

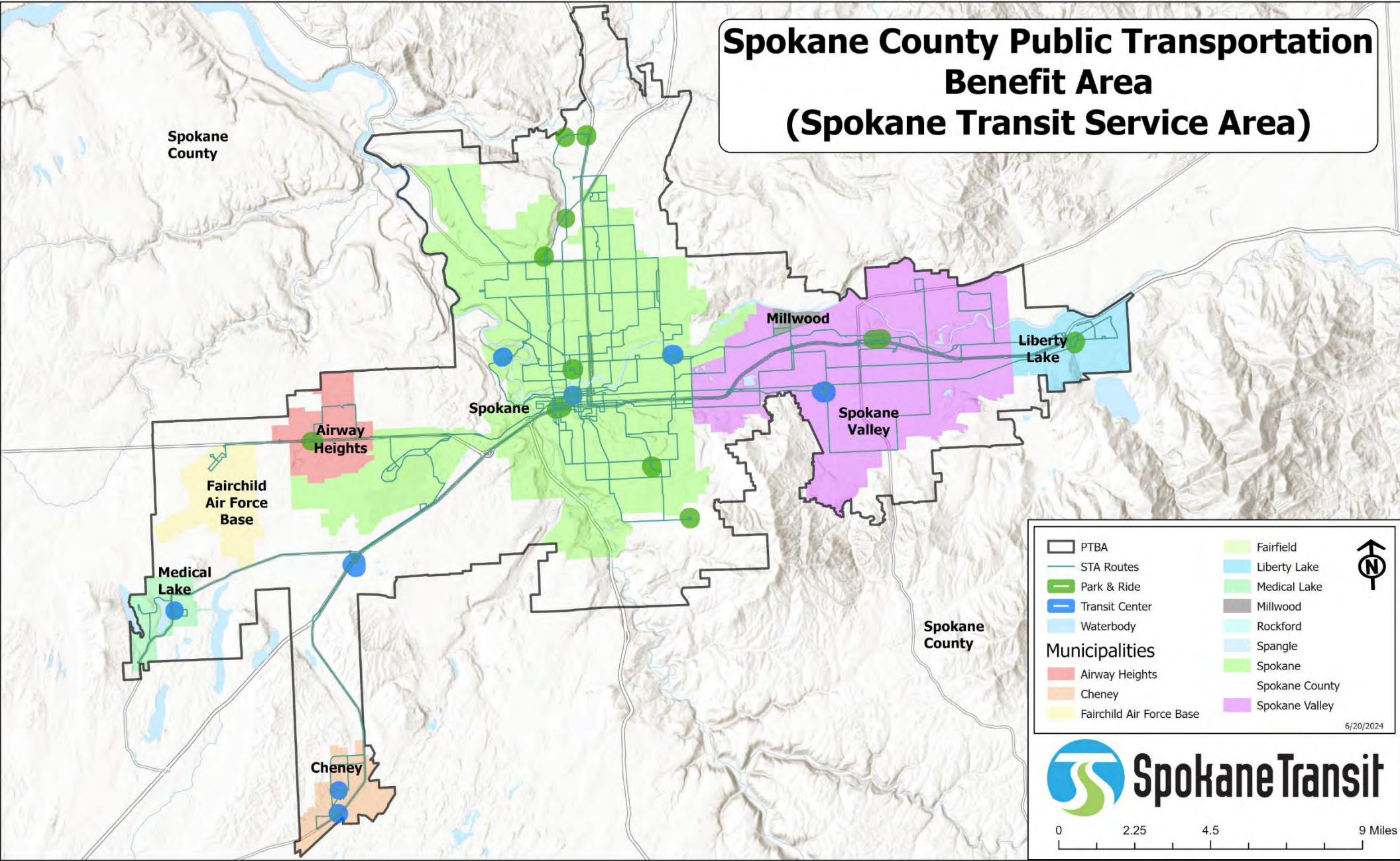


More than an academic exercise: Public Transit/Public School Partnership

NWTX 2024
Karl Otterstrom



Spokane County Public Transportation Benefit Area (Spokane Transit Service Area)

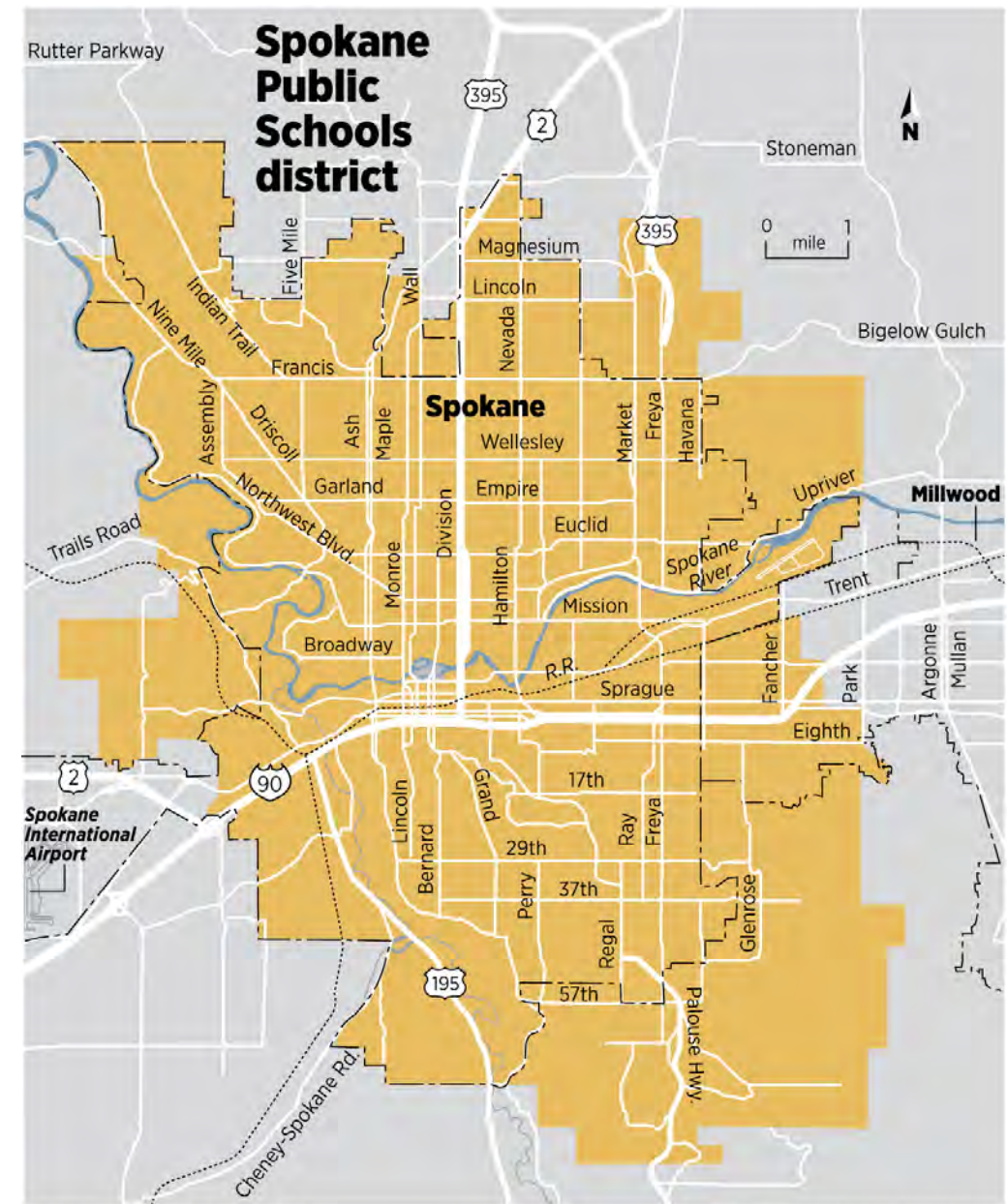


Spokane Transit Quick Facts

Number of bus routes	51 (1 BRT Line)
Number of bus stops (as of 12/31/23)	1,680
Fixed Route buses (active fleet)	160 (40 Battery Electric)
Paratransit vans	123
Rideshare vans	100
Employees (budgeted)	773
Sales Tax Rate	8/10 of 1%, including 2/10 subject to 2028 sunset

About Spokane Public Schools

- 29,000 pre-K through 12 grade students (2nd largest district in WA)
- 57 schools
 - 5 comprehensive high schools
 - 9 middle schools
 - 34 elementary schools
 - Other optional schools and programs
- One of seven full-service school districts wholly or partially within STA's Public Transportation Benefit Area



Source: Spokane Public Schools

MOLLY QUINN/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Brief History of Students on Transit in Spokane

- Feature of 1922 ballot measure that enabled unification of privately-owned transit systems established 4-cent student fares
- As bus service/ridership declined in 1950s-60s, pupil ridership remained important, with bell service trippers serving Spokane Public Schools (SPS)
- In 1974, SPS canceled contract with Spokane Transit (then city-owned) in favor of contracted yellow-bus service
- More recently, STA buses used primarily for alternative high school students and students “choiced” into school other than that assigned for their neighborhood

11

SPOKANE UNITED RAILWAYS —SCHOOL TOKEN CERTIFICATE

Name Eleanor Anderson Date Sept. 16

Address 914 Kiernan Aged 11

Is a regularly enrolled student at _____ School _____

J. E. Mader School Official

Upon presentation of this certificate at the office of Spokane United Railways, W. 325 Trent Ave. by the person named hereon, school tokens will be issued, in multiples of 25, at the rate of 4 cents each. This certificate is not transferable, and school tokens will not be issued to anyone over 18 years of age. Tokens must not be given in exchange for merchandise or given or sold to persons not entitled to school fare transportation. Violation of above rules gives the company the right to refuse transportation at school fare rates to holder of this certificate. This certificate is valid only during current school year.

VOID AFTER JUNE 30, 1943

Form 64 Rev.

Handwritten note: School tokens will not be honored for transit hours 5:00 P.M. and 6:30 P.M. on week days between

1942 Spokane United Railways School Token Certificate

Converging Factors

- 2019: Summer Youth Pass in partnership with SPS and City of Spokane offered zero fare with pass issued through public libraries
- 2021: New school attendance boundaries approved, set to go into effect Fall 2022 for middle and high schools disrupted 40-year-old feeder and busing patterns
- 2021: Route additions and restructures approved to go into effect summer 2022 as a companion to City Line (original service launch date)
- 2020-2021: COVID-19 resulted in workforce challenges in transportation industry, especially with contracted yellow bus operator for SPS

September 27, 2021

GETTING THERE

Bus driver shortages causing delays for Spokane students. Can STA help?



**TED
McDERMOTT**
SPOKESMAN
REPORTER



By Ted McDermott
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

If you have a child in Spokane Public Schools, the texts and emails are familiar by now, just two weeks into the new school year.

“Bus 114 & 159 busing students, running late. You are welcome to pick up your student.”

“Parents of bus riders at 4th & Hemlock. The bus missed your students’ pick-up and another bus is being routed to pick them up.”

“Parents of bus 126: delayed 1 hour every Tuesday AM pick up for 6 weeks. You are welcome to

bring your child to school.”

“Due to driver shortage, Bus 159 riders will be picked up on Fridays 70 minutes past their normal pick up time, and will leave Roosevelt Friday afternoons at 4:15. This will occur for the next 6 weeks.”

“Durham is looking for substitute and permanent drivers. Please visit Durham School Services if you are interested.”

Spokane Public Schools contracts with Durham to bus about 7,000 students a day on 105 routes.

That’s obviously a complex un-

See **SHORTAGE, 8**



Federal Context

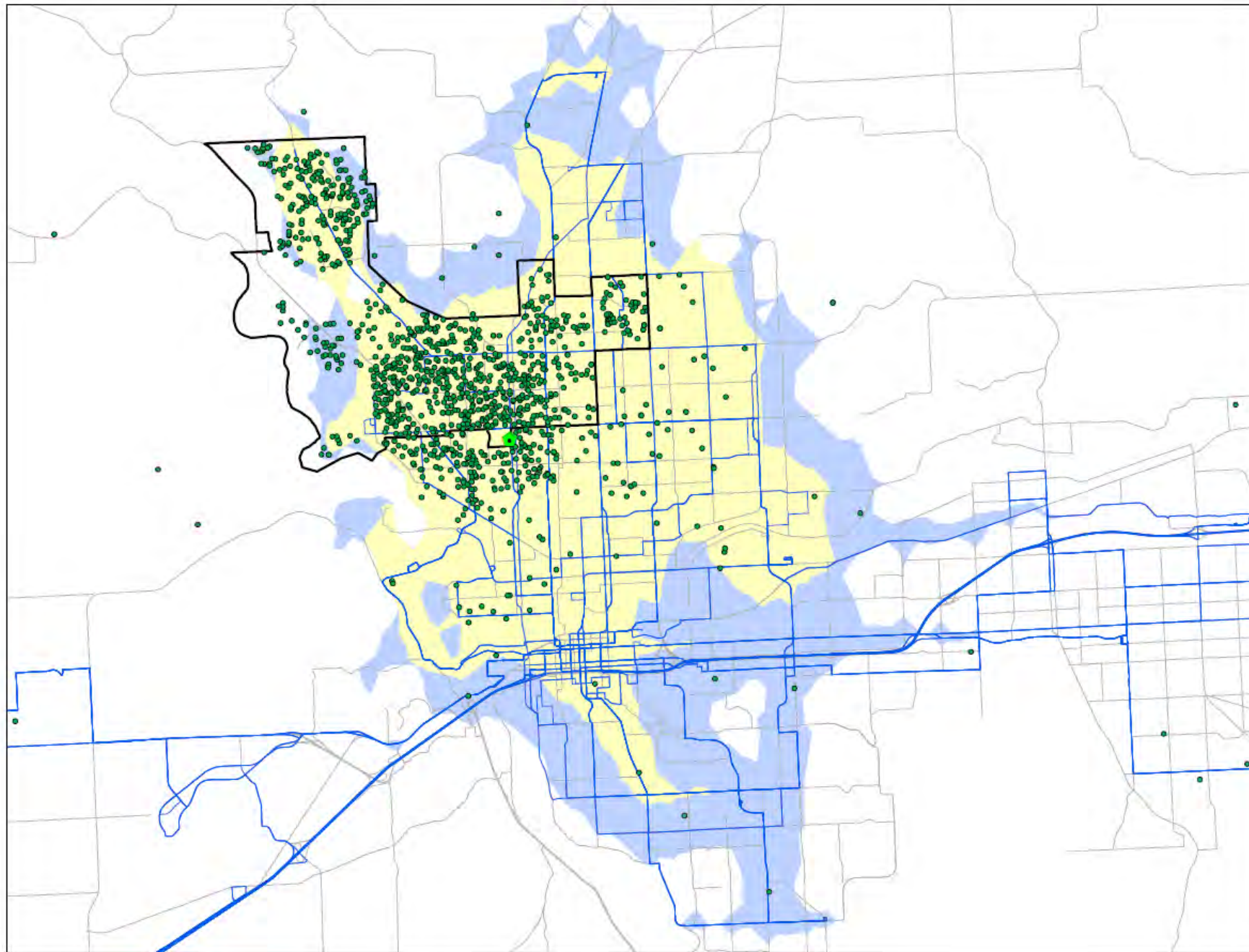
- STA is the designated recipient for several federal transit grant programs and receives multiple federal capita grants and is this required to adhere to federal law and regulations
- 49 USC 5302 expressly excludes “school bus service” from the definition of public transportation
 - STA certifies each year “not to provide school bus transportation that exclusively transports students and school personnel in competition with a private school bus operator.” (See 49 USC 5323)
- Further regulatory guidance found in 49 CFR Part 605
- Allowance made for “school tripper service” with strict limitations

SPS Transportation Work Group

- Six meetings between November 2021 – March 2022 with teachers, parents, staff; STA invited after first meeting
 - Exploring fleet electrification, future contracting requirements and STA partnership
 - Began exploring student travel demand data
- Ongoing failures of yellow bus contractor increased interest in STA partnership
- Additional convergence factor:
 - Legislature passes sweeping “Move Ahead Washington” that provides generous “Transit Support Grant” subject to agencies providing zero fare for youth (ages 18 and under) as of October 1, 2022

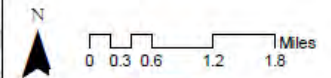
SHADLE HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Boundary with Travel Shed



Legend

- Shadle Students
- ⬠ Shadle Park High
- Transit Routes
- Streets
- 45-minute travel shed
- 60-minute travel shed
- ▭ Attendance Boundaries



Spokane Transit

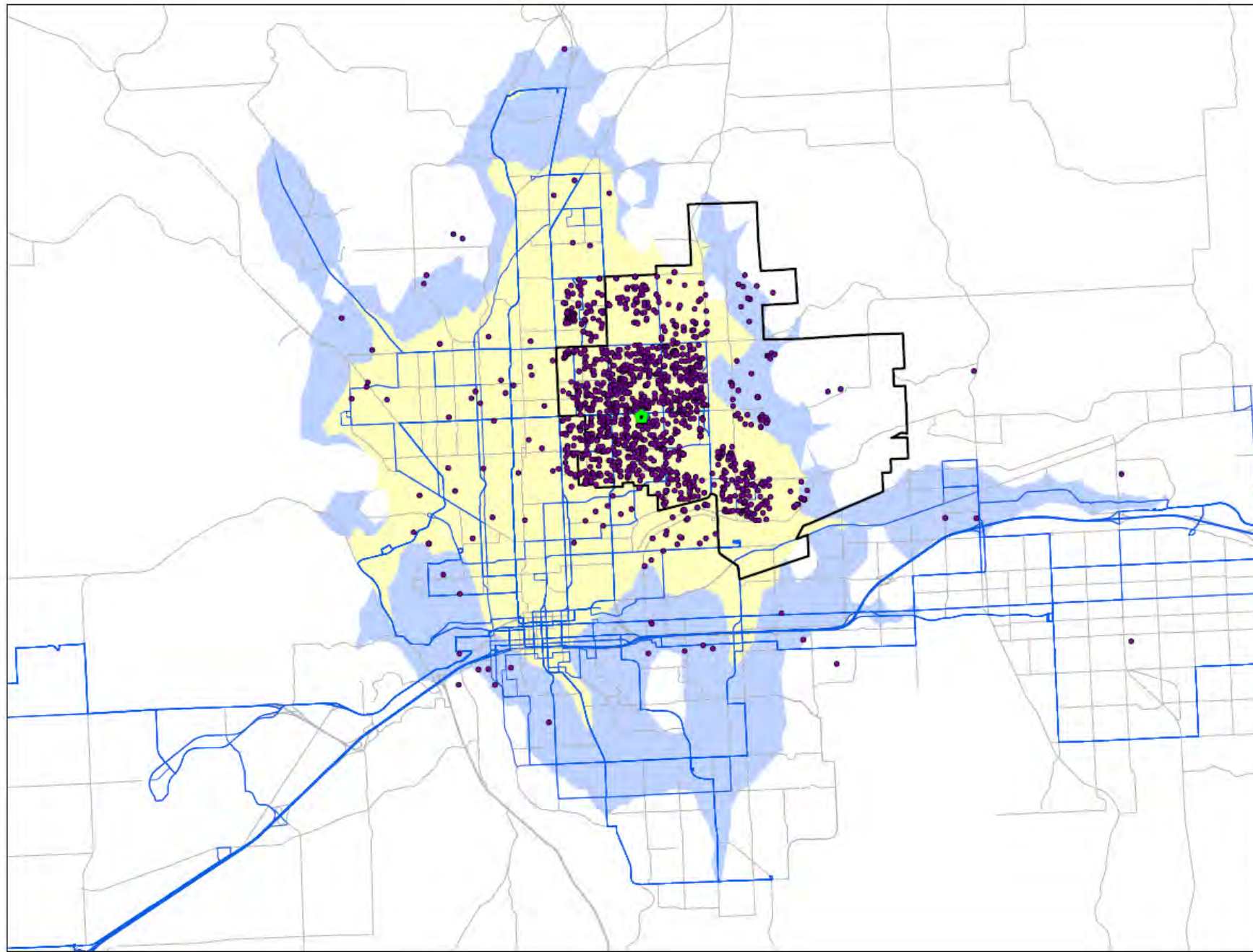
Spokane Transit Authority
1230 W Boone Ave Spokane WA 99201
www.spokanetransit.com

Shadle Park Transit Assessment

- Most of the attendance area is well served
 - Students within the attendance area will make transfers in north Spokane; no connections downtown
- Capacity concerns with Indian Trail; likely need for at least one tripper
 - Since many students in Indian Trail will continue to attend North Central, school tripper may need to extend to NC
- No STA service to Nine Mile Road\Northwest Terrace area that is within SPS district

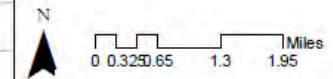
ROGERS HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Boundary with Travel Shed



Legend

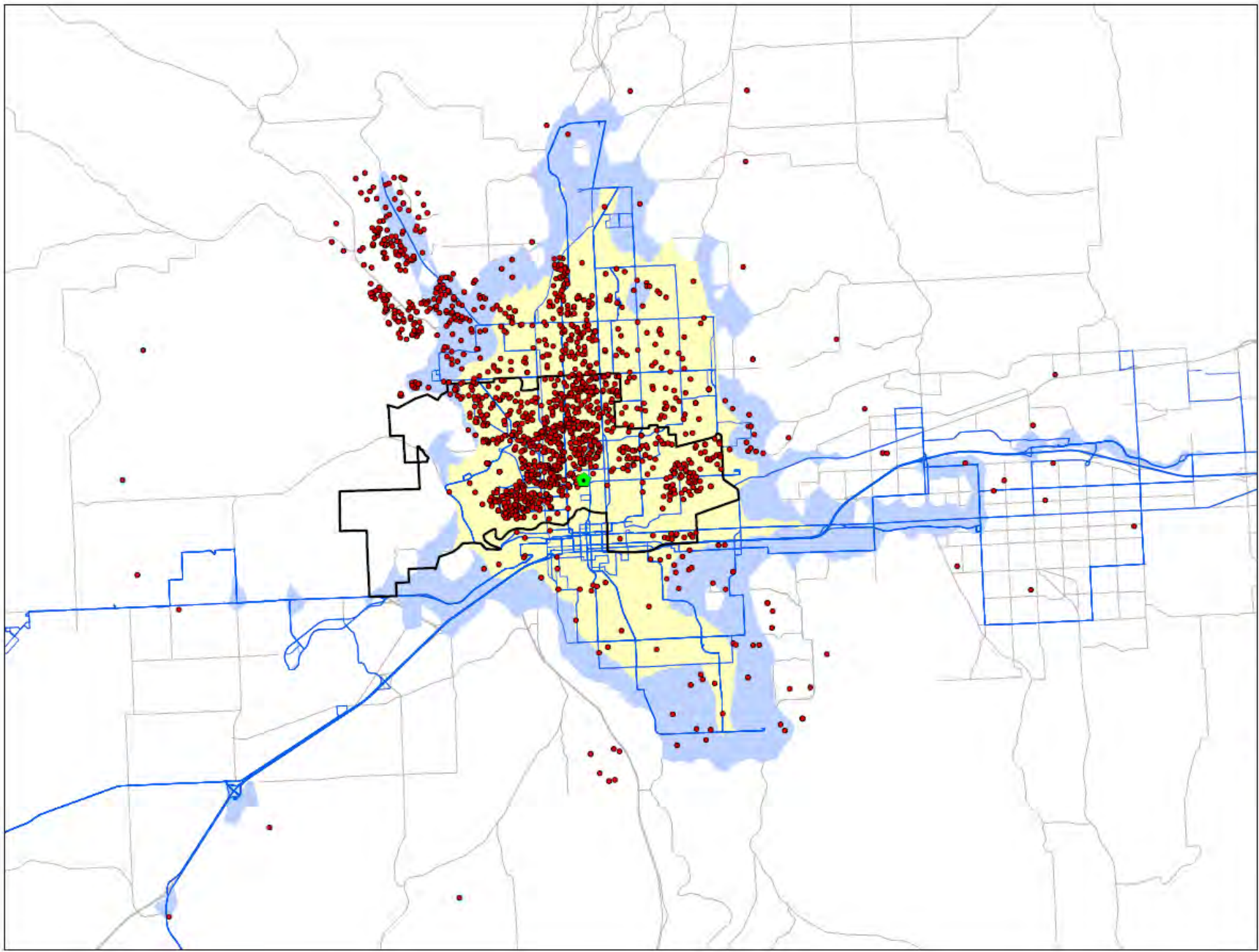
- Rogers Students
- ★ John Rogers High
- Transit Routes
- Streets
- 45-minute travel shed
- 60-minute travel shed
- Attendance Boundaries



Spokane Transit
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Rogers Transit Assessment

- Most of the attendance area is well served
 - Students within the attendance area will make transfers in north Spokane; no connections downtown
- STA's plans to add peak frequency on Route 27 may need to be accelerated, if possible, to provide more capacity to meet ridership demand
- Students east of Market Street/North Spokane Corridor, north of Euclid, are not served by STA
- Minnehaha neighborhood's student population and extent is beyond STA's ability to serve; students east of Freya Street will need yellow bus service

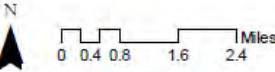


NORTH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Boundary with Travel Shed

Legend

- North Central Students
- North Central High
- Transit Routes
- Streets
- 45-minute travel shed
- 60-minute travel shed
- Attendance Boundaries

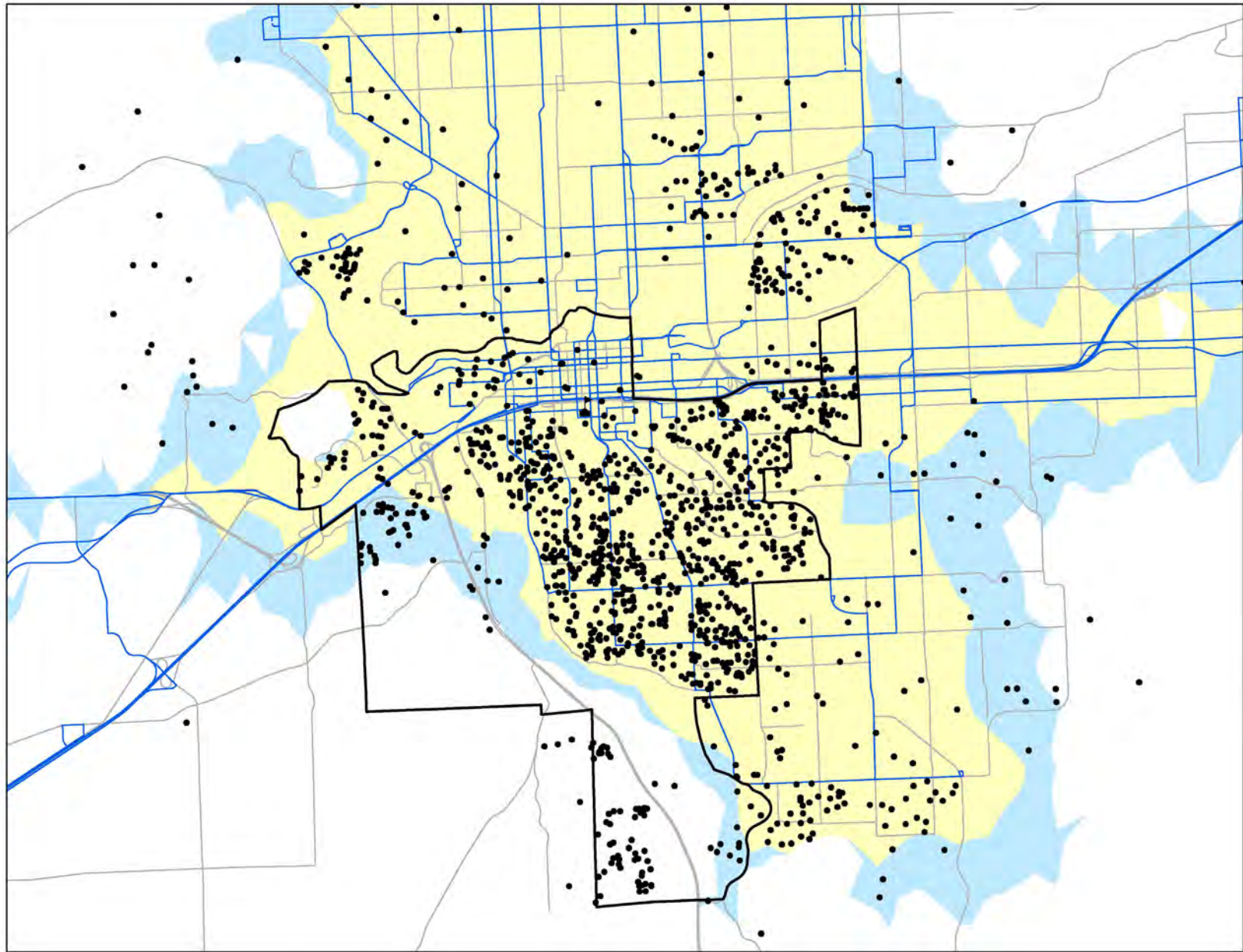


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North Central High School

- The entire attendance area is well served
 - Students from East Central, parts of Chief Garry Park neighborhood will access school by transferring at the STA Plaza
 - Most other areas have direct access or easy transfer to the high school
- STA's plans to add peak frequency on Route 27 may need to be accelerated, if possible, to provide more capacity to meet ridership demand

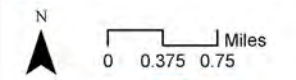


LEWIS & CLARK HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Boundary with Travel Shed

Legend

- Students
- 🏫 Lewis & Clark High
- Transit Routes
- Streets
- ▭ Attendance Boundaries
- 45-minute travel shed
- 60-minute travel shed



Spokane Transit

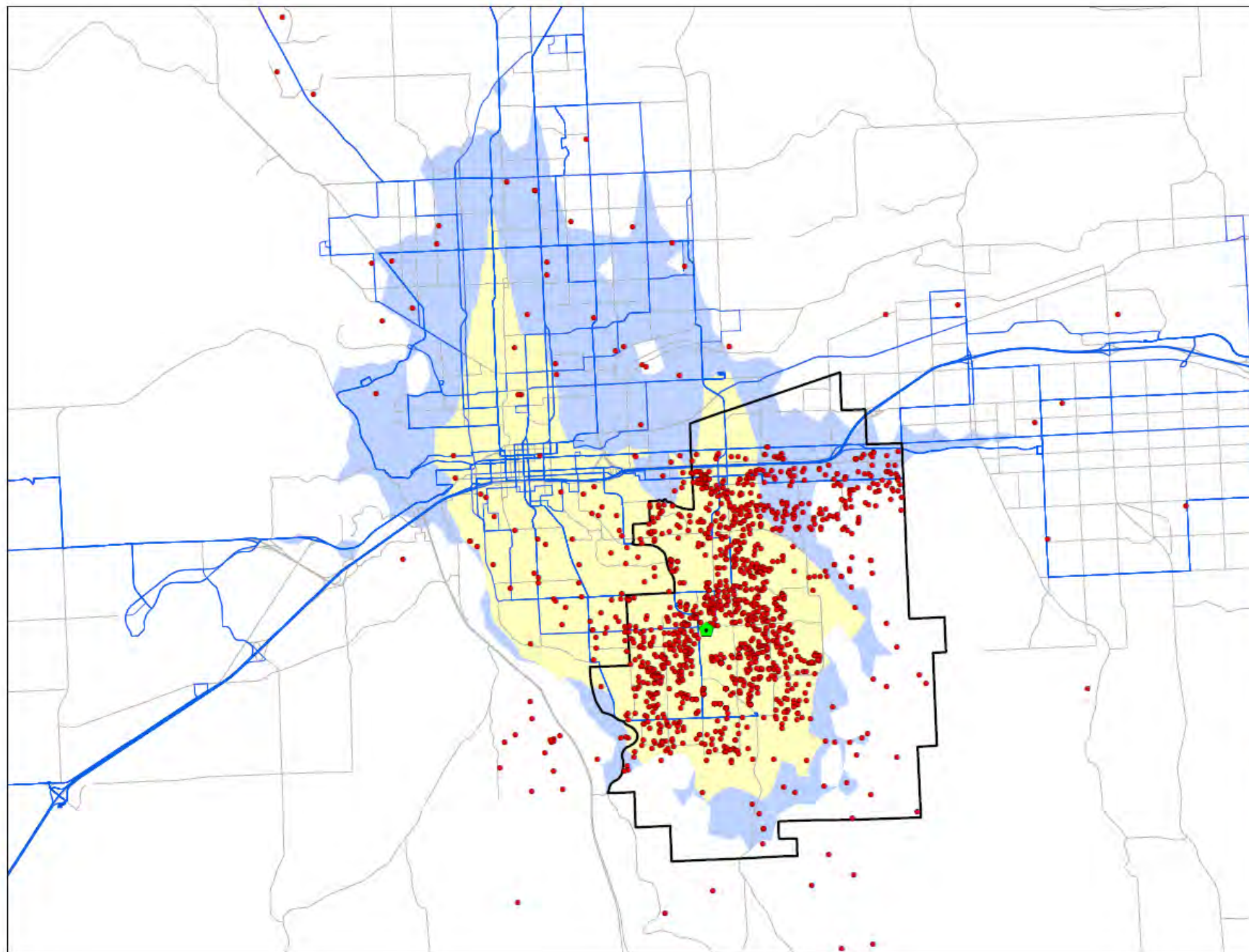
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Lewis and Clark High School

- Much of the attendance area is very well served
 - Proximity to downtown allows for generous capacity and flexibility in traveling to the high school
 - Some students will use the Plaza to transfer to school or simply walk to school from downtown
- These areas will need yellow bus service (no STA bus routes)
 - Grandview/Thorpe Road
 - Latah Valley
 - Eagle Ridge
 - Hatch Road Hill (south of 57th Ave)

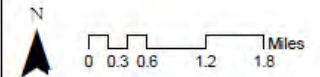
FERRIS HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Boundary with Travel Shed



Legend

- Ferris Students
- ⬢ Ferris High
- Transit Routes
- Streets
- 45-minute travel shed
- 60-minute travel shed
- ▭ Attendance Boundaries



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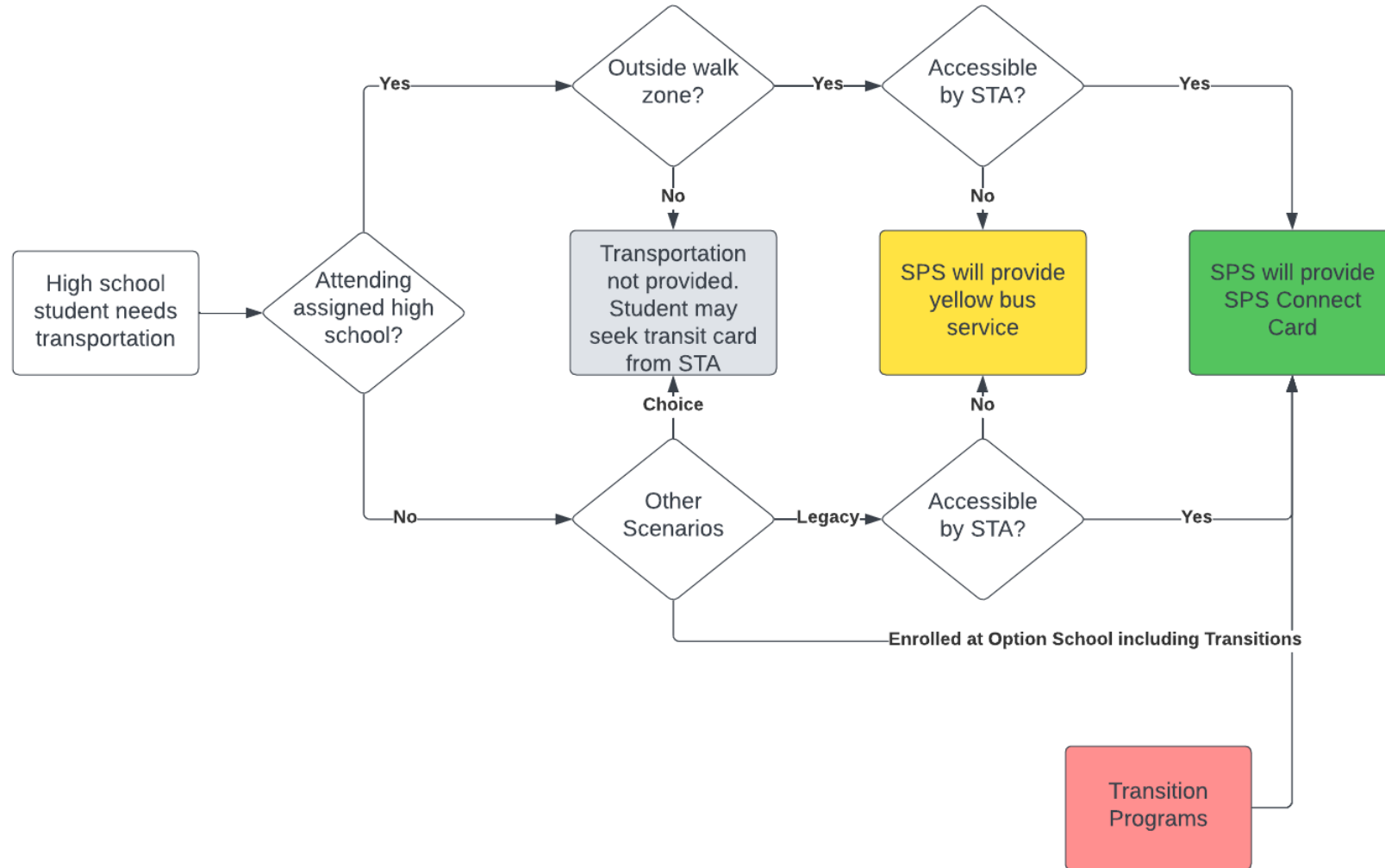
Ferris High School

- Many areas are within walking distance or good bus service
- Explore STA school tripper serving 8th Avenue to provide capacity and avoid time-consuming out-of-direction travel
- More rural areas when compared to other schools where STA does not serve (will need yellow bus service)
 - Glenrose
 - Carnahan Hill
 - Palouse Highway/Ben Burr Road rural areas
 - Small component of Hatch Road (east side of road)

Fall 2022 Plans

- Shift service change to begin three weeks early to start school year with new network (Sep 18 to Aug 28)
- Introduce tripper routes 223 Shadle/Indian Trail and 294 East 8th Ave
- Summer Youth Pass would continue through September until new Connect card media, including “Rider’s License” becomes available October 1
 - Rider’s License distributed by school to targeted students, available to others upon request through STA

Fall 2022 Transportation Decision Tree



STA/SPS Service Contract

- SPS distributes passes
 - Beginning in Fall 2023, all high schools students' ID cards are printed on STA Connect fare media
- SPS pays for trips made by 19-year-old students (following STA's UTAP program)
- SPS subsidizes routes 223, 294
 - Unallocated operating cost of platform hours less "farebox revenue"
 - Farebox Revenue = route ridership x average fare per passenger (systemwide metric)
 - No charge for peak pullout
 - Network adjustments (peak service attrition, interlining) provided spare buses relative to planned peak fleet utilization

August 2022 Family Orientation



Which Connect card is right for you?

SPS and STA both offer Connect cards that give students unlimited rides without needing to pay a fare.

SPS Connect card

- ✓ Unlimited rides on STA without fare
- ✓ Issued by Spokane Public Schools
- ✓ Available to eligible SPS high school students living outside the 1.5-mile radius walk boundary
- ✓ Contact your school for questions

"Rider's License" STA Connect card

- ✓ Unlimited rides on STA without fare
- ✓ Issued by Spokane Transit
- ✓ Available to youth age 6-18 Contact
- ✓ STA for questions
- ✓ spokanetransit.com/reducedfare

Applications for STA Connect "Rider's License" cards will be accepted starting Sept. 1

Results

- The return of crowding
 - Route 223 assigned articulated coach
 - Second tripper added to Route 294 with an existing block
- Youth ridership well above historic trends
 - 2019: 732,484
 - 2022: 819,885
 - 2023: 1,169,841
 - 2024 through August: 1,243,285 (18% of ridership YTD)
- School administrators now encouraging elementary classes to take field trips on STA to gain experience
- Rising generation of transit planners





FREE ON STA!

spokanetransit.com/youth

YOUTH



Conclusion

- Look for and pursue convergences that have the power to positively alter your transit network
- Service arrangement successfully passed federal scrutiny; make sure it's open to the public and advertised
 - Same standard as similar service
 - Triple digits for targeted services
 - Printed schedules
 - Appearances on system map
 - Uses regular stops outside minor deviations near a school
- More research for the future
 - Understanding ridership by age cohort and ridership retention, especially middle school through high school