EV technology.
- If the city were to offer property for public charging, that network could be built quicker.

#### Barriers:

- Retrofitting existing multifamily buildings for EV charging is expensive.
- Level 2 chargers may not be cost-effective for short-term public charging.
- Higher electricity costs for commercial charging make public charging less attractive than charging at home.
- Housing developments without driveways face challenges with EV access.

### Alternative fuels – renewable diesel (R99)

#### Existing or ongoing efforts that support alternative fuels:

- The Washington Clean Fuels Standard requires fuel suppliers to reduce the carbon intensity of transportation fuels. Lower-intensity fuels generate carbon credits that can be sold, which creates a financial incentive to produce and distribute cleaner fuels. This incentive is expected to lead to an increase in R99 in the state.

#### Opportunities:

- R99 is a drop-in fuel and can replace fossil diesel without requiring any additional or different equipment.
- Increasing education on renewable diesel (R99) could support alternative fuel adoption.

#### Barriers:

- Lack of awareness of and/or negative perception of alternative fuel options.
- In the short term, R99 is not readily available to purchase (but will be soon due to the Clean Fuels Standard).