E. Susan Meyer, CEO Spokane Transit Authority
Notes from SPTP Council meeting Sept 10, 2013

Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. I am the President of Washington State Transit Association (WSTA), and was a member of the Connecting WA Task Force in 2011. STA's motto is *How a Great City Moves*.

I have a vision for a time, hopefully long before 20 years from now, when the value of public transportation is widely judged for significantly growing its contribution to the efficient operation of transportation system; not by the myths and misinformation advanced by some whose agenda is to understate transit's value and undermine our credibility with voters.

I am formerly among those who espoused that the highest public good came from making the automobile the priority in all cases even at the expense of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit. Now I am a convert and evangelist to the often well-intentioned but misinformed.

I will continue to advocate for High Performance Transit (HPT) as the low cost/right size/premium transit service, even as I am pro-road, own two vehicles and believe the auto will continue to have a big market share into the future.

We have a largely mature roadway system desperately in need of maintenance and preservation. There are fewer miles being driven – declining since 2005 – two years before the recession began. The percentage of teens with drivers' licenses has declined and car ownership is likely on the other side of its peak, especially as Millenials join the workforce. Yet congestion significantly slows major segments of our local and state system for employees and freight.

It's time for a change in our policy discussions. Let's focus on moving more people and freight without more cars and create the transportation system of the future. Let's look at our existing infrastructure and delegate resources to maintaining and maximizing it. Let's define system performance goals for mobility, including what are acceptable levels of travel delay and how people without cars live their lives in terms people understand.

Then we will look at a corridor and ask, 'How do we meet current demand and ensure capacity for the future? How much transit service; bus, trains, vanpool; variable tolling, information technology, and added roadway capacity do we need so that we have a truly multi-modal system that moves Washington?'

That kind of transportation planning (which Secretary Peterson supports) should drive sustainable funding for investment in the most cost efficient and effective ways to move people and freight—the key to keeping Washington competitive. Only when the transportation system in Washington State is thought of as just that, a system, will transit be seen and valued widely as part of the solution.