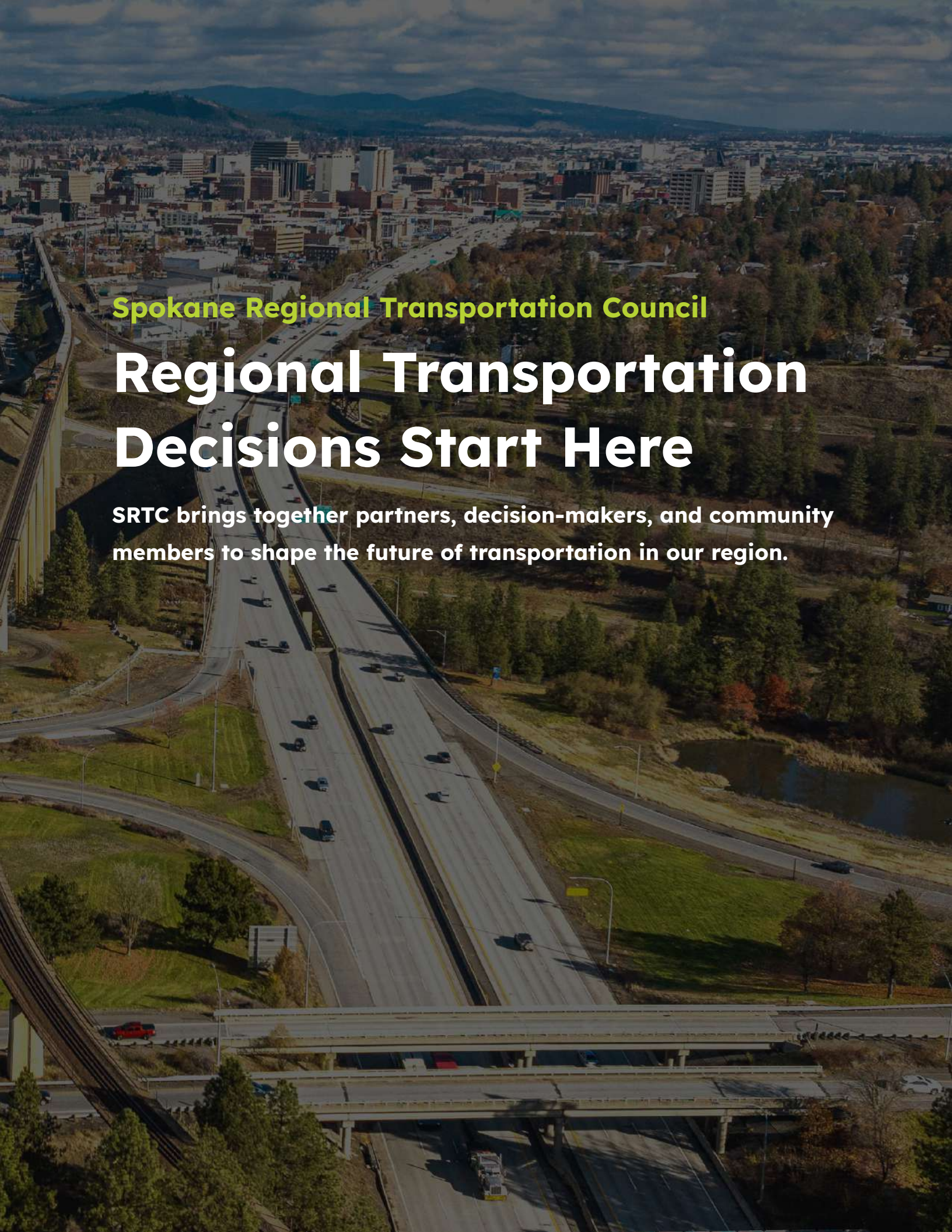
HORIZON 2050

Spokane Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Spokane Regional Transportation Council

DECEMBER 2025



Spokane Regional Transportation Council

Regional Transportation Decisions Start Here

SRTC brings together partners, decision-makers, and community members to shape the future of transportation in our region.

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RESOLUTION

of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS of the

SPOKANE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

R-25-28

ADOPTING THE HORIZON 2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR THE SPOKANE METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA

WHEREAS, the Spokane Regional Transportation Council's Board of Directors (SRTC Board) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Spokane Metropolitan Planning Area (SMPA) as well as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for Spokane County; and

WHEREAS, as the MPO and RTPO for Spokane County, SRTC is required to develop a long-range, multimodal, financially constrained transportation plan; and

WHEREAS, Horizon 2050 was developed in accordance with federal metropolitan transportation planning process requirements, as prescribed in Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 450 (23 CFR 450) and other relevant regulations; and

WHEREAS, the Revised Codes of Washington (RCW) 47.80.030 requires an RTPO to prepare a regional transportation plan in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, public transportation providers, and local governments within the region; and

WHEREAS, Horizon 2050 serves as the federally required Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and as the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the Spokane Metropolitan Planning Area; and

WHEREAS, Horizon 2050 has been developed under the direction of the SRTC Board in consultation with local government staff, Washington State Department of Transportation, and operators of public transportation, and with input from various groups and members of the public; and

WHEREAS, the public was invited to review the draft plan and was provided 30 days to comment; and

WHEREAS, the approved Horizon 2050 will replace the 2022-2045 MTP and RTP for Spokane County; and

WHEREAS, Horizon 2050 defines projects, programs, and strategies for a coordinated multimodal system and provides direction for development of future Transportation Improvement Programs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE Board of Directors of the Spokane Regional Transportation Council that:

1. Horizon 2050 is hereby adopted.
2. Spokane Regional Transportation Council is authorized to publish Horizon 2050 and per 23 CFR 450.324 (c) submit for information purposes the Plan to the Governor, Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

ADOPTED: 12/11/2025

ATTEST

Anadia Grier
SRTC
Clerk of the Board

Council Member Rod Higgins
City of Spokane Valley
Chair, SRTC Board of Directors

Spokane Regional Transportation Council Membership

City of Airway Heights

City of Cheney

City of Deer Park

City of Liberty Lake

City of Medical Lake

City of Millwood

City of Spokane

City of Spokane Valley

Kalispel Tribe of Indians

Spokane County

Spokane Transit Authority

Spokane Tribe of Indians

Town of Fairfield

Town of Latah

Town of Rockford

Town of Spangle

Town of Waverly

Washington State Department of Transportation

Washington State Transportation Commission

Horizon 2050
The Spokane Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Adopted December 11, 2025

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Table of Contents

Appendix

Quick Reference Guide

Use this guide to quickly find key topics and frequently referenced sections in Horizon 2050

Policy Framework

Transportation Network Conditions

Land Use and Demographics

Strategies and Implementation

List of Figures

1 Who We Are

2 Where We Are

3 Where We're Going

4 How We'll Get There

HORIZON 2050

Spokane Metropolitan Transportation Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SRTC'S Mission

To coordinate transportation planning in the Spokane region by providing leadership, expertise, and a forum for collaboration

Horizon 2050 is the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the Spokane Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), which consists of Spokane County in its entirety. The plan fulfills requirements under Spokane Regional Transportation Council's (SRTC) role as a federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and as the state designated Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO). SRTC developed Horizon 2050 as the long-range plan for an integrated, accessible, and multimodal transportation system to safely and efficiently move people and goods through the year 2050.

Horizon 2050 is founded on SRTC's Guiding Principles and Policies for achieving the regional transportation vision. The plan also reflects current demographics and recent economic realities while forecasting trends that influence travel behavior.

Horizon 2050 identifies a list of implementation strategies to address the transportation challenges our region will face over the next 25 years and to capitalize on regional opportunities. It contains short- and long-term strategies, projects, and programs important to the region.

Regional Vision

In order for SRTC to achieve its vision and mission, Guiding Principles and Policies were developed by the SRTC Board as the first step in creating a framework for Horizon 2050. The Guiding Principles are summarized below. A full description is provided in Chapter 1.

Economic Vitality

- Focus on people, freight, and goods movement to improve regional, national, and global competitiveness
- Enhance accessibility and connections to activity centers
- Support freight systems and supply chains

Cooperation and Leadership

- Provide a regional forum to develop priorities
- Identify funding strategies
- Coordinate with stakeholders

Stewardship

- Protect the environment
- Use public funds responsibly
- Measure performance

Operations, Maintenance, and Preservation

- Preserve and prolong the life of infrastructure
- Use fiscal resources prudently
- Provide adequate funding
- Improve operational efficiency

Safety and Security

- Draw on best-practice design
- Utilize education and outreach
- Protect critical infrastructure from external threats
- Understand problem areas through data analysis

Quality of Life

- Offer safe and convenient forms of active transportation
- Consider the needs of all transportation users, regardless of ability
- Increase public transit access and improve service
- Design to support social, cultural, and commercial activities

Equity (as part of SRTC's RTPO role)

- Ensure fair distribution of transportation infrastructure
- Facilitate access to employment and services for potentially disadvantaged populations

Challenges & Future Needs

SRTC evaluated future population and employment growth and other factors that influence the regional transportation system. Horizon 2050 uses this information to identify trends, opportunities, and transportation needs.

By the Numbers

Our Community

- Population of over 550,000 today; projected to grow to 670,000 by 2050 (Spokane County planning area)
- Over 450,000 people or approximately 83% of the population live within the Spokane Urban Area
- Approximately 24% of the region's employees live outside of the planning area
- More than 16% of the region's population has a disability[1]

Our Transportation System

- Spokane International Airport serves roughly 4 million passengers annually and processes over 75,000 tons of cargo
- 21 of the 307 bridges in the region are in poor condition
- Trucking is the dominant mode of freight transport
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) and Union Pacific (UP) operate roughly 60 trains per day through the region
- Bicycling and walking represent about 10% of total trips
- Over 10 million rides are provided on the STA bus system annually

Challenges and Opportunities

Several common transportation issues or themes are described throughout Horizon 2050. There are demographic shifts occurring in the region. Improved economic conditions and technological advances have influenced personal travel and supply chains. Funding for operations, maintenance and preservation of the regional transportation system has not been sufficient to keep up with needed repairs and improvements. The future of transportation in Spokane County will be significantly impacted by travel behavior, population growth and land use decisions, freight movement, and new technologies. Maintaining the system in a state of good repair will be a monumental challenge for the state and local jurisdictions.

System Funding Shortfall

The region faces an increasing backlog of preservation and maintenance costs, and funding levels have not been sufficient to maintain regional roads and bridges in a state of good repair. Although Washington state increased its gas tax by six cents in July 2025, it was the first increase since 2015 and will not be enough to satisfy the shortfall. The federal gas tax has not been raised since 1993, and the purchasing power of these dollars has declined in real terms due to inflation. Compounding this is improved fuel efficiency along with an increasing share of electric and alternative fuel vehicles operating on our roadways. Additional revenue options will be required to avoid future deferred maintenance and significant decline in the condition and function of our infrastructure.

1 US Census Bureau. American Community Survey: 2022 1-Year Estimates. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, 2022. https://data.census.gov. For more information on how the Census Bureau defines and collects disability data, see https://www.census.gov/topics/health/disability/guidance/data-collection-acs.html.

State of Bridges

Bridges are another element of regional maintenance needs and a critical piece for keeping the system in a state of good repair. It is anticipated that the number of deficient bridges will grow as the region's infrastructure ages, with the possibility of bridges in fair condition today transitioning to poor condition during the Horizon 2050 timeline. Many bridges are approaching or have exceeded their design life, and several are located on vital freight routes and provide critical system redundancy.

Safety

Safety trends are an area of critical concern. Newer vehicles are safer than they have ever been, yet the issues of distracted and impaired driving and speeding, combined with the vulnerability of non-drivers in the right-of-way, have led to consistent increases in serious injuries and fatalities in recent years. It will take a variety of strategies, including driver education and enforcement along with engineering solutions such as traffic calming measures, to begin to see progress. Within the timeframe of Horizon 2050, the goal is to continually move fatal and serious incidents to zero through proactive planning and investment.

Technology

The region's current estimates for future travel demand reflect travel behavior based on technology and travel choices that exist today. Emerging trends such as automated, connected, electric, and shared vehicles will likely have a stark influence on travel behavior. Going forward, vehicles will sense and adjust to their surroundings, increasing safety and efficient movement of goods and people. Other technologies such as the Internet of Things (connected devices) and AI will affect transportation systems of the future.[2] System impacts, both positive and negative, are difficult to predict in the long term. A key consideration is understanding how mobility improvements from these technologies could result in induced trips or other unforeseen mobility consequences.

On the transportation management side, information technology can help optimize the regional system, from advanced signal systems to asset management. On the energy side, trends in transportation electrification are a benefit to air quality and carbon reduction but will impact gas tax revenues at the state and national level and factor in how our power grid is managed and expanded. In addition, alternative fuel technologies offer the potential to diversify transportation energy demands.

Growth

Concentrated population growth and the location and density of housing significantly impact travel demand on the regional network. The same can be said for the location and expansion of jobs. The number of residents in turn affects the level of freight movement and deliveries to our region. Forecasting growth can be especially challenging, given the various factors that influence location choice. The long-term population forecast developed by SRTC is based on OFM's medium series projections.[3] While Horizon 2050 projections are focused on the SRTC planning area, growth in adjacent areas, namely north Idaho, affects the system as many trips are generated externally to Spokane County. SRTC will closely monitor growth data to ensure subsequent forecasts and travel demand modeling accurately reflect regional growth patterns.

With growth comes challenges related to housing availability and affordability. In response to these challenges, the state legislature passed HB1220 in 2021, amending the Growth Management Act and requiring jurisdictions to revise the housing element of their comprehensive plans to accommodate housing that is affordable to all economic segments. Affordable housing continues to be a high priority for policy makers, and local jurisdictions are responding by updating their comprehensive plans to address this and other state requirements. Local comprehensive plan updates are expected to conclude in 2026.

Additional study may be needed to assess future growth scenarios as comprehensive plan updates are implemented. Strategic land use decisions have the potential to enhance transportation system performance and connectivity.

2 2021 Urban Mobility Report. The Texas A&M Transportation Institute.

3 OFM. "Population & Demographics." Office of Financial Management, 2017. https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics.

When transportation and land use are not well-aligned, it can degrade the system and reduce its efficiency. Ongoing collaboration with local jurisdictions and stakeholders is essential to identify mutually supportive decisions that optimize both land development and transportation choices.

Diversifying Travel Options

The most effective transportation networks are ones that offer a variety of options that respond to the needs of a community. Biking, walking, car-share, micromobility, and mass transit are all modes that contribute to the safe and efficient completion of trips. Horizon 2050 public feedback supports this. Transit investments help optimize the throughput of our roadways, while improvements targeting bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and accessibility are complementary to transit use. Such investments often directly improve safety for roadway vehicle users as well. A system that offers viable transportation choices can decrease roadway demand, ease growth strains on the network, and facilitate better access for all. With the integration of micromobility and speeds of small motorized devices, design changes may be necessary to mitigate conflicts in high use areas.

Aging Population

The number of seniors (age 65+) has been trending upward in the nation, and this holds true in Spokane County. The forecasted increase to a greater number of seniors could have a major effect on transportation services. We can surmise that an increasing number of seniors could age out of driving and yet still need transportation to shopping, medical appointments, social activities, cultural events, and recreational opportunities.

Resiliency

The region's ability to withstand disruptions may increasingly be brought to bear with extreme weather events, large wildfires, system failures or major crashes. Average annual temperature in Spokane has risen by two degrees since 1950. Peak summer temperatures have risen by a greater amount.[4] With warming temperatures, lower snowpack, and faster melt-offs, wildfire risk is exacerbated, and wildfire smoke can impact the region more frequently. The ecosystem shift impacts the management of our transportation system, and transportation investments must consider resiliency in the face of both climate and human-caused disruptions. This includes maintaining a state of good repair and adequate redundancy if a major event were to render some of the network unusable. As part of our work as the RTPO, tracking carbon emissions from our transportation sector (a key contributor to heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere) will help decision makers gauge how investments are influencing VMT per capita, VHT per capita, and emission trendlines.

Other focus areas in this plan include the completion of the North Spokane Corridor (NSC). Horizon 2045 had an envisioned completion time of 2030. Funding uncertainties have at times jeopardized this target, but refocused legislative priorities maintain the 2030 completion year. Other related projects, such as delivery of Division Street BRT, are impacted by the ultimate completion time of the NSC. In addition, safe and efficient infrastructure to and from Spokane International Airport is instrumental as the aviation, air cargo, and aerospace sectors continue to grow. The same can be said for Fairchild Air Force Base—it is the largest employer in eastern Washington and supports critical KC 135 operations and the 92nd Air Force Refueling wing. Maintaining transportation infrastructure in support of FAFB and Spokane International Airport is a priority.

4 Spokane Climate Project. 2025. https://www.spokaneclimateproject.org/.

Implementation

Horizon 2050 establishes investment levels in four categories of need: Preservation, Maintenance and Operations, Regionally Significant Projects, and Transportation Programs. To improve the condition of our existing transportation network, the plan places most of the spending in the Preservation and Maintenance and Operations categories.

The plan also includes a list of short- and long-range large-scale capital projects in the Regionally Significant category. The final category of need is the Transportation Programs, where funding targets are established for all other essential capital projects and programs. Additionally, Horizon 2050 establishes regional priority freight, transit, bicycle, and vehicular networks to help focus investments in key facilities.

Horizon 2050's financial plan forecasts what funding is anticipated to be reasonably available during the next 25 years. It demonstrates that the projects and programs in the plan can be implemented within this financial constraint. In total, $16.1 billion in revenues is forecasted for the region as a whole. This is far short of the projected need—specifically for maintenance, operations, and preservation. The categories of need and financial plan are detailed in Chapter 4.

Strategies

The plan also includes implementation strategies that will lead to the maintenance and enhancement of a regional, integrated multimodal transportation system. These strategies facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, while addressing current and future transportation demand. The strategies were initially developed in previous MTPs and have been affirmed through analysis and coordination associated with the development of Horizon 2050.

Strategy 1. Prioritize Preservation, Maintenance, and Operations

Horizon 2050 emphasizes a state of good repair for the region's existing transportation network through timely preservation, maintenance, and operations investments.

Strategy 2. Improve Safety and Security

The transportation investments and policies in Horizon 2050 provide support for the safety and security of the regional networks and systems.

Strategy 3. Support Transportation Systems Management and Operations

Horizon 2050 places a priority on maximizing the efficiency of the existing transportation system by using cost-effective approaches, such as Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Intelligent Transportations Systems (ITS).

Strategy 4. Identify and Support Cost-Effective Transportation Solutions

Horizon 2050 supports innovative long-lasting construction techniques as well as least-cost planning and coordination to identify viable transportation solutions.

Strategy 5. Invest in Public Transportation

Public transportation plays an important role in the economic vitality and quality of life of our region. This applies to those living in urban areas as well as the surrounding rural communities and tribal reservations and trust lands.

Strategy 6. Provide Multimodal Options

All people should have safe, comfortable, and convenient access to community destinations and public places. This applies regardless of whether a person is walking, driving, bicycling, or taking public transportation.

Strategy 7. Promote Regional Leadership

SRTC will be the leading body for regional coordination and leadership to facilitate cross-jurisdictional transportation solutions.

Evaluation

Horizon 2050 is a performance-based plan. Measuring success will be essential for demonstrating the worth and effectiveness of the plan's strategies to regional decision makers and the public. SRTC sets and tracks performance targets for safety, pavement condition, bridge condition, travel time reliability, freight reliability, air quality, public transit asset management (TAM), and public transit safety. These are key to understanding progress toward strategies laid out in Horizon 2050.

Projected Transportation Revenues and Expenditures 2026–2050

All amounts are shown in millions of dollars, adjusted to their expected year of expenditure (YOE dollars)

		Expenditures				
Point of Expenditure	Total Revenues	Maintenance & Operations	Preservation	Programs	Regionally Significant Capital	Balance
Local/Regional	$ 5,280	$ 770	$ 2,700	$ 1,380	$ 430	$ 0
WSDOT	$ 3,960	$ 540	$ 1,870	$ 340	$ 1,210	$ 0
STA	$ 6,880	$ 6,090	$ 0	$ 380	$ 410	$ 0
Total	**$ 16,120**	**$ 7,400**	**$ 4,570**	**2,100**	**$ 2,050**	**$ 0**

Totals may not sum due to rounding

FOREWORD

History of Our Region

The history of the region has played a major role in how its transportation system has developed. The Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) planning area includes the ancestral homelands of at least three interior Salish-speaking tribes of Native Americans. One of those is the Spokane Tribe of Indians, whose name is often translated as "children of the sun"—and from whom the current name of the city, river, and region are derived. The Spokane Tribe have lived in this region for at least 9,000 years, pursuing a semi-nomadic lifestyle based on a cycle of subsistence activities.[1] Though they dwelt in temporary camps throughout much of the year, living on the natural bounty of the region's hills, mountains, and prairies, they spent their winters living along local rivers. Notably, they shared an integral bond to the Spokane River, whose traditional name Nx Wl Wl tsuten, means "river gives us our way of life"—reflecting their essential connection.[2] The Kalispel Tribe of Indians were semi-nomadic hunters, diggers, and fishermen whose homeland included the Selkirk Mountains in northern Spokane County.[3] The Coeur d'Alene Tribe, whose range stretched from the Spokane River valley in the west to Montana in the east, called themselves Schitsu'umsh, meaning "The Discovered People" or "Those Who are Found Here."[4] The westward expansion of settlers saw each of these tribes displaced from their lands and traditional lifestyles. Though the Spokane

1 Spokane Tribe of Indians, "History," Spokane Tribe of Indians, accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.spokanetribe.com/resources/dnr/preservation/history/.

2 Margo Hill, "The River Gives Us Our Way of Life," in The Spokane River, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018), chap. "The River Gives Us Our Way of Life," accessed via De Gruyter Brill.

3 "Kalispel Tribe of Indians," Upper Columbia United Tribes, Upper Columbia United Tribes, accessed August 4, 2025, https://ucut.org/members-tribes/kalispel-tribe-indians/; "Our Story," Kalispel Tribe of Indians: We Are Kalispel, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, accessed August 4, 2025, https://kalispeltribe.com/our-story.

4 "History," Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Coeur d'Alene Tribe of the Coeur d'Alene Reservation, Idaho, accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.cdatribe-nsn.gov/our-tribe/history/.

Historic Photo of Spokane Streetcar

and Kalispel tribes continue to hold lands in Spokane County, they were reduced to reservation and trust lands. The Spokane Indian Reservation was established in 1881, centered in Stevens County, and the Kalispel Indian Reservation was established in 1914 in Pend Oreille County near the towns of Usk and Cusick on the Pend Oreille River.[5]

The increasing presence of American and European settlers in the region led people to develop urban communities. Spokane County is made up of several cities, the largest being Spokane. The city of Spokane Falls (the "e" was added in 1883 and "Falls" dropped in 1891) was incorporated as a city of about 1,000 residents in November 1881.[6]

The settlement of the Spokane region has a rich history as a railroad hub, and some of the region's most significant landmarks have a historical tie to the rail industry. The railroad formed a critical connection to the region even before the City of Spokane was incorporated in 1881. The first railroad in Washington state was the short-line Cascade-Portage Railroad, which began operations in 1851 to offer shippers a route around the Cascade rapids in the Columbia River. In 1892, the president of the Great Northern Railway, James Hill, built a large rail yard northeast of downtown Spokane, Hill's Yard, which is today the namesake for Spokane's Hillyard neighborhood.[7] Additionally, the iconic downtown clock tower at Riverfront Park was originally the clock tower for the Great Northern Depot, which once occupied the site.

With the arrival of the four major intercontinental railroads, Spokane became a vital transportation center. The gold, silver, and lead rush in

5 Spokane Tribe of Indians, "History."

6 Arksey, Laura. "Spokane Falls (Later Renamed Spokane) Is Incorporated as a First-Class City." Spokane Falls (later renamed Spokane) is incorporated as a first-class city on November 29, 1881., October 13, 2009. https://www.historylink.org/File/9176.

7 BNSF Railway. "Spokane, Washington: The Imperial City." BNSF Railway: Rail Talk, November 16, 2023. https://www.bnsf.com/news-media/railtalk/heritage/spokane.html.

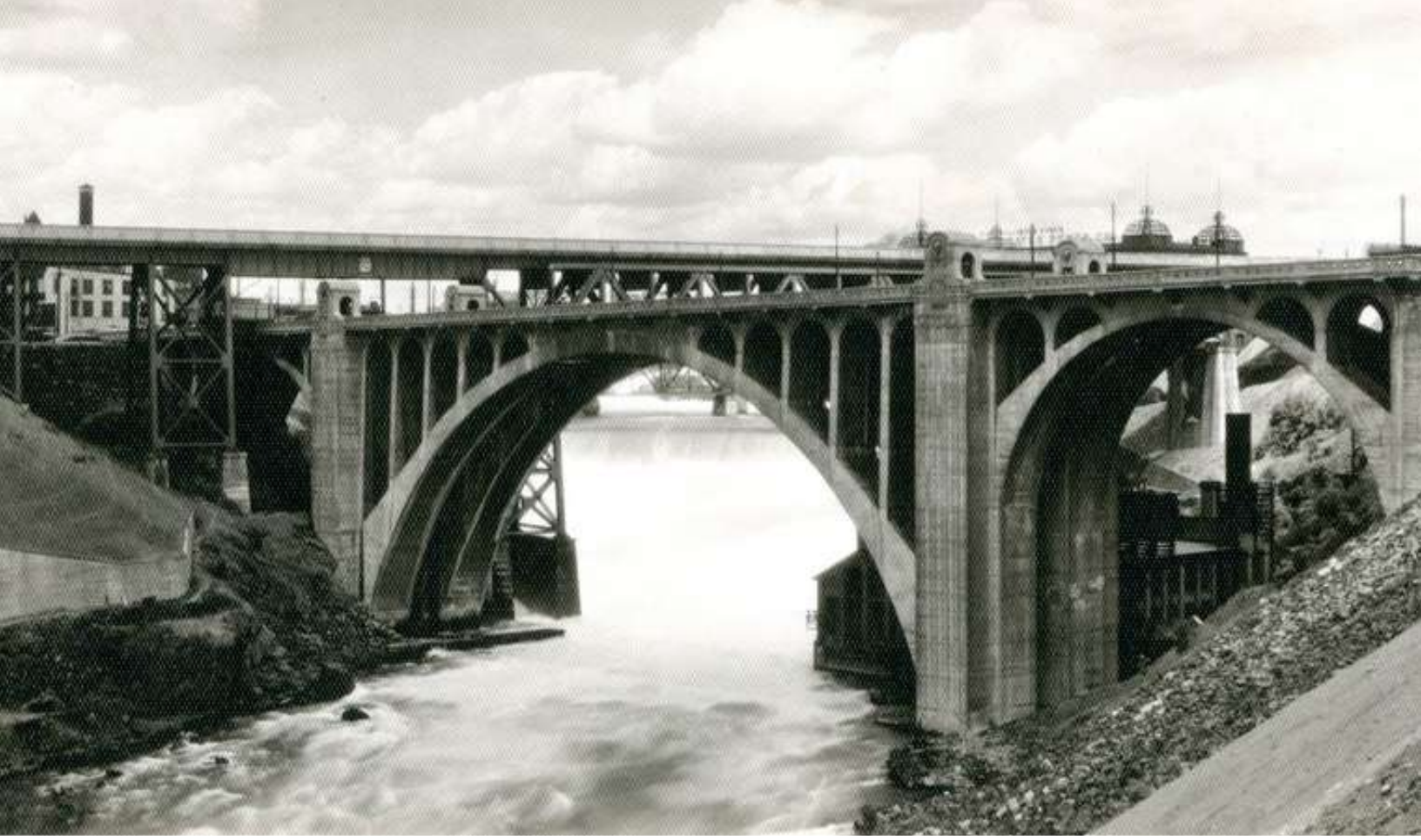
Historic Photo of the Great Northern Station at Present Day Riverfront Park

nearby northern Idaho in the late 19th century added to the desirability of our region, creating an economic and population boom for Spokane. The emergence of natural resource industries including agriculture and timber around the turn of the century continued to fuel the population growth and increase demand on the region's transportation system.

This demand led to the beginning of public transportation in the area: horse-drawn vehicles, steam-powered streetcars, and cable cars in the 1880s. The first public transportation in the area was a horse-drawn streetcar that began operation in 1887, operated by Spokane Street Railway. Two years later, in 1889, the Washington Water Power Company was formed to develop the dam and hydroelectric power plant at Monroe Street, generating power to fuel electric streetcars. In 1922, the Spokane United Railway Company was founded. It consisted of several electric trolley and streetcar lines established by real estate developers to encourage people to buy homes in new neighborhoods outside downtown Spokane. Ridership declined as the popularity of the automobile increased and by 1936 electric trolley lines were replaced by buses. Transit ridership reached its peak in Spokane in 1946 with 26 million passengers as a result of gasoline rationing from World War II. In the years following, the personal automobile continued to erode transit usage.

As Ford's Model T boomed in popularity during the early part of the 20th century, horse and wagon trails throughout the state of Washington were incorporated into the incipient automobile road system. The first Washington state road to run across the Cascade Range ran east to the Spokane area and was designated as the Sunset Highway. The road entered Spokane on the alignment of modern US Route 2 and Rosamond Avenue. The United States government began funding roadways following the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916, followed by the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1921, and the establishment of the US Numbered Highway System in 1926.

The increase in personal vehicles and increasing interest in long-distance military transport led to the growth of the Interstate Highway System. Interstate 90 (I-90) came to the area



Historic Photo of the Monroe Street Bridge

in the 1960s, bisecting Spokane County. I-90 is the longest interstate highway in the United States, nearly 3,100 miles from Seattle in the west to Boston on the east coast. It is a six-lane urban interstate highway from the Garden Springs interchange west of the City of Spokane to Barker Road in the City of Spokane Valley.

With a major river running through the metropolitan area, bridges have been and continue to be a critical piece of Spokane County's transportation network. Early in Spokane's history, several wooden and steel bridges spanned the Spokane River. Today, there are a total of 307 bridges in Spokane County included in the National Bridge Inventory (NBI).[8] Spokane County also administers hundreds of short-span bridges that are too small to be included in the NBI. The iconic Monroe Street Bridge was built in 1911 and underwent a major renovation from 2003–2005.

Spokane County has two Class I railroads, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) and Union Pacific Railroad (UP). A major yard and intermodal facility is operated by BNSF in the City of Spokane Valley. Amtrak provides passenger rail service to the region, using BNSF tracks. Spokane County's air travel and air cargo needs are primarily serviced by Spokane International Airport and Felts Field. Spokane International Airport's 6,000 acre facility is located adjacent to I-90 and US 2. A BNSF spur line, known as the Geiger Spur, also serves the AIR Spokane development site. FedEx, UPS, and US Customs and Border Protection all have facilities at Spokane International Airport. The US Postal Service also has a regional processing facility at the airport business park. More than 4 million passengers and 75 thousand tons of cargo pass through Spokane International Airport annually.[9]

8 FHA. "Bridges & Structures." U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, 2020. https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/nbi/ascii2020.cfm.

9 Average annual passenger and cargo volumes (2021–2024) based on data provided by Spokane International Airport.

Historic Photo of 1980s Spokane Transit Authority Bus

In 1979, Spokane County Parks proposed building a bike and pedestrian trail along the Spokane River. Today, the Centennial Trail is the jewel of the regional trail network. The paved pedestrian and bicycle path runs for 40 miles across Spokane County into Idaho. The Fish Lake Trail, Ben Burr Trail, and many other shared-use paths, bikes lanes, and park trails crisscross the county, often using former rail and streetcar right-of-way.

A handful of smaller cities and towns complete the makeup of Spokane County, each with their own transportation facilities and challenges. The City of Cheney is connected by SR 904 and contains the region's largest university, Eastern Washington University. The City of Liberty Lake has a park and ride facility utilized by many northern Idaho residents employed in Spokane County. Many of the rural communities of the county provide farm products destined for distribution points on the transportation system. Each community within the region works together through SRTC to make the larger transportation system work.

Origin of SRTC

The Interstate Highway Act linked communities around the country and facilitated long-distance travel, including intercity buses and long-distance truck freight. Highways enabled suburbs and bedroom communities to arise on the fringes of existing urbanized areas, while rapid increases in vehicle ownership and the advent of commercial airlines further served to complexify urban transportation and the relationships between these transportation modes.

Just six years after the 1956 Federal-Aid Highway Act authorized the building of highways throughout the nation, the 1962 Federal-Aid Highway Act mandated the creation of Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPOs) for urban areas with populations exceeding 50,000.[10]

The Act required that transportation projects in large urbanized areas be based on a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative planning process to be undertaken by states and local governments. Within a few years each of the 224 urban areas subject to the new requirement had such a transportation planning process underway—Spokane County among them. The Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965 further developed this mandate by authorizing federal grants to be made to organizations made up of public officials that represent political jurisdictions within the urban area or region.[11]

SRTC's Board of Directors continues to be primarily comprised of elected representatives within the SRTC planning area. The Board of Directors is SRTC's decision-making body, composed of 20 voting members that include elected officials and tribal representatives, member agency executives, and representatives from the freight and business communities. The Board, who are informed by SRTC staff as well as the agency's Transportation Technical and Transportation Advisory Committees, meets monthly at least eleven times per calendar year to discuss key topics of importance and vote on decisions that affect the region's transportation system.

Although MPOs vary from region to region based on local character and organizational structure, all must carry out several key responsibilities. As mentioned above, MPOs are charged with receiving and distributing federal dollars. MPOs must prepare a fiscally constrained Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that outlines significant transportation projects in the region for at least a four-year period. Notably, each MPO is required to prepare a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) to accomplish objectives outlined by the region, the state, and public transportation providers regarding the region's multimodal transportation network.[12] MPOs are also subject to regular federal review to ensure that their long-range planning efforts are consistent and that they are carrying out their responsibilities while meeting federal requirements.

Within the state of Washington, SRTC also serves as the Spokane region's Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO). RTPOs were created throughout the state of Washington as a requirement of the 1990 Growth Management Act (GMA). The GMA sought to coordinate transportation planning with broader regional growth strategies across the state. RTPOs serve as a mechanism for local governments from cities, counties, Tribes, ports, transportation service providers, and private employers to collaborate with the state of Washington on local and regional transportation planning, even in rural areas that were not part of the federal mandate for MPOs. RTPOs certify local comprehensive plans and ensure consistency between local transportation plans and regional plans and policies.[13] As one of their essential responsibilities, RTPOs must develop and periodically update a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) in accordance with the Revised Code of Washington.

This document, Horizon 2050, serves as both the MTP and the RTP for the greater Spokane region. In the chapters that follow, readers can learn more about who we are as an organization and as a community, the state of our transportation network today, anticipated trends and future conditions, as well as the strategies we can pursue to ensure a prosperous future for the region and all of us who call it home.

10 Weingroff, Richard F. "The Greatest Decade 1956-1966: Part 1 Essential to the National Interest." The Greatest Decade 1956-1966: Part 1 Essential to the National Interest, June 30, 2023. https://highways.dot.gov/highway-history/interstate-system/50th-anniversary/greatest-decade-1956-1966-part-1-essential.

11 AMPO, "About MPO's: A Brief History." Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, December 12, 2019. https://ampo.org/about-us/about-mpos/.

12 FTA, "Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)," November 21, 2022. https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/transportation-planning/metropolitan-transportation-plan-mtp.

13 WSDOT. Tribal & Regional Planning, n.d. https://wsdot.wa.gov/engineering-standards/planning-guidance/tribal-regional-planning.

1 WHO WE ARE

Introduction

Horizon 2050 is the Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan for Spokane County, Washington

Regional transportation decisions start at SRTC. We serve the Spokane region at both the federal and state levels as leaders in long-range transportation planning. As public servants, SRTC is committed to meeting the needs of the community through inclusive and thoughtful planning processes, offering the best available data, and providing clear communication to regional decision-makers and members of the public. To fulfill its public duty, SRTC produces both the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for Spokane County.

Spokane County has a growing and diverse population. The region is centered around the Spokane River, which bisects Spokane County's urban core. Similarly, the region is traversed by key infrastructure, including Interstate 90 (I-90), the longest interstate highway in the United States, and two major rail lines. Together, they play a critical role in the movement of people and goods through the Spokane region.

Chapter 1: Who We Are outlines the SRTC planning area, providing an overview of our core responsibilities, federal and state planning requirements, and the foundational policies that guide our work.

Our Region

Spokane County is the fourth most populous county in Washington state with 550,700 residents in 2022,[1] as shown in Figure 1.01. By 2024, its population was estimated to have grown to 559,400.[2] The City of Spokane is the largest city in the county—second in the state to Seattle—and the county seat. The metropolitan area is the largest between Seattle and Minneapolis, serving as a hub for the greater Inland Northwest. Historically, Spokane County's economy was driven by mining, timber, and agriculture sectors. Today the region has a more diversified economy based on healthcare, education, professional services, and manufacturing. Figure 1.02 shows the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), which includes all of Spokane County. For the purposes of this document, the "Spokane region" and the "SRTC planning area" are used interchangeably with the Spokane MPA..

SRTC Responsibilities

SRTC is where important regional transportation decisions are made. SRTC brings together government agencies, community members,

1 2022 is the base year used in Horizon 2050 to forecast population, employment, and land use change in the travel demand model.

2 OFM. "April 1, 2025, Population of Cities, Towns and Counties Used for Allocation of Selected State Revenues State of Washington." Washington State Office of Financial Management, April 1, 2025. https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics/population-estimates/april-1-official-population-estimates.

Figure 1.01 **Population of Jurisdictions in the SRTC Metropolitan Planning Area**

Source: Washington State OFM April 1, 2022 Official Population Estimates

Jurisdiction	2022 Population
Spokane	230,900
Spokane Valley	107,100
Cheney	12,920
Liberty Lake	12,870
Airway Heights	11,040
Medical Lake	4,840
Deer Park	4,670
Millwood	1,915
Fairfield	600
Rockford	545
Spangle	280
Latah	185
Waverly	120
Unincorporated County	162,715
Total	**550,700**

tribes, and other stakeholders from around the region to make good, well-informed transportation decisions. As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Spokane County, SRTC develops plans and programs that coordinate transportation planning across the Spokane region. Federal law requires any urbanized area with a population greater than 50,000 to establish an MPO to ensure transportation spending is based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process. Federal funds for transportation projects and programs are channeled through this process and awarded to local agencies and jurisdictions to address transportation needs.

With an urbanized area exceeding 200,000 residents, the Spokane region MPO is also federally designated as a Transportation Management Area (TMA). Responsibilities of a TMA include discretion in allocating certain federal transportation funds. TMAs are required to have public transportation representation on their board, a regionally coordinated Congestion Management Process (CMP), and authority for project selection in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). As a TMA, SRTC is reviewed by the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration every four years to certify that it is fulfilling its TMA duties and responsibilities.

SRTC is also a state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for Spokane County. RTPOs serve the same basic transportation planning functions as MPOs with additional responsibilities pertaining to the Growth Management Act (GMA). An RTPO covers both urban and rural areas and receives state funding for planning efforts. As mandated by the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) to advance coordination at the regional and local level, RTPOs are authorized to certify County and local comprehensive plans (including amendments). To be certified by SRTC, plans must demonstrate that their transportation elements are consistent with the RTP (Horizon 2050), reflect the guidelines and principles thereunder, and satisfy the state requirements.[3]

As a regional intergovernmental agency, SRTC encourages communication, coordination, and collaboration among planning and transportation departments at partner agencies, including Kalispel Tribe of Indians, City of Spokane, Spokane Airport Board, Spokane County, STA, Spokane Tribe of Indians, City of Spokane Valley, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and small cities and towns to assure connectivity throughout Spokane County. An interlocal agreement between these agencies shows our commitment to working together to provide each other, and the public, with quality transportation planning services. SRTC maintains a robust program of public outreach and stakeholder engagement to support our planning and analysis.

3 RCW 47.80.026 and RCW 36.70A.070(6)

Figure 1.02 **Map of the SRTC Metropolitan Planning Area**

Figure 1.03 **Metropolitan Transportation Planning's Regulatory Context**

23 USC § 134 - Metropolitan Transportation Planning

(a) Policy.—It is in the national interest—

(1) to encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of surface transportation systems that will serve the mobility needs of people and freight, foster economic growth and development within and between States and urbanized areas better connect housing and employment, and take into consideration resiliency needs while minimizing transportation-related fuel consumption and air pollution through metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes identified in this chapter; and

(2) to encourage the continued improvement and evolution of the metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes by metropolitan planning organizations, State departments of transportation, and public transit operators as guided by the planning factors.

What is Horizon 2050?

To keep pace with evolving needs of metropolitan areas, careful long-range planning is essential to ensure a transportation system that supports a thriving, resilient and growing community. Our plan, Horizon 2050, serves as both the MTP and the RTP required under Washington's Growth Management Act.

Horizon 2050 is a comprehensive long-range multimodal transportation planning document that:

- Outlines a regional transportation policy framework
- Assesses current transportation conditions
- Analyzes regional surface transportation needs
- Establishes a strategic path forward for Spokane County's transportation future
- Highlights critical regional transportation projects, programs, and strategies
- Demonstrates financial feasibility through the year 2050

Additionally, Horizon 2050:

- Supports regional coordination and collaboration
- Recognizes that land use and transportation are linked and must be considered together to meet both land use goals and transportation needs
- Puts an emphasis on maintenance, preservation, and safety
- Recognizes that an efficient transportation system/network supports livable communities and is crucial to economic vitality
- Acknowledges improvements to the efficiency of the transportation system can be made through the use of transportation demand management (TDM) and intelligent transportation systems (ITS)
- Provides a financial plan to meet future needs while demonstrating that funding for all projects and programs in the plan is reasonably available
- Satisfies state and federal planning requirements and regulations
- Is a performance-based plan that establishes metrics for monitoring and evaluating success

Guiding Principles & Policies

SRTC's core values are expressed in its Guiding Principles and Policies, which serve as the foundation for all agency plans and programs. These principles were updated for Horizon 2050 through a collaborative process with SRTC's committees and Board of Directors.

The Guiding Principles, shown in Figure 1.04, serve as the basis for Horizon 2050's policy framework. This framework directly addresses the federal planning factors discussed earlier, as well as the state's transportation policy goals. Together, these elements provide a structured approach for establishing performance measures that assess regional progress toward achieving adopted policies.

This section provides a detailed overview of each of the Guiding Principles.

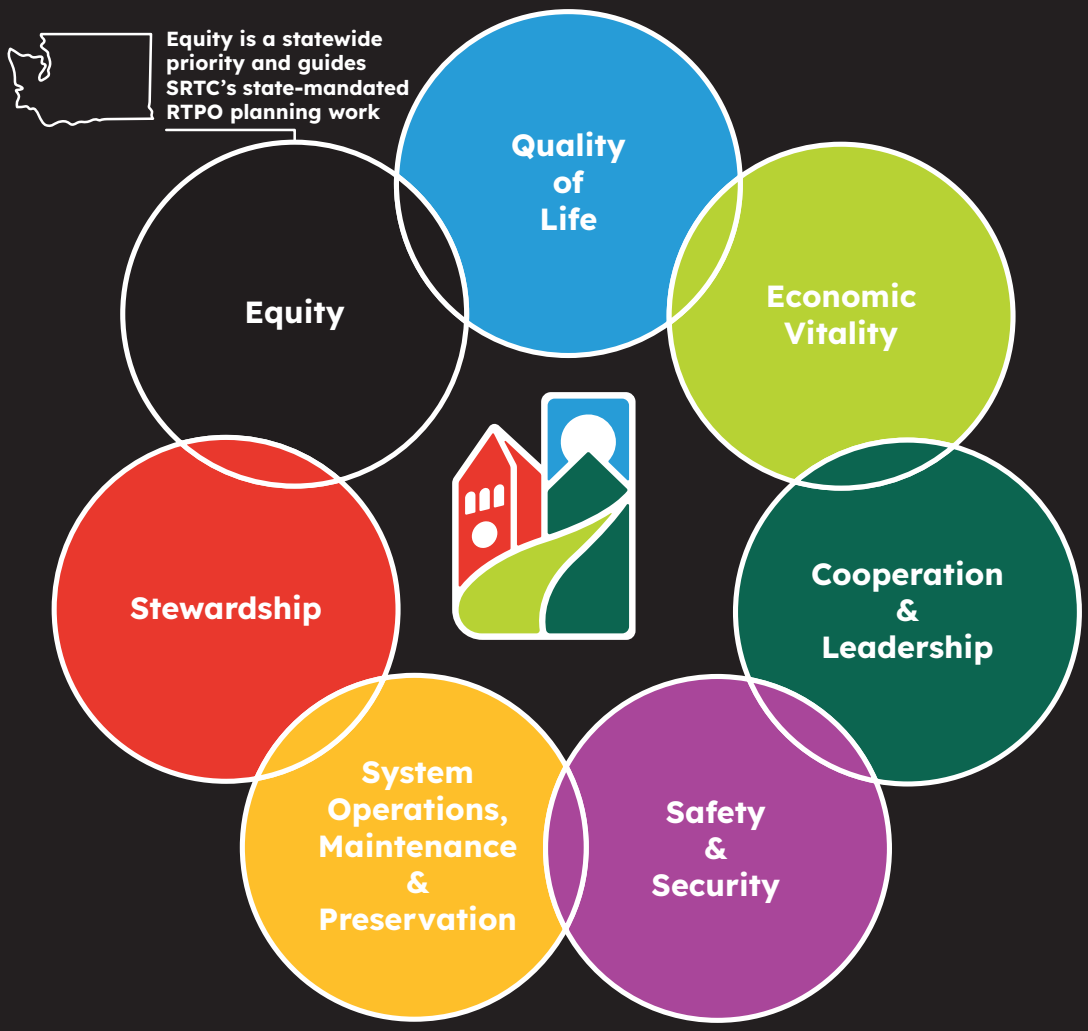


Figure 1.04 **Horizon 2050 Guiding Principles**

Quality of Life

Improving the day-to-day experience for everyone across the county

SRTC will promote plans and projects in urban, suburban, and rural neighborhoods that offer safe and convenient forms of healthy active transportation options for people of all abilities. Decision-making will strive to create multimodal transportation choices through increased availability and improved service, and Level of Traffic Stress analyses and other relevant data will be leveraged in transportation planning. Strengthening existing connections and creating new connections will improve mobility for all users. Context sensitive design will be considered to preserve cultural, social, commercial, and natural elements of the region's neighborhoods and communities.

Quality of Life Policies

A. Apply SRTC's Complete Streets Policy in transportation planning efforts to advance lower-stress and accessible active transportation options.

B. Improve access and the quality of access to public transit for all people including those considered underserved, regardless of race, age, national origin, income, or ability.

C. Support public transit that improves frequency, span and reliability of transit services with a variety of service levels and transit modalities within the region, with emphasis on investments in the Transit Priority Network.

D. Support multimodal transportation options and complementary land use practices that encourage walking and enhance health and physical activity for users of all abilities.

E. Support demand-management strategies to help safely integrate e-bikes and micromobility devices while reducing Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) trips.

F. Support transportation projects that protect culture, value unique characteristics of communities, and contribute to a sense of place.

G. Support projects that maintain and preserve active transportation facilities, with emphasis on maintaining and upgrading the Bicycle Priority Network, including extending and filling gaps in regional multi-use trails.

Why Quality of Life?

- SRTC strives to improve everyone's day-to-day travel experience through comprehensive planning processes such as Safe and Complete Streets.
- SRTC understands the need for public transportation options which serve all the diverse members of our community.
- SRTC sees the benefits that active transportation can have through economic vitality and physical and mental health.

Example: Fish Lake Trail Connection (City of Spokane)

The Fish Lake Trail Connection project will establish a long-awaited connecting segment between the Centennial Trail and the Fish Lake Trail. This further strengthens the regional trail network and allows for longer active transportation trips. Connecting communities, higher accessibility, and healthier trips are all facets of Quality of Life.

Economic Vitality

Working towards better economic opportunities and outcomes for Spokane

Investments and improvements in the regional transportation system will promote economic vitality by moving people, freight, and goods to enhance the global competitiveness of the regional economy. Major transportation facilities, and the mobility they provide to, between and within economic activity centers, will stimulate commerce. Horizon 2050 should prioritize and coordinate regional transportation investments aimed at the development of a multimodal system that provides transportation opportunities that enhance accessibility and connections among city centers, regional service centers and attractions, towns, and areas of regional employment.

Economic Vitality Policies

A. Prioritize transportation investments by mode that enhance accessibility and connections between city centers, regional centers, attractions, towns, and areas of regional employment.

B. Support areas of potential economic development.

C. Support the efficiency of freight movement and monitor associated performance measure progress around travel time reliability.

D. Support projects that maintain and enhance the Freight Priority Network.

Why Economic Vitality?

- SRTC plans for supportive local infrastructure in coordination with land use to ensure an efficient and well-connected system.
- SRTC supports areas of potential economic development to ensure economic opportunity is afforded to all citizens of the region.
- SRTC understands the importance of local freight and air goods transportation to the regional economy.

Example: Argonne Bridge to I-90 (City of Spokane Valley)

The Argonne Bridge in western Spokane Valley is a critical connection between economic hubs in the Spokane region. On the North side of I-90, a large commercial and industrial hub spanning across jurisdictional boundaries is connected to the Sprague commercial corridor on the south side of I-90 via the Argonne bridge. This project maintains an important connection which is identified as one of the truck freight routes on SRTC's Freight Priority Network.

Cooperation & Leadership

Regional coordination and collaboration starts with SRTC

SRTC will provide the forum to develop regional transportation priorities, to identify transportation funding needs, and to develop strategies to acquire funding in accordance with federal and state planning requirements. SRTC will help coordinate efforts to communicate with business and community groups and give the public sufficient time to review and comment at key milestones in the transportation planning process. These efforts will bring together all community stakeholders and transportation planning partners in order to present a unified voice in support of the region's transportation needs.

Cooperation & Leadership Policies

A. Provide leadership by facilitating coordinated, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning.

B. Incorporate public processes in significant planning efforts.

C. Promote regional transportation interests, plans, and projects to federal, state, and local public and private entities.

D. Coordinate transportation relevant data for shared use among regional stakeholders.

E. Strengthen avenues of involvement for all people including those considered underserved regardless of race, national origin, or income in the decision-making process.

Why Cooperation & Leadership?

- SRTC takes a leadership role in regional and national advocacy to ensure local projects and agencies have as much access to support and funding as possible.
- SRTC sees cooperation as paramount to ensure a seamless transition across jurisdictional boundaries.

Example: Unified List of Regional Transportation Priorities (SRTC)

The SRTC Unified List of Regional Transportation Priorities serves as a coordinated communication tool to inform state and federal legislators of the region's highest transportation priorities. Updated annually in collaboration with member agencies, the list identifies critical investments that enhance the efficiency, safety, and overall performance of the regional transportation system. Projects are evaluated using criteria that reflect quality of life, economic vitality, safety, and other factors demonstrating benefit to both the region and the state.

Safety & Security

Our commitment to zero fatal and serious injuries in Spokane County

SRTC aims to eliminate fatal and serious injury crashes for all road users. SRTC will promote and implement the FHWA Safe Systems Approach, thus the regional transportation system will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to ensure that all road users and their vehicles are able to travel safely, at safe speeds, and on safe roads. SRTC will prioritize investments that make the system safer for all users through best-practice design, operational improvements, education and outreach, and technology-based strategies. SRTC will promote strong regional post-crash care response.

Safety & Security Policies

A. Support improvements to vehicle and roadway safety deficiencies to eliminate fatal and serious injury crashes.

B. Protect critical infrastructures from natural and human threats.

C. Review, reassess, and renew data targets regularly to achieve Target Zero.

D. Promote safety through supporting education, outreach and enforcement of rules of the road for all modes that use the roadways.

E. Support strategies to ensure safe and efficient working conditions for roadway maintenance teams and emergency responders while they provide post-crash care.

F. Support structural improvements to the active transportation network in accordance with SRTC's Complete Streets Policy.

Why Safety & Security?

- SRTC understands that protecting the most vulnerable network users trickles up to all modes of transportation.
- SRTC ensures the region has access to funding to protect its citizens through efforts such as the Regional Safety Action Plan.

Example: Regional Safety Action Plan (SRTC)

The Regional Safety Action Plan (RSAP) is a comprehensive planning document which details important points of data and demographics for the Spokane region. The RSAP gives crash information for each jurisdiction, including amount, type, and whether or not there were any fatal or serious injuries. It also outlines potential solutions for the crashes, from design treatments to behavioral fixes.

System Operations, Maintenance & Preservation

Maintaining, updating, and preserving the transportation network

SRTC will strive to provide adequate funding for projects that preserve the region's physical infrastructure, optimize system operations, and reduce costs. SRTC and project proponents will establish performance targets and measures that promote efficient system management and well-maintained infrastructure. Technology solutions will be utilized where appropriate to maximize efficiency of the existing transportation system.

System Operations Policies

A. Identify cost-effective strategies and utilize technology to optimize system performance and adaptability considering future growth and potential changes in transportation demand.

B. During winter weather conditions, ensure snow and ice removal and snow storage is managed for roadways and sidewalks to improve user safety and mobility and to keep the transportation system operational for all users.

C. Monitor and set performance targets for federally required performance management areas to improve travel time reliability and advance pavement and bridge condition.

D. Promote coordination and collaboration with the Spokane Regional Transportation Management Center (SRTMC) and incident and emergency management agencies.

E. Utilize the Congestion Management Process to identify areas of need and implement strategies to improve operational efficiency.

Why System Operations?

- SRTC sees technology as a growing area of opportunity for transportation efficiency and safety.
- SRTC understands the value that the Spokane Regional Transportation Management Center brings to the region.

Example: I-90 TSMO Improvements (WSDOT)

WSDOT's I-90 TSMO improvements project is currently focusing on increased efficiency and safety along the corridor. The project, which is in SRTC's Transportation Improvement Program, aims to add meters at on- and off-ramps all the way to the Idaho border. Other improvements include variable message signs, variable speed limit signs, and more. Currently installed ramp metering along I-90 has demonstrated safety benefits with a decline in crash incidents at the merging locations.

Stewardship

Stewardship is reflective of our effort to balance the human and natural environment

Transportation decisions will strive to maximize the positive impacts to the built environment while minimizing negative impacts to air quality and the natural environment. SRTC will promote investments in the region that protect and enhance the environment and promote energy conservation. SRTC will leverage data for the benefit of the region and establish performance measures to ensure coordinated regional policies make progress towards established objectives. SRTC will ensure that the region plans for a resilient, redundant, connected, and equitable multimodal transportation network that can withstand unforeseen disruptions. Coordinated regional investment opportunities will be sought out to support the fiscally constrained planning program and fund project delivery.

Stewardship Policies

A. Ensure transportation decisions minimize impacts to natural resources and conserve non-renewable resources.

B. Make investments that maximize transportation benefits and support federal, state, and local goals and maintain a federally compliant TIP.

C. Ensure plans and programs provide for the responsible use of public and private funds while demonstrating financial constraint.

D. Encourage evaluating shared use of infrastructure for stakeholders and all transportation users.

E. Use performance measures to evaluate how policies and investments support key transportation objectives.

F. Enhance overall resiliency in the transportation network by prioritizing projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote energy efficiency, and ensure infrastructure redundancy and state of good repair.

Why Stewardship?

- SRTC understands the need to balance the continuous growth of the built environment with our natural environment.
- SRTC wants to ensure regional accountability through performance targets and competitive project investment processes.
- SRTC is a steward of public dollars and aims to invest wisely in transportation infrastructure.

Example: STA Fleet Electrification (STA)

The STA Fleet Electrification project will continue to reduce air emissions in the Spokane region for years to come. As part of that, it will increase the quality of life for Spokane County constituents and support the resiliency of the transportation network through less reliance on non-renewable fuels.

Equity

A Washington State effort and priority to ensure equitable access to transportation

As the Washington state RTPO for the Spokane region, SRTC is responsible for considering equity and environmental justice issues as current transportation planning decisions will impact lives for generations. SRTC maintains that all people, regardless of their demographic characteristics or barriers they may face, should have safe, dependable, and accessible transportation infrastructure that connects to resources and opportunities and enables them to reach their full potential. As such, users' experience when using the transportation system should not be determined by race, socioeconomic status, age, or any other characteristic.

SRTC defines potentially transportation disadvantaged communities in terms of low income, disability status, lack of vehicle access, and age dependency. Transportation disadvantaged residents are present throughout Spokane County in both urban and rural environments, and statewide data indicates that these demographics are disproportionately represented as pedestrian victims in fatal and serious injury crashes. SRTC also considers vulnerable populations as defined in RCW70A.02.010.

Equity Policies

A. Identify and elevate projects with community support as demonstrated by a robust and well-documented public engagement strategy that includes tailored outreach to vulnerable and transportation disadvantaged communities.

B. Work to meet established safety targets and address fatal and serious injury crashes by supporting projects that build complete streets, mitigate modal conflict, and foster improved safety in areas where vulnerable and transportation disadvantaged residents make up a large share of the population.

C. Ensure that all people can benefit from a well-connected transportation network by addressing multimodal connectivity gaps and supporting projects that improve access to employment and service centers for potentially disadvantaged communities.

D. Employ established federal and state evaluation tools alongside local data in considering environmental justice and health disparities in transportation planning.

Why Equity?

- SRTC understands the state level priorities surrounding equity and advancing overburdened communities.
- SRTC understands that the Spokane region has a diverse community with many different cultural backgrounds and spoken languages.
- SRTC understands that there are historically overburdened communities within Spokane County.

Example: US 2 Corridor Multimodal Improvements (City of Airway Heights/WSDOT)

The US 2 Corridor Multimodal Improvements project will revitalize the corridor by adding new sidewalks and paths, upgraded intersections, safer pedestrian crossings, speed-management measures, and a more inviting streetscape that supports walking and local businesses. The project is located in areas of potential disadvantage, as identified in Chapter 2, and will improve access through a critical community corridor while creating additional opportunities for historically disadvantaged populations. SRTC awarded $5 million to this project through the 2027–2029 Call for Projects.

MTP Requirements

Regional transportation planning is guided by federal legislation, which provides the framework, funding, and priorities for surface transportation investments. Federal transportation laws or "acts" serve as the foundation for funding and transportation programs. These laws cover a specific time frame and are reauthorized or updated periodically. The current federal transportation funding legislation, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), was enacted in November 2021 and expires at the end of 2026. The IIJA brought significant increases in federal infrastructure funding and introduced new programs aimed at traditional and emerging federal priorities including:

- Roads, bridges, and major projects
- Passenger and freight rail
- Highway and pedestrian safety
- Public transit
- Airports
- Electric vehicle charging
- Ports, waterways, and water infrastructure
- Resiliency, including funding for weatherization

With $550 billion in new investments, IIJA also created or expanded several funding programs such as:

- National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)
- Bridge Formula Program

Before the passage of the IIJA, the Fixing American's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) was approved in December 2015, replacing the previous funding legislation, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). The FAST Act provided state and local governments with funding certainty to help them advance major transportation projects. Though it largely maintained existing program structures and funding levels between highways and transit, the FAST Act made changes and reforms to many Federal transportation programs, including streamlining the approval processes for new transportation projects, providing new safety tools, and establishing new programs to advance critical freight projects.

It is important that SRTC remains flexible to prepare projects and plans that can be competitive even as federal emphasis areas change. MTPs must be fiscally restrained, meaning they only include projects for which the MPO can reasonably demonstrate that sufficient funding will be available. While there are many required components as part of the development of an MTP, the next few sections highlight some key elements

Planning Factors

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), enacted in 1998, established seven planning factors which MPOs must consider in the formulation of transportation plans and programs. Subsequent federal transportation acts continued to emphasize these and added three new factors to the metropolitan planning process. In total, the ten federal planning factors illustrate the need for transportation planning initiatives to promote the economic vitality, safety, accessibility, and interconnectivity of the multimodal transportation system. The federal planning factors are listed in Figure 1.05, while Figure 1.06 demonstrates how Horizon 2050 and SRTC's long-range planning address the factors.

Figure 1.05 **Federal Planning Factors**

1. **Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency**

2. **Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users**

3. **Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users**

4. **Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight**

5. **Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local growth and economic development patterns**

6. **Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight**

7. **Promote efficient system management and operation**

8. **Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system**

9. **Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation**

10. **Enhance travel and tourism**

Figure 1.06 **Where Horizon 2050 Addresses Federal Planning Factors**

Federal Planning Factors	Within Horizon 2050 (Chapter: Section)	Example Projects/Strategies/Actions
1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency	▸ **2 Where We Are**: Our Economy ▸ **3 Where We're Going**: Projected Freight Movement	▸ I-90 Study ▸ Financially Constrained Projects & Programs ▸ Economic Vitality Guiding Principle
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users	▸ **2 Where We Are**: Performance-Based Planning & Programming ▸ **3 Where We're Going**: Future of Transportation Programs	▸ Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress ▸ Regional Safety Action Plan ▸ Safety & Security Guiding Principle
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users	▸ **2 Where We Are**: Performance-Based Planning & Programming ▸ **3 Where We're Going**: Future of Transportation Programs	▸ Regional Safety Action Plan ▸ Resiliency Plan ▸ Safety & Security Guiding Principle
4. Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight	▸ **3 Where We're Going**: Projected Freight Movement ▸ **4 How We'll Get There**: Implementation Strategies	▸ Congestion Management Process ▸ Freight Priority Network
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local growth and economic development patterns	▸ **1 Who We Are**: Guiding Principles & Policies ▸ **4 How We'll Get There**: Future Trends & Other Considerations	▸ Smart Mobility Plan ▸ Resiliency Plan ▸ Stewardship & Quality of Life Guiding Principles
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight	▸ **3 Where We're Going**: Projected Freight Movement ▸ **4 How We'll Get There**: Implementation Strategies	▸ Congestion Management Process ▸ Safe & Complete Streets Policy ▸ Regional Priority Networks
7. Promote efficient system management and operation	▸ **04 How We'll Get There**: Financially Constrained Projects & Programs ▸ **04 How We'll Get There**: Implementation Strategies	▸ Congestion Management Process ▸ Regional ITS Architecture Plan ▸ TSMO Program
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system	▸ **2 Where We Are**: Our Economy ▸ **4 How We'll Get There**: Financially Constrained Programs, Implementation Strategy 1	▸ Resiliency Plan ▸ System Operations Guiding Principle ▸ Preservation Call for Projects
9. Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation	▸ **1 Who We Are**: Guiding Principles & Policies ▸ **2 Where We Are**: Our Economy	▸ Resiliency Plan ▸ System Operations & Stewardship Guiding Principles
10. Enhance travel and tourism	▸ **1 Who We Are**: Guiding Principles & Policies ▸ **2 Where We Are**: Our Economy	▸ I-90 Study ▸ Quality of Life Guiding Principle ▸ Multimodal Improvement Strategy

Consistency with Other Plans

Federal regulations stipulate that the MTP must be consistent with regional plans and programs including:

- The TIP
- The Regional ITS Architecture Plan
- The CMP
- STA Transit Development Plan
- WSDOT Highway System Plan
- WSDOT Strategic Highway Safety Plan
- WSTC Washington Transportation Plan
- Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan
- Other modal plans (state rail plan, state active transportation plan, et cetera)

Horizon 2050 was developed with consideration of these planning efforts to ensure consistency with our partner agencies.

3C Planning Process

As the MPO for Spokane County, SRTC is charged with ensuring a "3C" planning process is utilized—"a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a MTP, that encourages and promotes the safe and efficient development, management, and operation of surface transportation systems to serve the mobility needs of people and freight and foster economic growth and development, while minimizing transportation related fuel consumption and air pollution."[4] This process requires SRTC to work directly with local, state, and federal agencies and the public to develop and administer a wide range of transportation program activities.

SRTC integrates the concepts of 3C planning in every activity and work product. A few examples of how SRTC implements 3C into its work activities include:

- **Continuing:** Core functions of SRTC—MTP, TIP, Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Transportation Performance Measures—follow an ongoing schedule for updates, allowing for consistent progress and performance tracking. The UPWP outlines activities more specifically over a two-year period ensuring a robust plan of ongoing work. SRTC also holds monthly Board and advisory committee meetings to promote ongoing communication and data sharing.
- **Cooperative:** SRTC has a foundation in cooperative planning. From the makeup of the Board to the advisory committees, and through our public engagement, we operate under the spirit of open coordination and cooperation. SRTC initiates both formal and informal relationships with local governments, tribes, transit providers, state and federal agencies, advocacy groups, and the public via participation on boards and committees and through public engagement efforts and planning agreements. Additionally, the development of grant applications, scopes of services, and working documents such as the UPWP involve input and direction from these various stakeholders.
- **Comprehensive:** SRTC addresses all surface transportation modes as part of our planning activities. Additionally, we participate regularly in planning studies and other activities that span transportation and land use. SRTC also integrates key emerging issues into our planning efforts including technology, safety, alternative fuels, and economic development to support a resilient regional system.

MTP Amendments and Administrative Modifications

MTP updates are required every five years now that the area is no longer under a limited maintenance plan for criteria pollutants of carbon monoxide and particulate matter that

4 23 CFR 450; 49 CFR 613

is 10 micrometers or less in diameter (PM10). As of August 2025, Spokane County is an attainment area under the Clean Air Act for particulate matter and carbon monoxide pollution. Previously, the area was a non-attainment area but was re-designated as an attainment area with limited maintenance plans for the pollutants in 2005. As part of the air quality maintenance planning period of 20 years, there were additional transportation planning requirements including updating the MTP every four years. Now that the 20-year maintenance planning is complete as of August 2025, and the area demonstrated continued attainment of the air quality standards, MTP updates are required every five years.[5]

Updates to Horizon 2050 can be made more often, as required, through two methods: amendment or administrative modification. Amendments require public review and demonstration of fiscal constraint. Changes to projects that are included only for illustrative purposes do not require an amendment. A revision is a change to the MTP that occurs between scheduled periodic updates. A major revision is an amendment, while a minor revision is an administrative modification.

SRTC worked with WSDOT, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to develop guidelines for amendments which include:

- New projects or deleted projects,
- Major scope changes, **or**
- Significant changes in funding for or cost of a project.

Administrative modifications include any change that doesn't qualify as an amendment. Administrative modifications do not require public review and comment or demonstration of fiscal constraint.

These two different means of modifying the MTP, amendments and administrative modifications, also apply to the SRTC TIP.

RTP Requirements

As stated earlier in this chapter, SRTC is required to develop and maintain the RTP for Spokane County. The RTP is a requirement of the GMA. Horizon 2050 serves as both the MTP and RTP for Spokane County. To satisfy the GMA requirements for an RTP, Horizon 2050 must include:

- A regional transportation strategy
- Identified existing and planned facilities and programs
- Level of service standards for the regional system[6]
- A financial plan[7]
- Assessment of regional development patterns
- Assessment of regional capital investment
- Least-Cost Transportation Planning
- Compliance among local land use plans, countywide planning programs/policies, and the state transportation plan[8]
- References to benchmarks that require a reduction in annual per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT)[9]

5 23 CFR § 450.324
6 RCW 36.70A
7 RCW 47.80.030(1)(d)
8 RCW 47.80.026, RCW 36.70A.070, RCW 36.70A.210
9 RCW 47.01.440

- References to greenhouse gas reduction goals[10]

As further defined in the RCWs, primary duties of an RTPO include:

- "Establish guidelines and principles by July 1, 1995 that provide specific direction for the development and evaluation of the transportation elements of comprehensive plans"[11]
- "Certify by December 31, 1996, that the transportation elements of comprehensive plans adopted by counties, cities, and towns within the region reflect the guidelines and principles developed pursuant to RCW 47.80.026, are consistent with the adopted RTP, and, where appropriate, conform with the requirements of RCW 36.70A.070"[12]
- "Review level of service methodologies used by cities and counties planning under chapter 36.70A RCW to promote a consistent regional evaluation of transportation facilities and corridors"[13]
- "Work with cities, counties, transit agencies, the department of transportation, and others to develop level of service standards"[14]

SRTC is currently in the process of evaluating and updating a comprehensive plan review and certification process. The current plan review and certification process was adopted in 2015. This document is available on the SRTC website and will be updated once a new review process is approved by the SRTC Board.

As part of its review and certification process, SRTC evaluates regional LOS for the following modes: vehicular, transit, and non-motorized (combined bike/walk). SRTC's regional vehicular LOS is evaluated for regional mobility corridors with data taken from the SRTC regional travel demand model. For vehicular LOS on interrupted flow facilities, SRTC conducts a corridor-level travel time analysis and for vehicular LOS on uninterrupted flow facilities, SRTC conducts the analysis using corridor-level vehicular volumes. For transit LOS, SRTC evaluates systemwide ridership and for non-motorized LOS, mode share is analyzed. The regional LOS standards are detailed in the Comprehensive Plan Certification Manual available in the Growth Management section of the SRTC website.

State Transportation Policy

Horizon 2050 is also required to consider the state transportation policy goals. Washington's transportation policy goals were established by the Washington State Legislature in 2007 which directed WSDOT and regional agencies to align planning and investment decisions with six statutory goals, as listed in Figure 1.07.[15]

Horizon 2050 is required to consider the state transportation policy goals. The state goals influenced the development of SRTC's Guiding Principles and Policies included earlier in this chapter. The goals were created to ensure a consistent, accountable, and performance-based framework for managing the state's transportation system, and they are consistent with the Guiding Principles that shape SRTC's work.

MTP and RTP Requirements

Requirements for the federal MTP and state RTP overlap in several areas. The requirements for each are shown in Figure 1.08.

Public Outreach

Public outreach is an organizational value. When crafting a schedule and strategies for public outreach, SRTC staff seek to meet people where they are in the community and foster thoughtful feedback that can be used in our work. Horizon 2050 engagement was centered around accessibility, transparency, inclusivity, and collab-

10 RCW 70.235.020
11 RCW 47.80.026
12 RCW 47.80.023
13 RCW 47.80.023
14 RCW 47.80.023
15 RCW 47.04.280

Figure 1.07 **Statewide Transportation Goals**

1. **Preservation**
   To maintain, preserve, and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services

2. **Safety**
   To provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system

3. **Stewardship**
   To continuously improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the transportation system

4. **Mobility**
   To improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington state

5. **Economic Vitality**
   To promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy

6. **Environment**
   To enhance Washington's quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment

oration. SRTC understands the importance of ensuring members of the public have access to decision-making and ample opportunity to learn about and provide input on the planning activities that impact their communities. Communities across Spokane County, including historically excluded areas, are intentionally targeted to get equitable and accurate information.

To guide our public outreach and engagement, SRTC maintains a Public Participation Plan. SRTC's Public Participation Plan, adopted in December 2021, includes several requirements for public outreach and document review during the MTP process. A variety of outreach methods and materials must be used to engage the public. In addition, the MTP will:

- Be updated at a minimum of every five years
- Be reviewed by SRTC's Board of Directors, Transportation Technical Committee, and Transportation Advisory Committee prior to being adopted or accepted by the Board
- Be reviewed through the Interagency Coordination and Collaboration process
- Have a minimum 30-day public comment period prior to adoption
- Have a public meeting hosted during the 30-day public comment period to solicit input

In addition to these requirements, SRTC develops a tailored community engagement strategy for each plan, program, and study. The engagement strategy includes a variety of outreach methods and ensures that we have considered current demographics, community barriers to participation, challenges, and needs. Outreach activities undertaken for Horizon 2050 are detailed in the next section.

Figure 1.08 **Horizon 2050 Federal and State Requirements**

Horizon 2050 Engagement

Input from various outreach activities, including discussions with community members at public events, MTP workshops, public surveys, and presentations to community groups have been very valuable in gauging the region's priorities. SRTC relies on public input to effectively plan for the region's transportation needs, especially during an MTP update cycle. During this time, SRTC must take critical steps to ensure the region's long-range plan effectively guides the development and operation of the region's transportation system through the planning horizon.

Since early 2024, Horizon 2050 materials have been distributed or presented at the following events. Each of these events were opportunities for public input/feedback and were one of the many available avenues of communication with SRTC:

- Lunar New Year Celebration
- El Mercadito
- Spokane Bike Swap
- Liberty Lake Farmer's Market
- Felts Field Neighbor Day
- Juneteenth Celebration
- Summer Parkways
- Unity in the Community

A public feedback summary follows, and all public comments are included in Appendix A.

MTP Workshops and Presentations

As part of the targeted outreach for Horizon 2050, SRTC scheduled a series of workshops. The workshops served as an opportunity for the community to learn and share their thoughts and needs pertaining to the regional transportation network. As with SRTC's community outreach program, workshops were scheduled around the region, with a particular emphasis on hosting workshops in communities that capture the region's full demographic, social, and geographic diversity.

MTP-specific workshops were held at:

- Eastern Washington University—Cheney Campus
- U-District Catalyst Building
- Liberty Park Library
- Airway Heights Community Center
- Spokane Valley Library
- Spokane Central Library

In addition to the workshops listed above, SRTC staff discussed the MTP with the agency's Transportation Equity Working Group and Transportation Advisory Committee, comprised of community members who meet to discuss specific transportation issues, concerns, and opportunities. SRTC staff also provided information on MTP development at public meetings throughout 2024 and 2025. In February 2025, SRTC staff discussed the MTP on the Spokane County Library District podcast, Library Out Loud, in Episode 110—Spokane Regional Transportation Council Future Planning.

Public Feedback Summary

At each of the public events and workshops listed above, SRTC staff presented an interactive activity that asked community members to indicate their preferences among several regional transportation priorities. Participants were given three stickers to represent how they would invest in a set of transportation priority categories. In total, 1,103 stickers were placed on the boards, meaning approximately 368 people participated in the activity. Figure 1.09 illustrates the commu-

nity's responses to this activity by category of investment.

The categories of investment and their descriptions were listed as follows:

Active Transportation
Construction of facilities that serve pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-vehicular forms of transportation.

Maintenance and Preservation
Maintaining existing roads, paths, bridges, and their surface condition.

New Construction
Building new major roadways or widening existing roads to add lanes.

Research, Analysis, and Planning
Strategic analysis of transportation corridors or other focused studies to identify appropriate transportation solutions.

Safety and Security
Projects and programs that improve safety or security for road users across all modes of transportation.

Transportation Demand Management
Includes strategies and projects that aim to improve transportation system efficiency by reducing drive-alone trips during peak travel hours.

Transit
All projects aimed at improving public transit fleets, routes, or service levels.

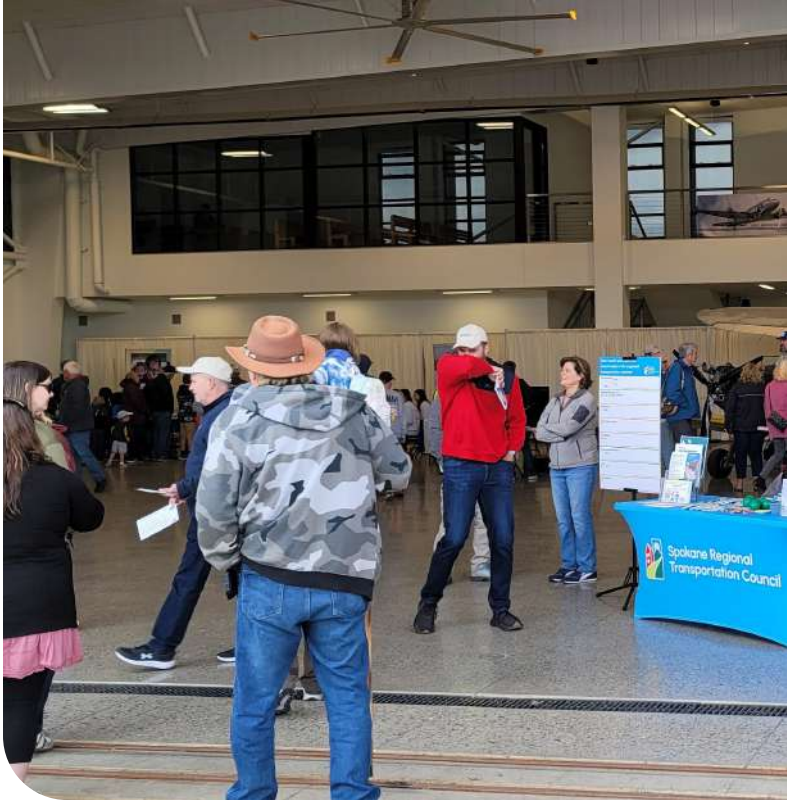
System Operations
Includes technology applications to maximize network efficiency such as ramp meters and traffic signal timing coordination.

Public Opinion Survey

To supplement the public engagement efforts listed above, as well as public engagement performed in previous years, SRTC conducted an MTP-focused survey designed to get information on the public's use of the transportation system and any specific areas of concern.

The survey questions can be broken down into the following key categories:

- Demographic information
  - Jurisdiction of residence
  - Employment status



- Commute/Daily trip behavior
  - Travel methods
  - Preferred travel methods if conditions were better
  - Barriers to various travel modes
- Vision for the future
  - SRTC Guiding Principles importance metrics
  - Preferred funding allocations
  - Future transportation system vision

Analysis of the survey responses revealed the following key insights and takeaways:

- The most responses came from the City of Spokane, with the next three most prevalent jurisdictions being the City of Spokane Valley, unincorporated Spokane County, and the City of Cheney, respectively.
- Most respondents reported being employed full-time.
- Driving alone to work was the most common commute mode, followed by working from home and using public transportation.
- Many respondents indicated they would be more likely to take the bus, bike, or walk for daily trips if safety and travel conditions improved.
- When asked to rank SRTC's Guiding Principles, respondents identified Safety and Security as the most important.
- When asked to prioritize regional transportation funding, respondents allocated the most funding to maintenance and preservation compared to the next highest categories—active transportation and transit.

SRTC received 307 responses on our Horizon 2050 public survey. The results of the survey, and other feedback received through public comments, are summarized in Figure 1.11 and Figure 1.12. The full survey results and all public comments received are provided in Appendix A.

The SRTC Board of Directors also participated in a live polling activity in which they distributed investment preferences in the same set of transportation priorities that was provided in the public survey. The results of that activity are indicated below in Figure 1.10.

Figure 1.09 **Poster Board Transportation Priorities Activity Responses**

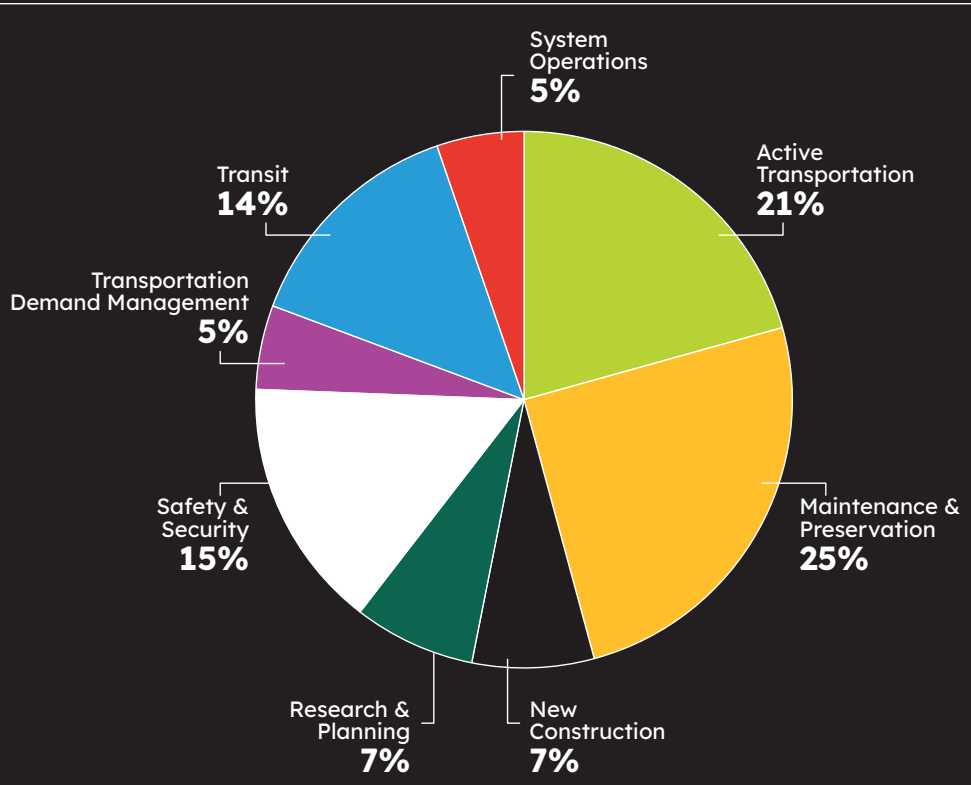


Figure 1.10 **SRTC Board of Directors Transportation Priorities Poll Results**

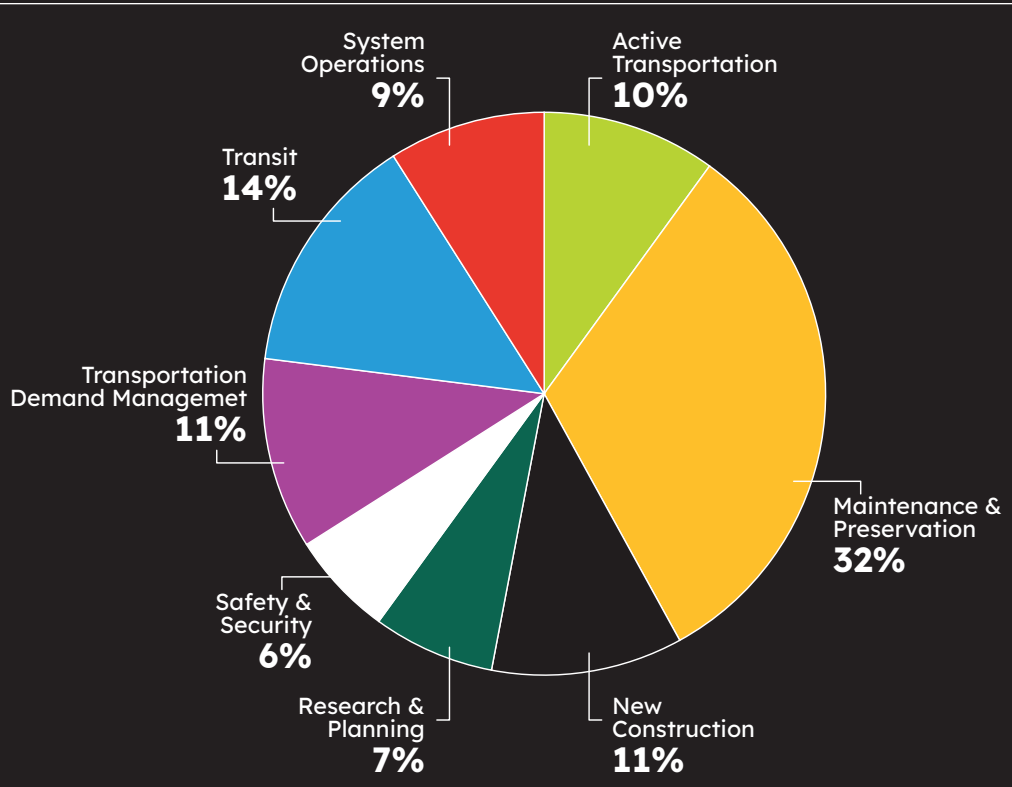
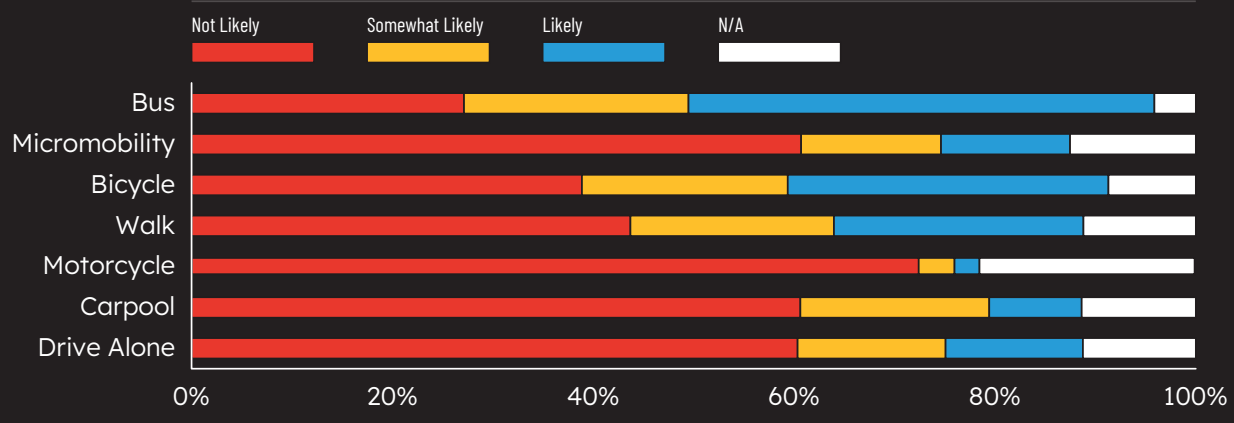


Figure 1.11 **Horizon 2050 Feedback Word Cloud**

The word cloud below displays the most frequently used words from respondents' answers to the question: "What three key words describe your vision of our transportation system in 2050?"

Figure 1.12 **Horizon 2050 Survey Results and Comment Summary**

Results from Question 4 of the Horizon 2050 public survey, which asked respondents how likely they would be to increase their use of the travel modes shown below for daily trips if infrastructure or travel and safety conditions were improved.



Commute Trip Reduction Outreach

As part of the 2024 Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Plan update, SRTC conducted an extensive outreach campaign that shed light on commuting preferences and challenges relevant to Horizon 2050. In the CTR outreach process, SRTC and partnering agencies attended over 20 in-person events and received 246 survey responses.

The outreach identified several key preferences:

- Increasing frequency and expansion of the transit network
- Reducing fares or free transit service
- Improving pedestrian safety
- Establishing a light rail or other transit connection between North Idaho and Spokane International Airport
- Addressing bus safety concerns, as many riders reported feeling unsafe or cited safety perceptions as a barrier to riding transit
- Expanding telework opportunities to lower congestion and increase employee happiness
- Expanding roadway lanes and making general roadway improvements to accommodate anticipated population growth

The results of this outreach, along with feedback from in-person events, were provided to all local agency partners who participated in the CTR Plan update process. More information and the full plan can be found on SRTC's website.


Spokane Regional Transportation Council
SRTC
Stakeholders
RTC


Spokane Regional Transportation Council
WWW.SRTC.ORG
What is SRTC?
GET INVOLVED


CROWN SHADES
How would you prioritize investments in the regional transportation system?
Spokane Regional Transportation Council
Active Transportation 1
Construction of facilities that serve pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-vehicular forms of transportation.
Maintenance & Preservation 2
Maintaining existing roads, paths, bridges, and their surface condition.
New Construction 3
Building new major roadways or widening existing roads to add lanes.
Research, Analysis, & Planning 4
Strategic analyses of transportation corridors or other focused studies to identify appropriate transportation solutions.
Safety & Security 5
Projects and programs that improve safety or security for road users across all modes of transportation.
Transportation Demand Management 6
Includes strategies and projects that aim to improve transportation system efficiency by reducing drive-alone trips during peak travel hours.
Transit 7
All projects serving to improve public transit fleets, routes, or service levels.
System Operations 8
Includes technology applications to maximize network efficiency such as ramp meters and traffic signal timing coordination.
Spokane Regional Transportation Council

In Review

Chapter 1: Who We Are introduces SRTC's core responsibilities, outlines federal and state planning requirements, and describes the foundational policies that guide our work. Grounded in the 3C planning process—continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive—this framework ensures that all subsequent strategies and investments are built on compliance, collaboration, and a long-term vision.

Chapter 2: Where We Are provides an overview of current conditions in our region and its transportation network. It presents key baseline data—such as employment trends, commuting patterns, bridge conditions, traffic volumes, and freight movement—that inform the planning process and establish a benchmark for shaping the region's transportation future.

2 WHERE WE ARE

Introduction

How the demographic, natural, and built environments impact the existing transportation system

Chapter 2 defines Spokane's position today as the foundation for shaping the future. As the population grows the region is evolving with shifting demographics and changing travel trends. Aging infrastructure and limited resources present real challenges, but they also spur innovation and forward-thinking solutions. Addressing these issues requires a well-defined strategy. Understanding Where We Are is a starting point for building a stronger, more connected transportation future.

This chapter is an overview of the region's demographics and existing conditions including employment trends, commute patterns, the condition of area roads and bridges, traffic volumes, and the movement of freight. This information is essential for evaluating the region's transportation needs and establishing priorities for transportation infrastructure.

Regional Profile

SRTC's planning area, consisting of Spokane County, is shown in Figure 1.02 in Chapter 1. It has a 2022 population of 550,700.[1] The Spokane Urban Area comprises around 9% of the total land area, yet over 80% of the population (457,366 people) live within its boundary.[2]

Spokane serves as a regional employment center for eastern Washington and northern Idaho, providing an estimated 241,190 jobs in 2022. Around 24% of the area's workforce are individuals who live outside the county, including many out of state. Over the past two decades, the number of workers commuting into the region from outside the planning area has grown by approximately 39%. The region's commute flows are shown in Figure 2.01.

1 Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM). "April 1, 2025, Population of Cities, Towns and Counties Used for Allocation of Selected State Revenues State of Washington." Washington State Office of Financial Management, April 1, 2025. https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics/population-estimates/april-1-official-population-estimates.

2 OFM Small Area Estimates Program. Washington State of Financial Management. "Small Area Estimates Program." Office of Financial Management, December 11, 2024. https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics/population-estimates/small-area-estimates-program.

Like Washington state and the nation overall, Spokane County has undergone demographic shifts over the past few decades that have impacted the regional transportation system. As illustrated in Figure 2.02, the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) indicated that two-thirds of the region's households are single-person or two-person households, a slightly higher percentage than both the Washington state and national averages.[3]

Over time, household size has been trending smaller while the share of older age groups is growing. In addition, household income in the planning area is generally lower compared to state and national income data (Figure 2.03). Policy choices and investment decisions in Horizon 2050 consider these trends and demographic realities and how they impact the delivery of regional transportation systems and services.

3 ACS, US Census Bureau. "American Community Survey Data 2022 1-Year Estimates." Census.gov, 2022. https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html.

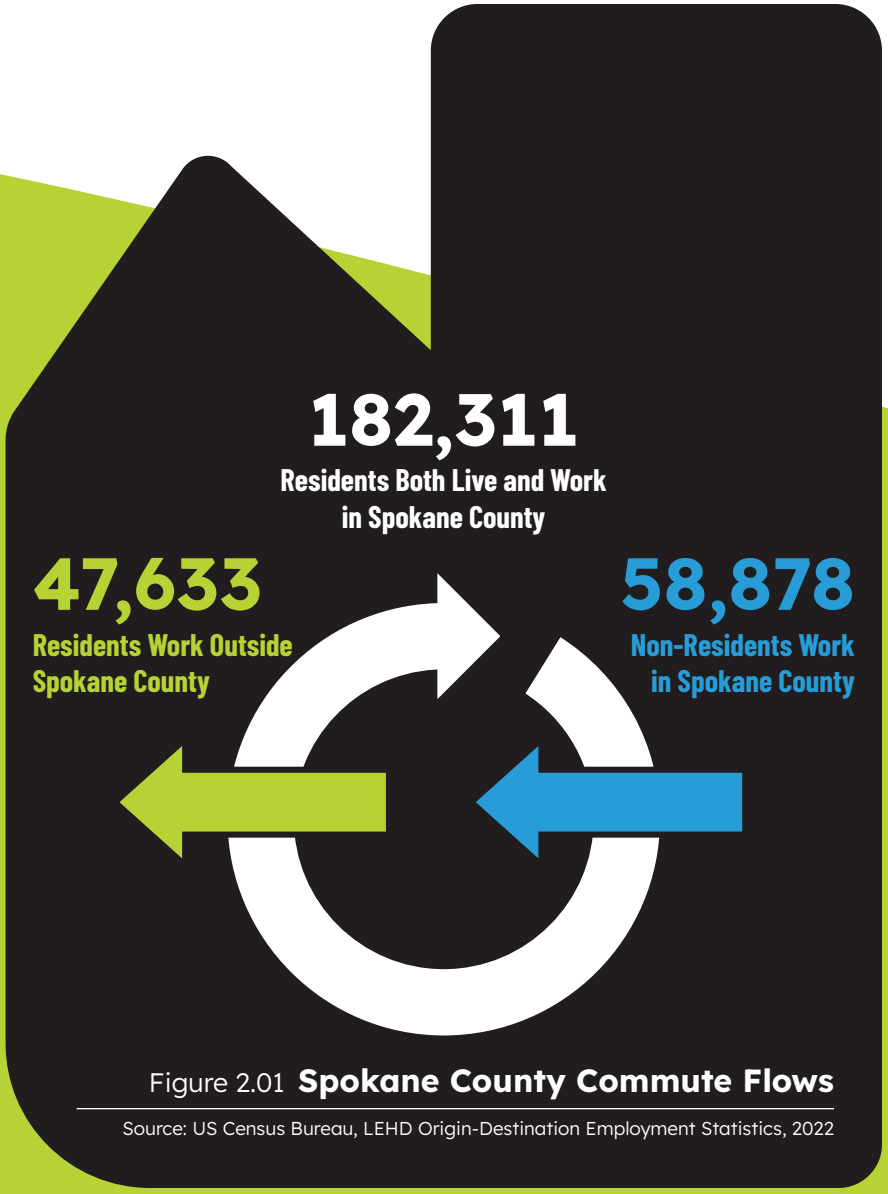


Figure 2.01 **Spokane County Commute Flows**

Source: US Census Bureau, LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2022

Figure 2.02 **Household Size in Spokane County, Washington, and the US**

Source: US Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 1-Year Estimates

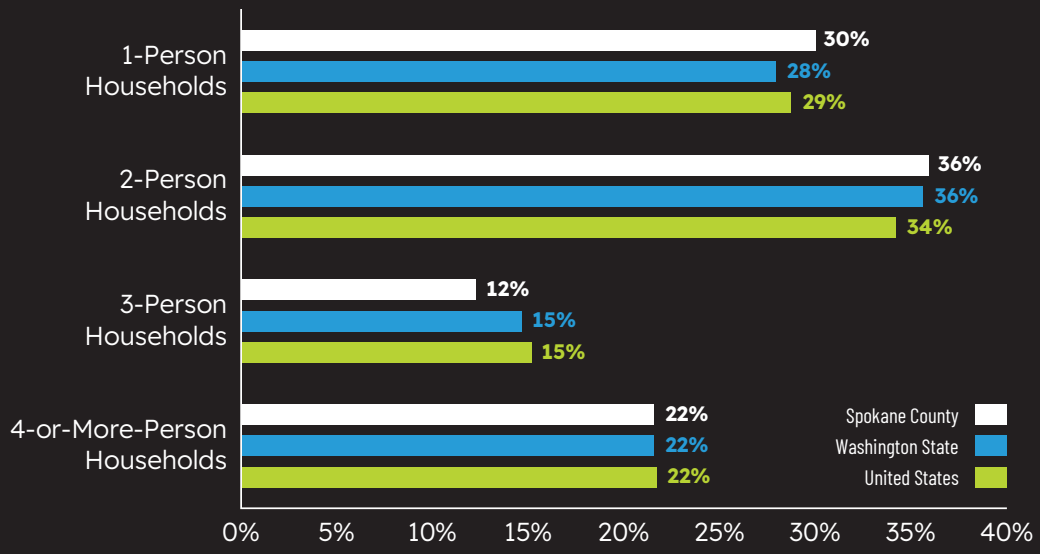


Figure 2.03 **Household Income in Spokane County, Washington, and the US**

Source: US Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 1-Year Estimates

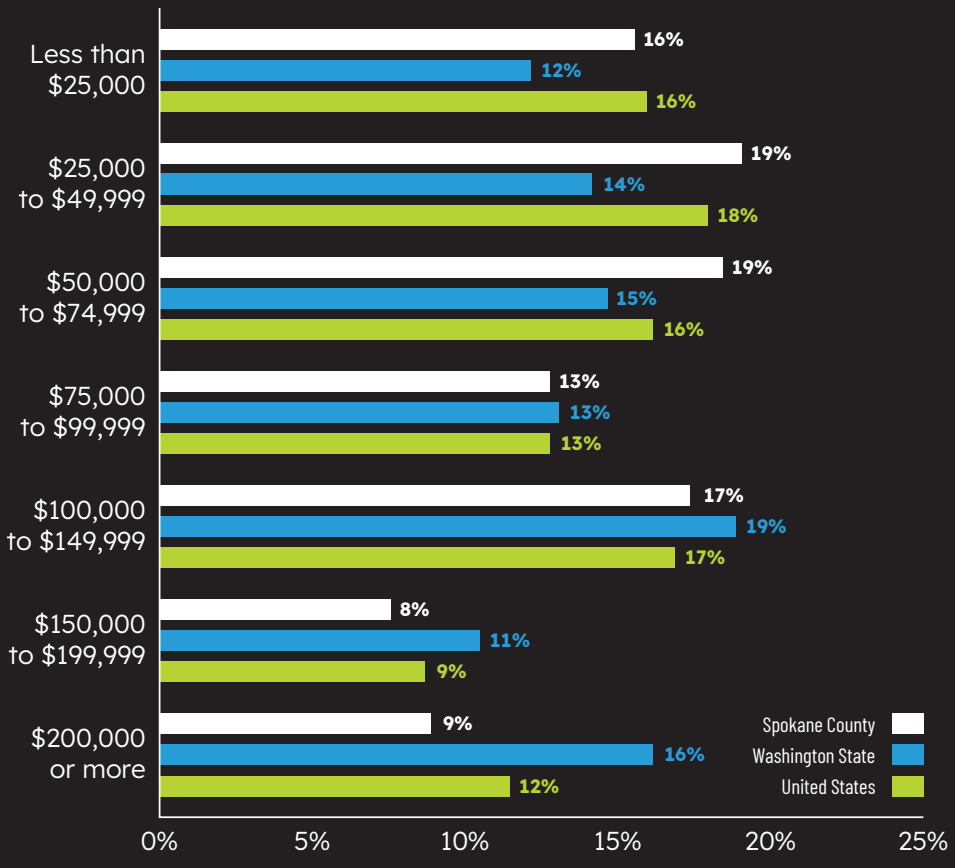


Figure 2.04 **Spokane County and Washington State Demographics**

Sources: [A]OFM April 1, 2022 Population Estimates, [B]US Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 1-Year Estimates

	Spokane County	Washington State
Total population[A]	550,700	7,864,400
Average household size[B]	2.42	2.48
Share of individuals with incomes below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level[B]	28.8%	22.9%
Share of population identifying as a racial or ethnic minority[B]	17.1%	34.1%
Share of households with Limited English Proficiency[B]	1.4%	3.7%
Share of households with no vehicle access[B]	6.3%	6.8%
Share of population under age 18[B]	15.8%	15.7%
Share of population over age 65[B]	17.4%	16.8%
Share of population with a disability[B]	16.6%	13.5%

Our Economy

Spokane County's economy is a mix of traditional industries and newer sectors, with a strong emphasis on healthcare, education, and a growing presence in advanced manufacturing and technology. The region serves as a hub for the Inland Northwest, providing a range of services to surrounding areas. While mining, forestry, and agriculture were once dominant, the county has diversified its economic base. A long-standing presence is Fairchild Air Force base, which brings in federal defense investment and is a major employer. A fundamental part of the region's economic vitality is a well-maintained, safe, and reliable freight system across multiple supply chains. Less tangible, but also important, is the quality of life the region offers to ensure a skilled, educated workforce that chooses to invest their lives here, build businesses, and innovate.

Economic Development

The Spokane region leverages its higher education system to be an area of skilled services and advanced manufacturing. The region boasts two community colleges and five other colleges and universities. Spokane is a regional center for healthcare, health sciences, and medical education, attracting investment in Health IT, pharmaceutical manufacturing, and related fields. Moreover, Spokane is a key transportation hub for delivery and distribution, relying heavily on I-90, major rail freight connections, and Spokane International Airport. Near the airport, economic development initiatives are focused on the production of advanced materials for the aerospace industry. Leading the charge in business development and support are chambers of commerce, including Greater Spokane Inc., Downtown Spokane Partnership, West Plains Chamber of Commerce, and Greater Spokane Valley Chamber of Commerce. To facilitate economic growth in targeted areas, Spokane County has multiple Public Development Authorities (PDAs), which are public corporations created by the city or county to undertake activities such as acquiring land, building infrastructure, or attracting businesses. Figure 2.05 shows the PDAs in our region.

The Spokane region is home to over 100 aerospace firms and represents the largest assemblage of aerospace companies in Washington state outside of the Puget Sound region. The region also has one of the state's premier aerospace industry clusters, the Inland Northwest Aerospace Consortium (INWAC), which was formed in 2005. INWAC's membership is comprised of Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) including tier one, two and three suppliers.

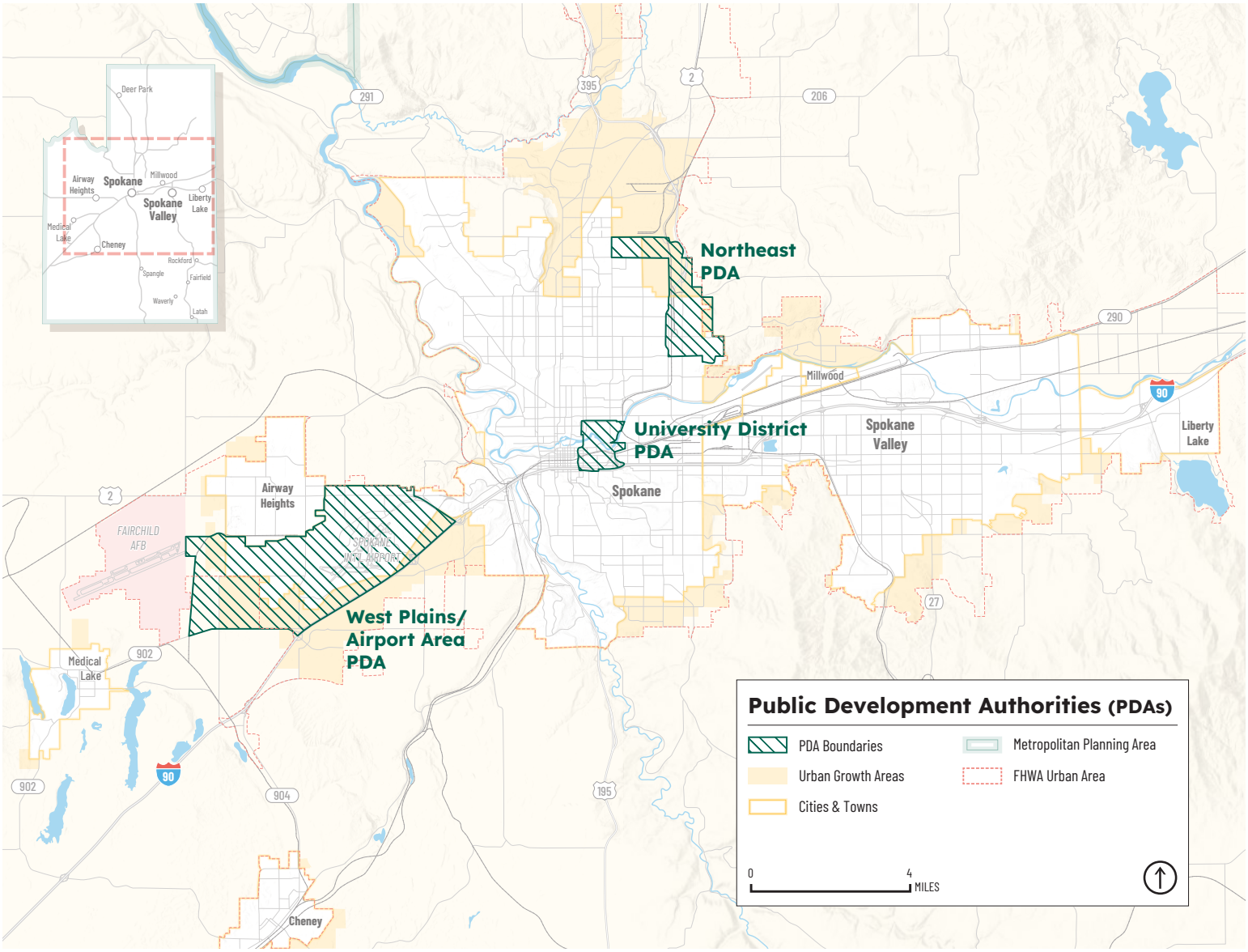


Figure 2.05 **Public Development Authorities in the SRTC Planning Area**

Labor Force

In 2022, there were over 15,000 employers and approximately 240,000 employees in the SRTC planning area.[4] The average not-seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 4.8%.[5] Meanwhile, 79% of the region's employers were establishments that employed less than ten people. Employers with less than ten accounted for only 14.5% of the region's total work force in 2022. Conversely, 1.7% of employers in the region employed 100 or more individuals but accounted for 43.2% of the region's total employment.[6] Health care and government are the region's two largest industries. Combined, they accounted for one-third of the region's total employment. Other significant employment sectors are retail trade, accommodation and food services, and manufacturing.[7]

4 Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD). Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) 2022 Annual Averages, Revised. Retrieved February 11, 2025, from https://esd.wa.gov/jobs-and-training/labor-market-information/employment-and-wages/covered-employment-qcew.

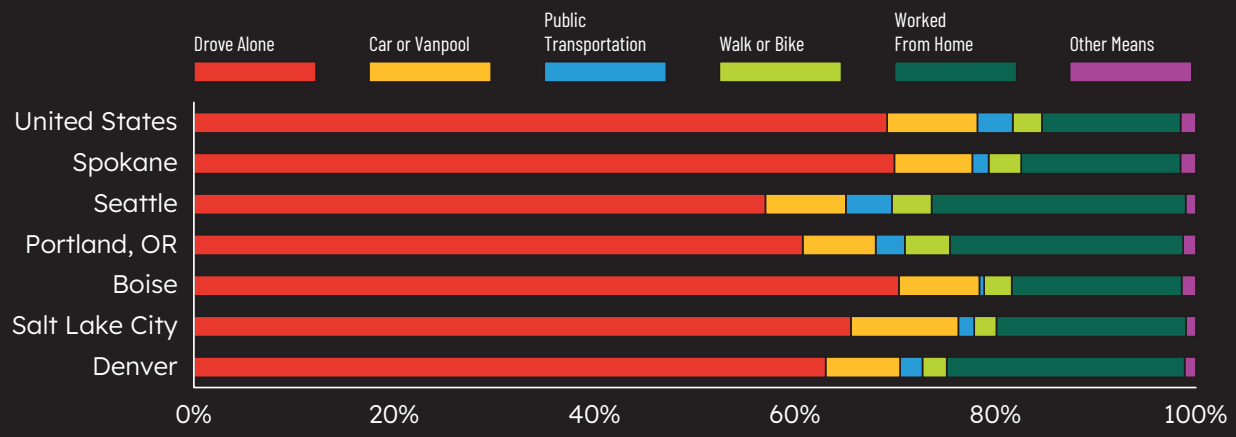
5 ESD. Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) All Areas Historical Estimates. Retrieved February 11, 2025, from https://esd.wa.gov/jobs-and-training/labor-market-information/labor-force-and-unemployment/labor-force-laus.

6 ESD. 2022 Establishment Size Report. Retrieved February 11, 2025, from https://esd.wa.gov/jobs-and-training/labor-market-information/labor-market-report-library.

7 ESD. 2022 Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS). Retrieved February 11, 2025, from https://esd.wa.gov/jobs-and-training/labor-market-information/labor-market-report-library.

Figure 2.06 **Mode to Work in Spokane and Peer Metro Areas**

Source: US Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 1-Year Estimates



The primary mode of commuting to work, driving alone, has not significantly increased or decreased since 2015. Figure 2.06 shows the Spokane-Spokane Valley Metropolitan Statistical Area's (MSA) commute shares by mode of travel. The Spokane-Spokane Valley MSA's average travel time to work is 23.2 minutes. Figure 2.07 offers travel time comparisons to other areas around the country. Commuting during peak times remains the primary cause of recurring congestion in the Spokane area.

Central Business District

The Spokane Central Business District (CBD) is the core of the region. It has the highest concentration of employment and entertainment activity. While there have been losses in office space use since the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been growing as a residential hub in recent years. It is the highest order activity center in the region, and this is reflected in the dense built environment and mix of office, retail, residential, hotel, and entertainment uses. Visitation to the CBD is well over 10 million each year, and the area has over 10,000 employees.[8] Complementing downtown is the 100-acre Riverfront Park, a legacy of investment from the Expo '74 World's Fair that underwent renovation and expansion that concluded in 2021. Accordingly, the transportation network is supportive of access to the downtown, with a dense street grid, multiple transit routes, intercity transit, a walkable environment, and direct connection to the regional Centennial Trail. Maintaining and enhancing this infrastructure is key to continued longevity for the region's central hub.

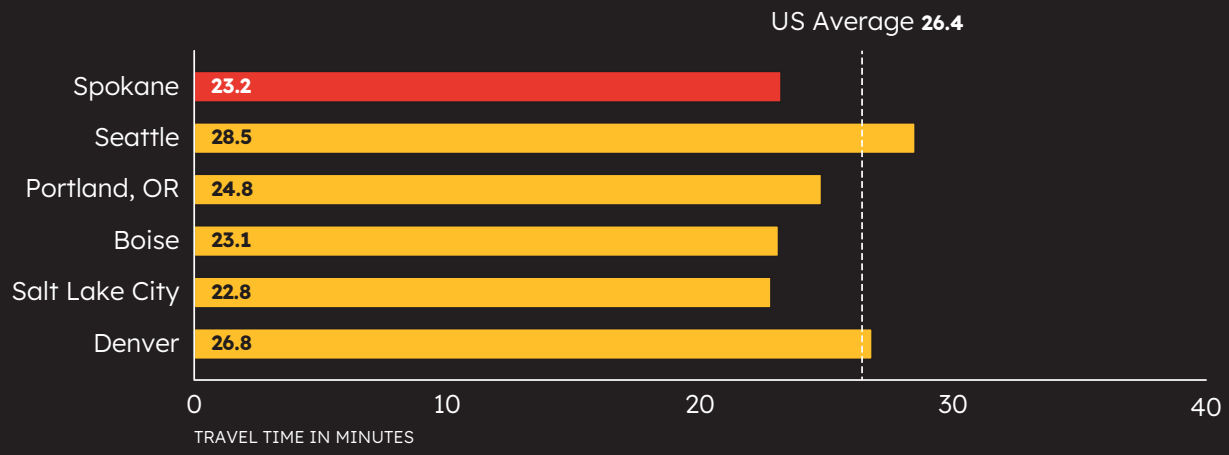
Tourism

It is well established that the region functions as a service and entertainment hub for the greater Inland Northwest, from northern Idaho, Montana, and Canada to surrounding rural communities that span well beyond the SRTC planning area. The regional economy benefits from this, and additional opportunities stem from growing the visitor economy. Spokane has seen growth in tourism and conventions, with its outdoor recreation ethos and role as a regional destination. Visitors are drawn to the area for its recreation opportunities and a variety of events, some internationally known, such as Bloomsday or Hoopfest, and the many other activities that occur in the region's sports, entertainment, and shopping venues. Tourism is a fantastic economic multiplier, with outside dollars coming into the region in support of local businesses and contributing $233 million in state and local tax revenue in 2024. Moreover, the visitor economy

8 2025 State of Downtown Report. Downtown Spokane Partnership.

Figure 2.07 **Mean Travel Time to Work in Spokane and Peer Metro Areas**

Source: US Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 1-Year Estimates



generated $1.53 billion in annual spending and sustained 18,000 jobs in Spokane County.[9] These metrics are all trending higher year by year since the drop-off in visitation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Facilities such as ONE Spokane Stadium, The Podium, First Interstate Center for the Arts, Spokane Convention Center, and Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena pull in local visitors along with a significant number from the surrounding geographic region, across state and national borders (see Figure 2.08). The two largest state parks in the Washington system—Mount Spokane and Riverside—are in Spokane County, offering year-round activities. The federally managed Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge is just south of Cheney, and the region boasts numerous trail systems for hiking, road cycling, and mountain biking as well as lakes and waterways for boating and swimming. With these attractions, tourism has become a key part of the regional economic mix.

Figure 2.08 **Spokane County Entertainment District Event Attendance in 2024**

Source: Downtown Spokane Partnership, 2025 State of Downtown Report

Venue	Events	Attendees
Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena	77	427,376
Spokane Convention Center	194	303,364
First Interstate Center for the Arts	58	152,157
The Podium	50	189,417
ONE Spokane Stadium	129	145,553
Total	**508**	**1,217,867**

9 Visit Spokane. "2024 Spokane Regional Economic Impact Report." Visit Spokane, 2024. https://www.visitspokane.com/tourism-matters/.

Indicators of Potential Disadvantage

Low income, vehicle access, age dependency, and disability status are all indicators of potential disadvantage (IPD) when it comes to transportation mobility and access. These groups and their families are more likely to face barriers getting to work and accessing services or other destinations, which can affect economic opportunity and quality of life. To ensure this is considered in its planning processes, SRTC tracks data pertaining to these indicators. Following is a brief description of the indicators, along with maps showing their geographic distribution. SRTC will continue to analyze the relationship between regional demographic patterns and transportation investment needs.

Age Dependent Populations

The population outside of the normal working age, youth and seniors, is considered age dependent. In Spokane County, age dependent populations tend to be concentrated along both the northern and southern fringes of the Spokane Urbanized Area. The region's outlying communities, such as Deer Park, north of Francis Avenue, and the Dishman-Mica area, also tend to have high concentrations of age dependent residents. This suggests the need for public transportation services in these areas. Figure 2.09 shows the geographic distribution of age dependent populations in Spokane County.

Disabled Populations

Disabilities can make transportation a challenge and many people with disabilities rely on public transit to access health and other needed services. In Spokane County, approximately 16.6% of the population has a disability.[10] Unlike age dependent populations, residents with disabilities are much more concentrated in and around the region's urban core. Figure 2.10 shows that the area in and around Spokane's CBD, East Sprague, northeastern Spokane, and several areas scattered throughout Spokane Valley have concentrations of disabled residents that are significantly higher than the regional average. However, there are also some rural areas in Spokane County that have higher than average concentrations of populations with a disability, particularly in the County's southeastern and western portions.

Low-Income Populations

Poverty can also be a barrier to transportation. In 2022, the median household income in Spokane County was $70,394, significantly lower than the Washington state and national averages of $90,325 and $75,149, respectively.[11] Earlier in this Chapter, Figure 2.03 shows the share of households, by income bracket, in the SRTC planning area compared to Washington state and the US as a whole. Figure 2.11 illustrates that the highest concentrations of individuals with low incomes are generally located around the region's urban core—central, east central, and northeast Spokane all have sizable low-income populations. However, there are also areas in and around Airway Heights, Cheney, and Spokane Valley that have concentrations of low-income individuals that are above the regional average.

Vehicle Access

Whether due to poverty, age, ability, or by choice, 6.3% of area households have no vehicle available.[12] Figure 2.12 shows that high concentrations of these households exist near the City of Spokane's downtown and lower north side, which is a similar pattern to the region's low-income residents. There is also a concentration of homes without vehicle access in northern Spokane.

Areas of Potential Disadvantage

Areas of Potential Disadvantage in the Spokane region, which are areas with above average concentrations of potentially disadvantaged populations, were identified by overlaying all four indicators. These groups are more likely to face challenges in their daily travel patterns, be it to work or shopping trips. Once overlaid, a composite score was calculated, and the results of that calculation are shown in Figure 2.13.

10 ACS, US Census Bureau. "American Community Survey Data 2022 1-Year Estimates." Census.gov, 2022. https://data.census.gov/.
11 ACS, US Census Bureau. "American Community Survey Data 2022 1-Year Estimates." Census.gov, 2022. https://data.census.gov/.
12 ACS, US Census Bureau. "American Community Survey Data 2022 1-Year Estimates." Census.gov, 2022. https://data.census.gov/.

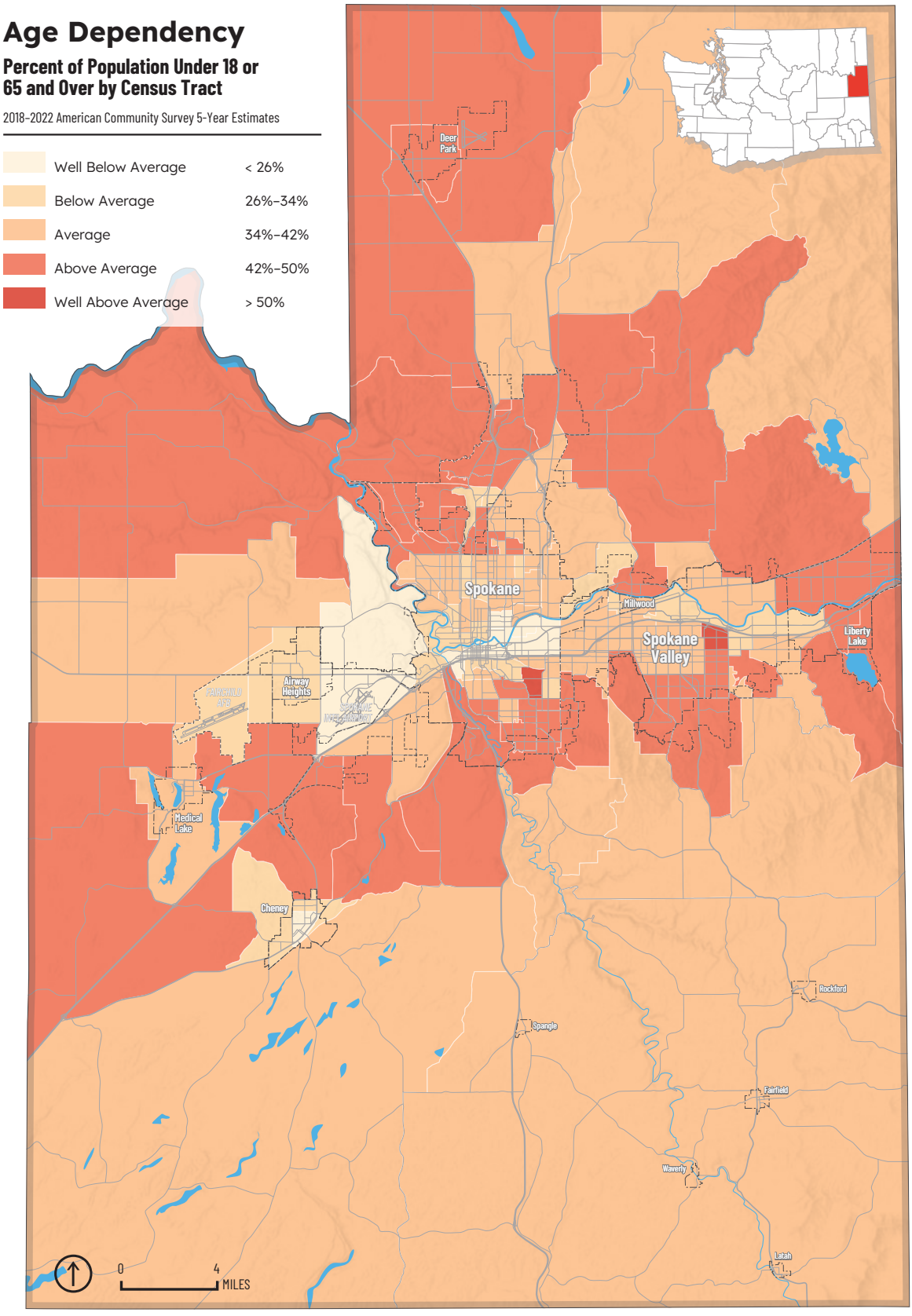


Figure 2.09 **Age Dependent Populations in the SRTC Planning Area**

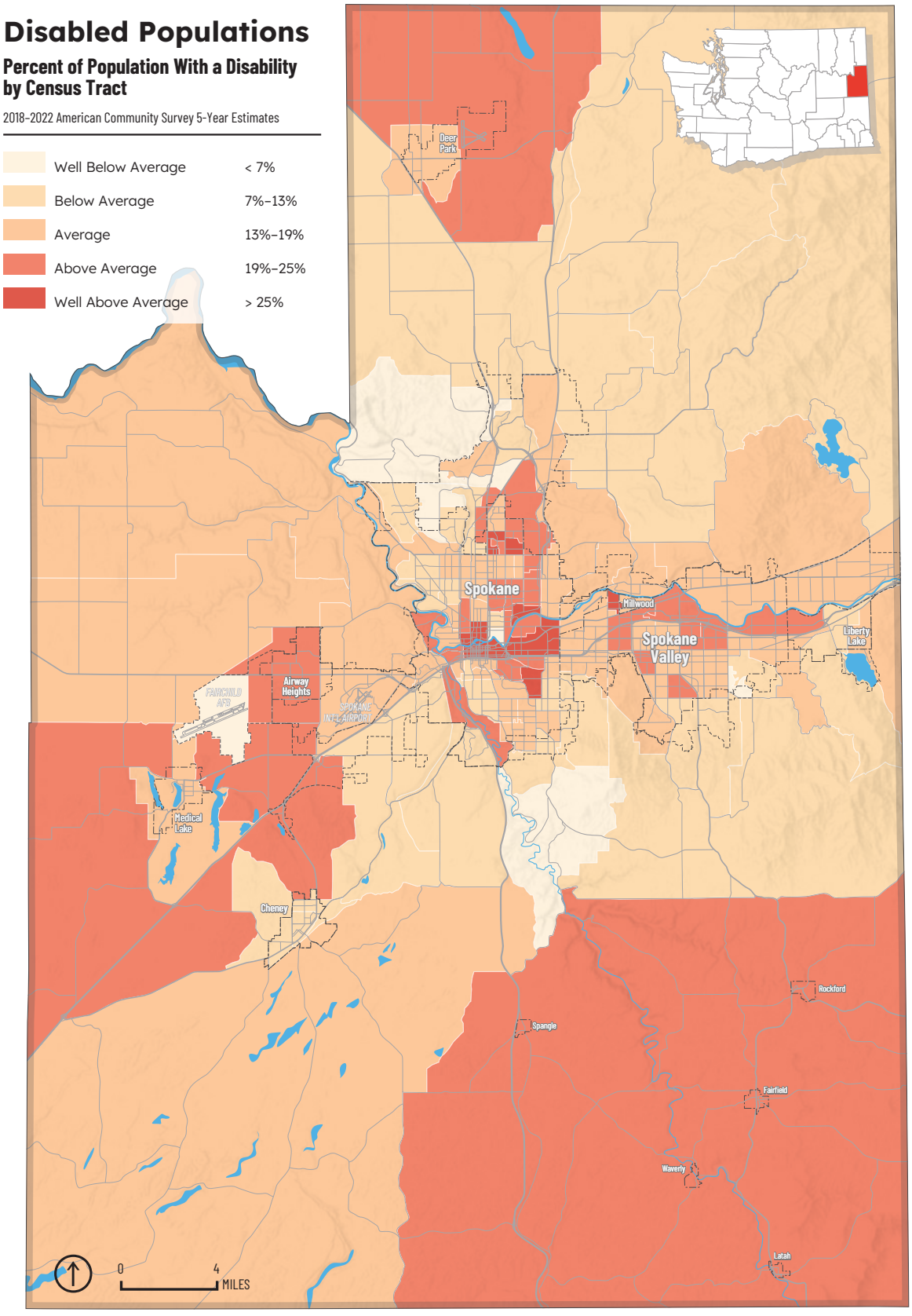


Figure 2.10 **Disabled Populations in the SRTC Planning Area**

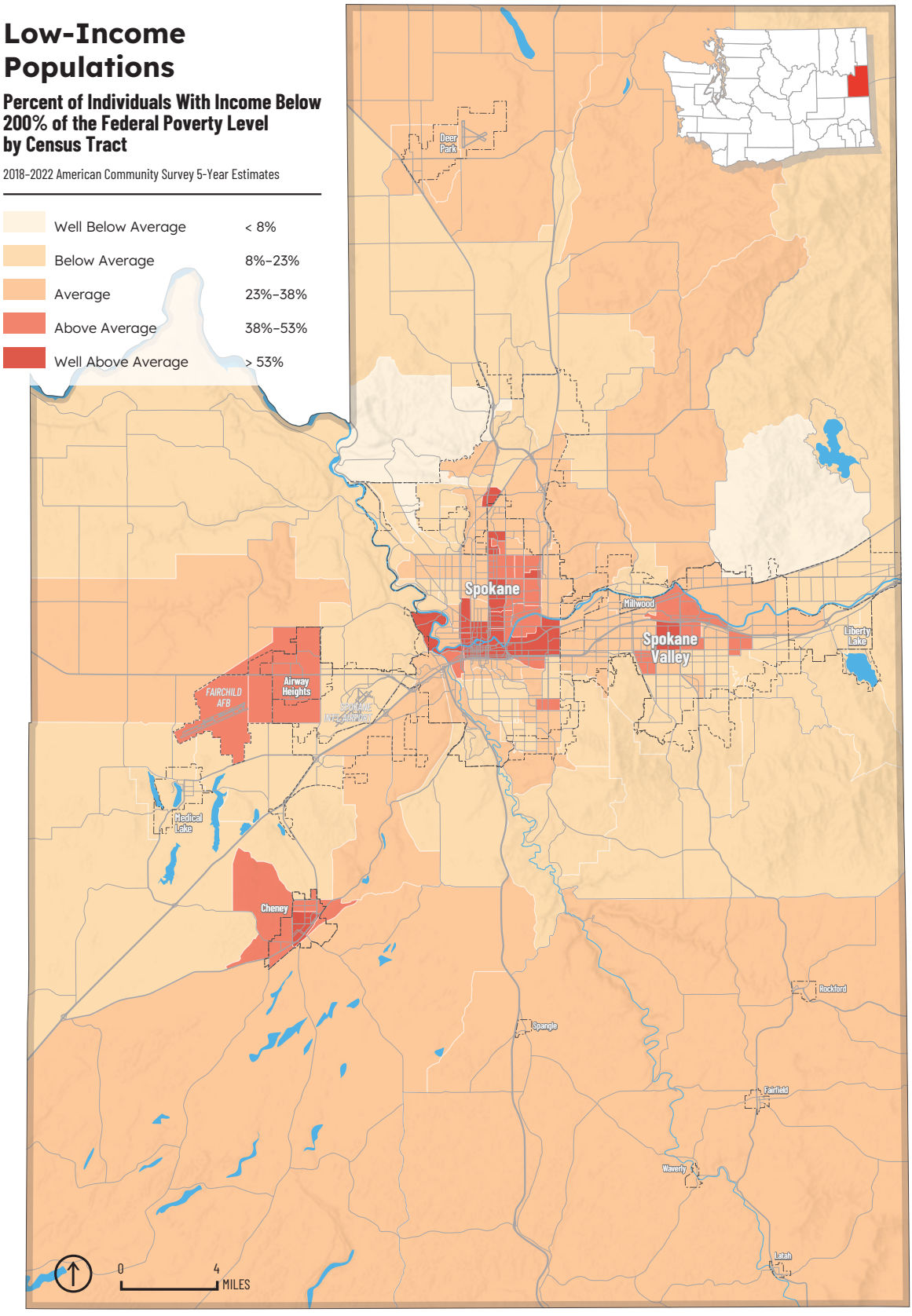


Figure 2.11 **Low-Income Populations in the SRTC Planning Area**

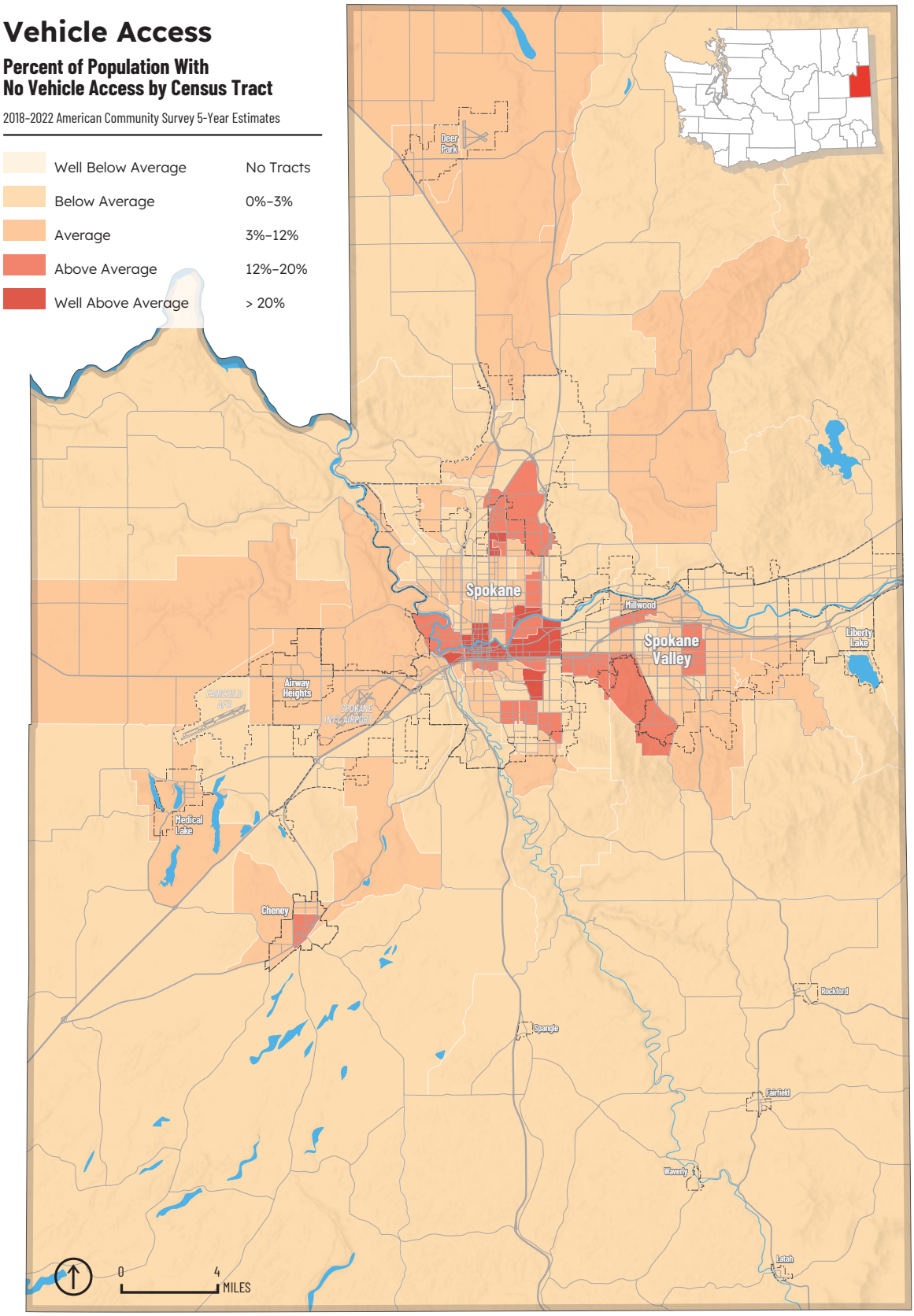


Figure 2.12 **Vehicle Access in the SRTC Planning Area**

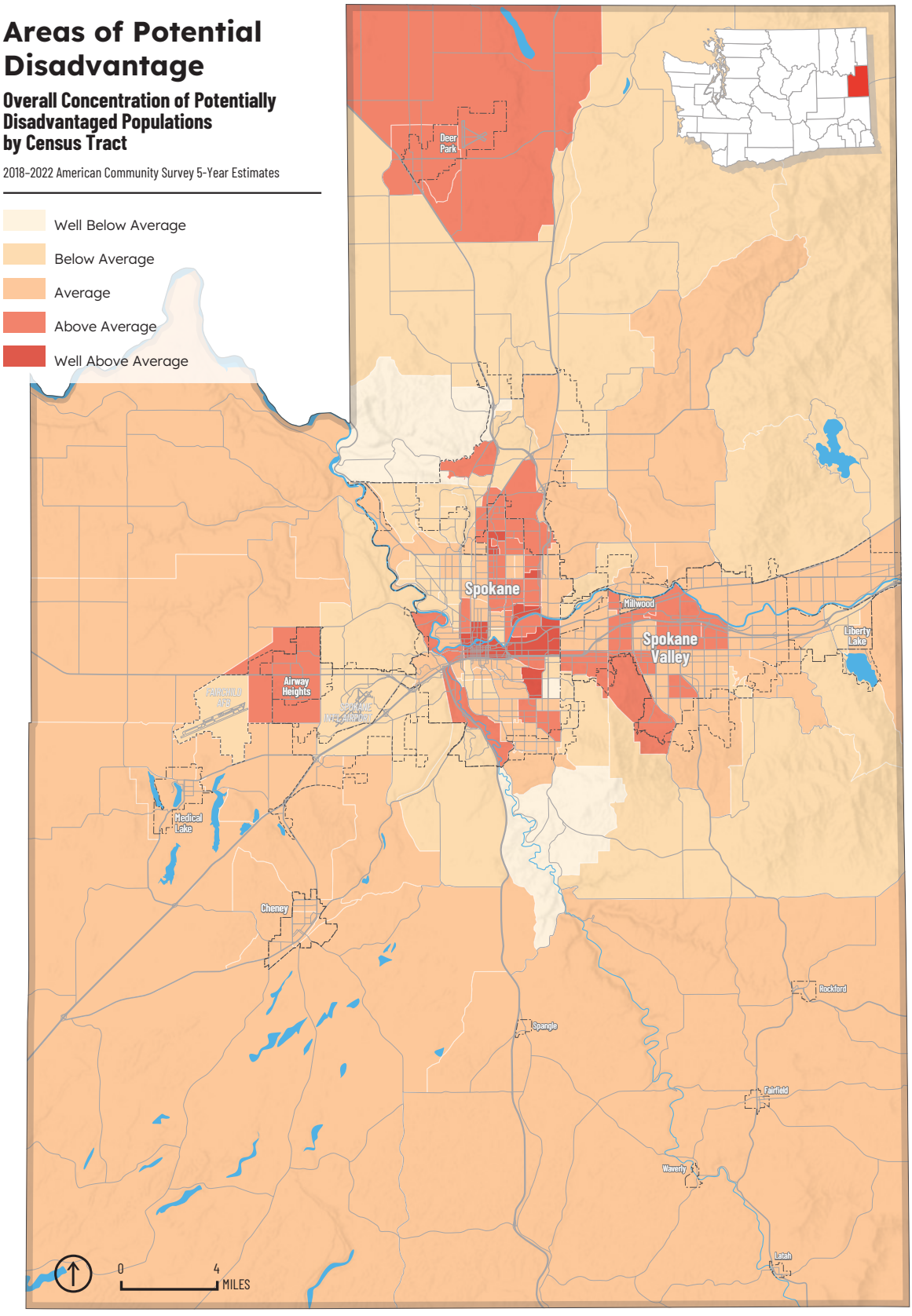


Figure 2.13 **Areas of Potential Disadvantage in the SRTC Planning Area**

Technical Tools for Transportation Analysis

As part of the development of Horizon 2050 and other planning processes at SRTC, staff assess the existing transportation system and regionwide patterns. This utilizes tools and data inputs for technical analysis and transportation planning, which are reviewed below.

Regional Travel Demand Model

Modeling is a method of evaluating the performance of the transportation system and predicting how the public will use it in the future. This is done using computer software to represent how travel choices are made. The SRTC Regional Travel Demand Model was updated from the previous version and released for use in 2025; it is founded on a 2022 base year of data.

SRTC's travel demand model contains inventories of existing roadways and public transit routes including park and rides. Land use (existing and planned housing, employment, services, et cetera) is included in the model and is an important input for determining where people are coming from and where they are going. Using the model, future traffic volumes and transit ridership can be estimated in order to be proactive in managing traffic congestion, providing public transit, and building right-sized transportation facilities to accommodate demand. The latest update to the model also allows for analysis of different land use scenarios to test how changes in development patterns could impact travel demand.

Federal transportation planning regulations require documentation of the input assumptions and methods used for developing forecasts.[13] SRTC's travel forecasting documentation includes an inventory of the current state of transportation in the planning area, key planning assumptions used in developing forecasts, and descriptions of the methods used to develop forecasts of future travel demand.

In 2022, SRTC conducted a household travel survey to gather regionwide data that supports the needs of both SRTC and its member agencies. This survey, along with SRTC's travel demand model, reflect the agency's commitment to data-informed planning and decision-making.

Regionally Significant Projects

SRTC uses the model to evaluate regionally significant projects. For Horizon 2050's purposes, a transportation project is defined as regionally significant if it:

- Cannot be grouped in the TIP and/or Statewide TIP (STIP),[14] **and**
- Is on a facility which serves regional transportation needs (federally classified as a principal arterial or higher) and alters the number of through-lanes for motor vehicles for a distance greater than a half mile, or impacts a freeway or freeway interchange (other than maintenance projects); **or**
- Is a new or extended fixed guideway transit service (dedicated bus lanes, vehicle track or wires) or capital expenditures related to a new fixed-route transit service on a facility which serves regional transportation needs (federally classified as principal arterial or higher); **or**
- Is determined by the SRTC Board to be regionally significant.

The model can also be used to evaluate potential transportation scenarios. FHWA encourages scenario planning in the transportation planning process to help anticipate future growth trends while prioritizing how limited resources will be

13 23 CFR 450.316
14 2 U.S.C. 135(g)(4)(C)(ii)

used. Scenario planning is the process of developing a range of possible futures to facilitate public decision-making on land use policies and transportation investments. Various measures can be used to evaluate scenarios, such as the extent to which the scenario impacts vehicle miles of travel, average trip length, transit ridership, amount of available land, air quality, or energy consumption.

Macroscopic Transportation Modeling

Macroscopic models, such as SRTC's, are used for high-level regional travel analysis. Travel demand models are limited in their ability to estimate changes in operational characteristics (such as speed, delay, and queuing) down to the individual transit route, road segment, or intersection level. The SRTC model uses specific analytical processes that consider choices based on origin, destination, mode, time of day, and route and then represents the resulting traffic flow and transit ridership at the macroscopic (i.e., regional) level.

Land Use

A key aspect of SRTC's travel demand model is land use, which is a mosaic of Spokane's past economic conditions and development philosophies. Early in the 20th century, higher-density neighborhoods with homes, parks, and local retail centers underscored the value of walkable, community-focused development. Post–World War II, automobile dependence expanded access to outlying areas, encouraging development beyond the city limits on less expensive land with larger lots.

Suburban development, with lower-cost infrastructure requirements, outcompeted higher-density urban projects. As a result, residential and commercial development inside the City of Spokane stagnated, resulting in low growth rates inside the city limits from 1960 to 1990. By the 1990s, changes in water quality and road standards, sewer requirements, and rising land values made low-density development increasingly costly. Higher dwelling-unit densities became necessary to sustain growth. Commercial development patterns also shifted. Neighborhood stores were replaced by shopping centers and big-box retailers. Strip commercial development flourished along principal arterials due to easy access, visibility, and a constant flow of traffic. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted travel and land use patterns, significantly affecting commercial real estate.

Today, there is an increased policy focus on expanding housing supply, particularly affordable housing options, to address rising costs. Washington House Bill 1110 proposed amendments to the Growth Management Act requiring many cities across the state to adopt zoning that allows higher-density development in all residential zones. This modification established further nexus with cities' efforts to plan for affordable housing needs. Such policy direction emphasizes infill development and a variety of housing types, particularly along and near transportation corridors.

Land Use Categories

For modeling purposes, land uses are broken down into categories and associated with different travel behaviors, as shown in Figure 2.14. Employment-based land use categories are assigned using North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) codes, which provide a standardized framework to classify business and industries. These categories exhibit distinct travel patterns that are reflected in the SRTC model—for example, a fast-food restaurant generates more traffic than an office, and the type and timing of trips vary accordingly.

Each land use category has a value for the number of housing units, employees, hotel/motel rooms, or higher education commuter students. All land uses are geocoded by SRTC staff. Geocoding assigns a location to all data based on information such as an address. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), the land use totals are grouped by areas known as Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ), which are the primary units of analysis in SRTC's travel demand model. There are 670 TAZs in Spokane County, which are shown in Figure 2.15.

Base Year Land Use

The base year for the current SRTC model is 2022; the horizon year is 2050. A variety of data sources were used to establish land use values for the 2022 base year and ensure their accuracy. This section provides an overview of the

Figure 2.14 **SRTC Land Use Categories**

Code	Description	Type	Measure
LU1	Single-family, duplex, triplex, manufactured or mobile home	Population	Housing units
LU2	Four our more residential units on a single parcel	Population	Housing units
LU3	Hotel, motel, or campsite	Other	Rooms/campsites
LU4	Agriculture, forestry, mining, industrial, manufacturing, wholesale	Employment	Employees
LU5	Retail trade (non-CBD)	Employment	Employees
LU6	Services and offices	Employment	Employees
LU7	Finance, insurance, and real estate services (FIRES)	Employment	Employees
LU8	Medical	Employment	Employees
LU9	Retail trade (CBD)	Employment	Employees
LU10	College and university commuter students	Other	Students
LU11	Education employees (K–12)	Employment	Employees
LU12	Education employees (college and university)	Employment	Employees

process used to develop SRTC's 2022 base year land use.

Households

SRTC uses occupied housing units (i.e., households) as a proxy for population in the regional travel demand model. To estimate and validate base year housing unit figures, SRTC relies on multiple data sources, including the US Census Bureau's decennial census counts, parcel data from the Spokane County Assessor's Office, SRTC's regional building permit database, and the Washington State Office of Financial Management's (OFM) Small Area Estimates Program (SAEP).

The SRTC model represents where people live by using occupied single-family (SF) and multifamily (MF) housing units in the trip generation process. For both categories, housing unit counts were taken directly from the 2020 Decennial Census. Local building permit data was then incorporated to account for additions or removals of housing units between the 2020 Census and the 2022 base year. Household densities are shown in Figure 2.16.

SRTC applies housing unit occupancy rates from OFM's SAEP data. The 2022 occupancy rate was applied to the SF and MF housing units in each TAZ, providing a more precise estimate of the total number of households and strengthening the reliability of trip generation results.

Employment

The primary source of employment data is the Washington State Employment Security Department's (ESD) Unemployment Insurance (UI) data. It is utilized to determine business locations, number of employees, and industrial classifications.

Significant staff research supplements the ESD data. Several additional data sources, including the US Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data, are used to confirm and revise the UI data.

Various additional checks and validation techniques are also performed to increase the accuracy of the data. This includes utilizing GIS software to review employment data against land use, zoning, and Spokane County Assessor parcel data to confirm the correct location and industrial classification. Moreover, SRTC staff contact the region's larger employers directly to confirm the number of employees and other data. Figure 2.17 illustrates the 2022 employment density in the greater Spokane area.

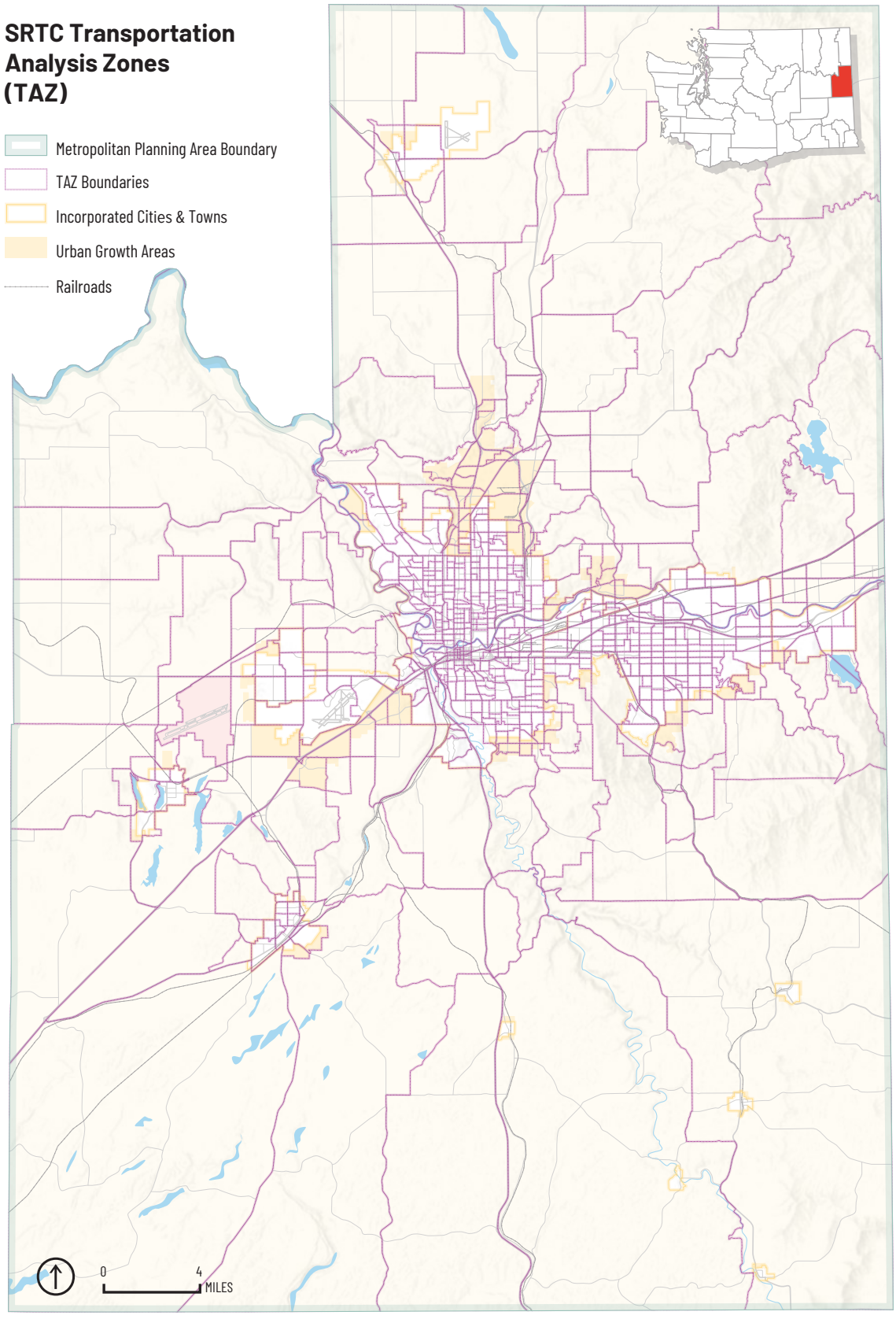


Figure 2.15 **SRTC Transportation Analysis Zones**

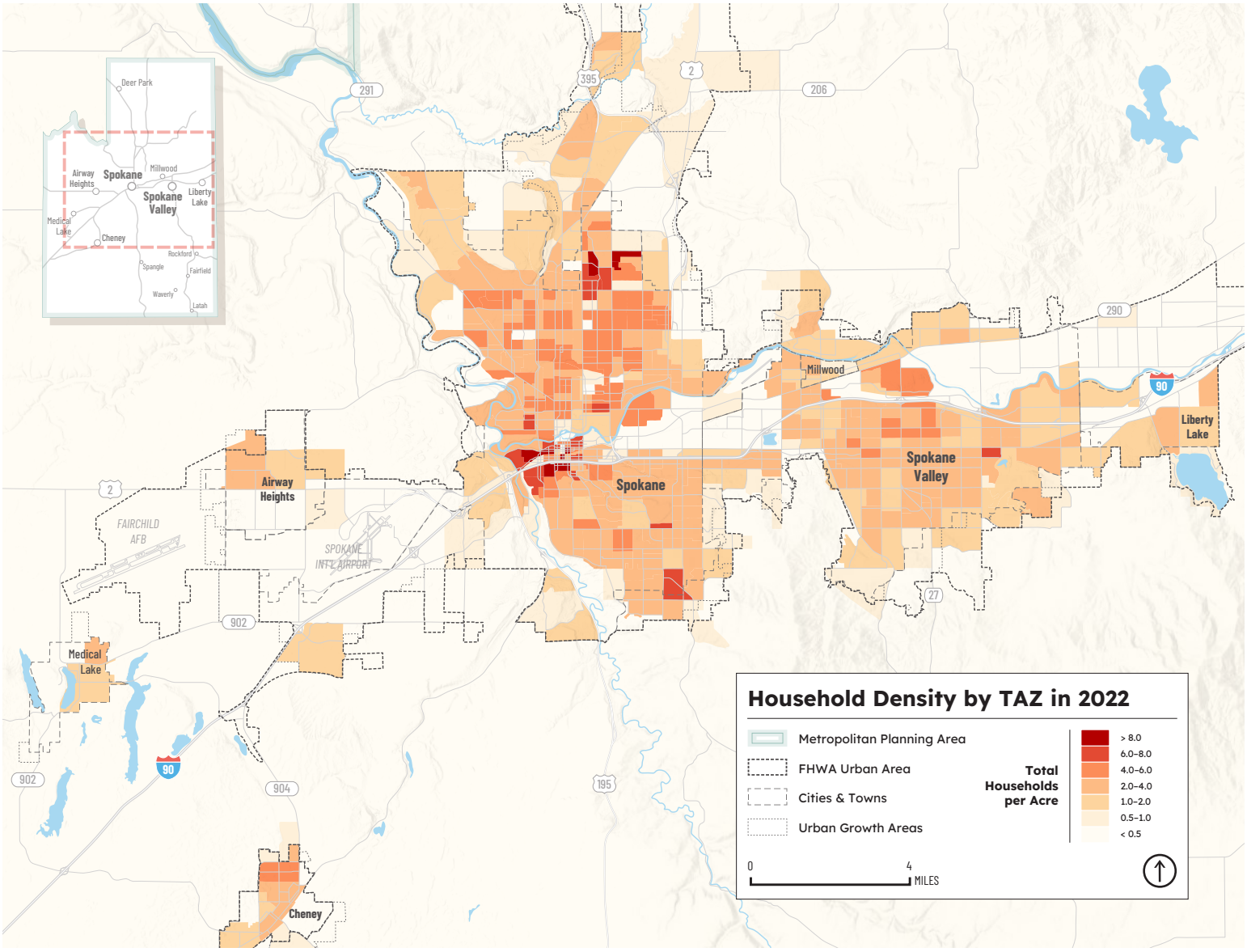


Figure 2.16 **2022 Base Year Household Density by TAZ**

Hotel and Motel Rooms

For hotel and motel rooms (LU3), SRTC uses transient accommodations data from the Washington State Department of Health. This data includes employee counts and number of rooms.

Commuter Students

The LU10 category consists of higher education commuter students. Staff calculate the totals for this category by contacting higher education institutions throughout Spokane County to request enrollment and resident student population totals by campus. The resident student population is subtracted from enrollment to determine the commuter student population. When available, other non-commuting populations such as online students are removed from the commuter student population. A summary of the 2022 totals for the generalized land use categories is provided in Figure 2.18.

Regional Activity Centers

Activity centers can be defined as areas of regional significance "where economic, social, and civic activity, and key infrastructure assets, are concentrated."[15] To identify these centers within the SRTC planning area, staff analyzed a

15 Rowlands, DW, and Tracy Hadden Loh. "PAS Memo 116: Identifying Activity Centers: A How-To Guide." American Planning Association (APA), 2023. https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/PAS-MEMO-2021-01-02.pdf.

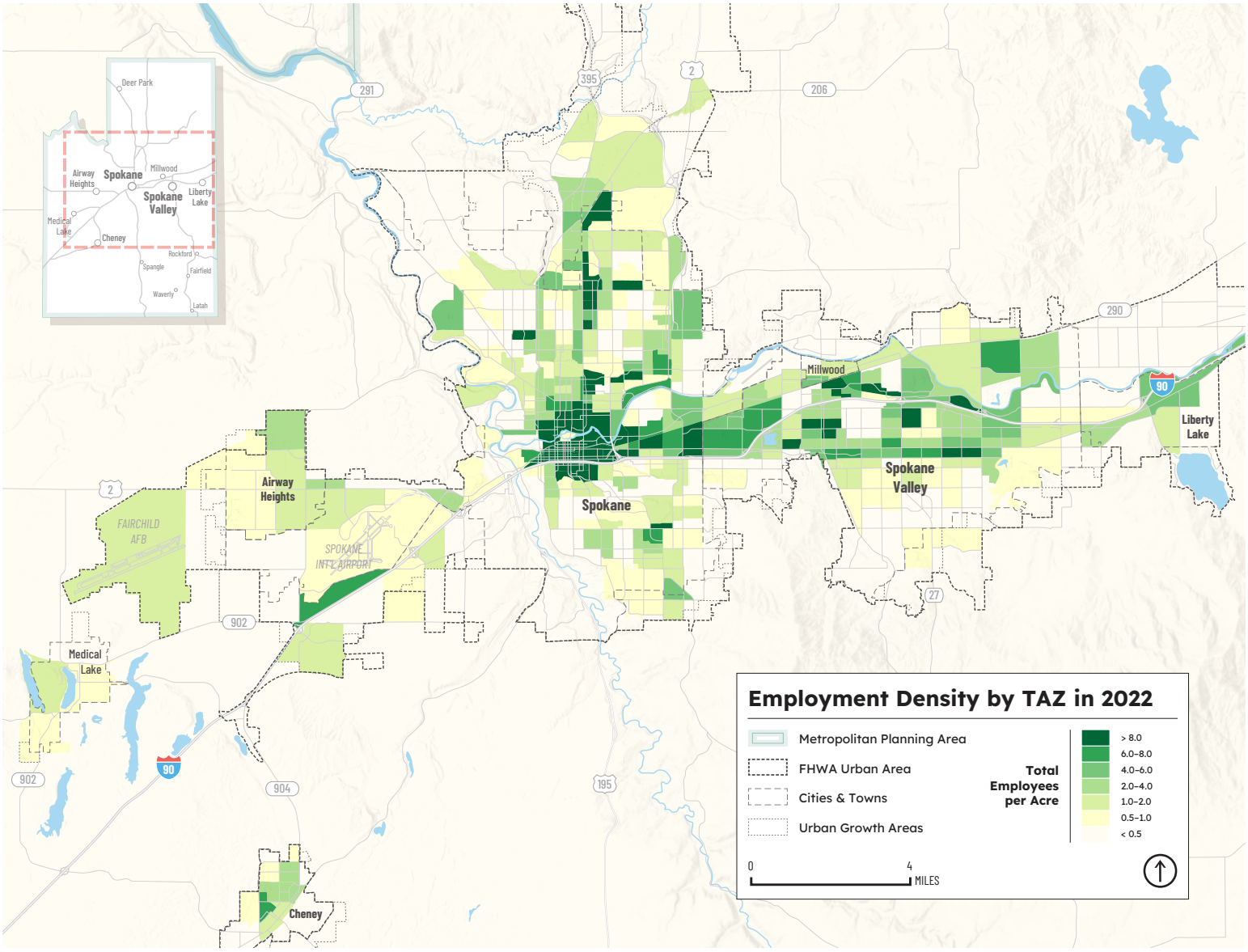


Figure 2.17 **2022 Base Year Employment Density by TAZ**

Figure 2.18 **SRTC Land Use Categories**

Description	Code(s)	2022 Base Year Total
Total Population	None	550,700
Occupied Single-Family Housing Units	LU1	159,456
Occupied Mutlifamily Housing Units	LU2	60,740
Total Employment	LU4–9, LU11–12	230,263
Hotel Rooms and Campsites	LU3	7,837
College and University Commuter Students	LU10	27,770

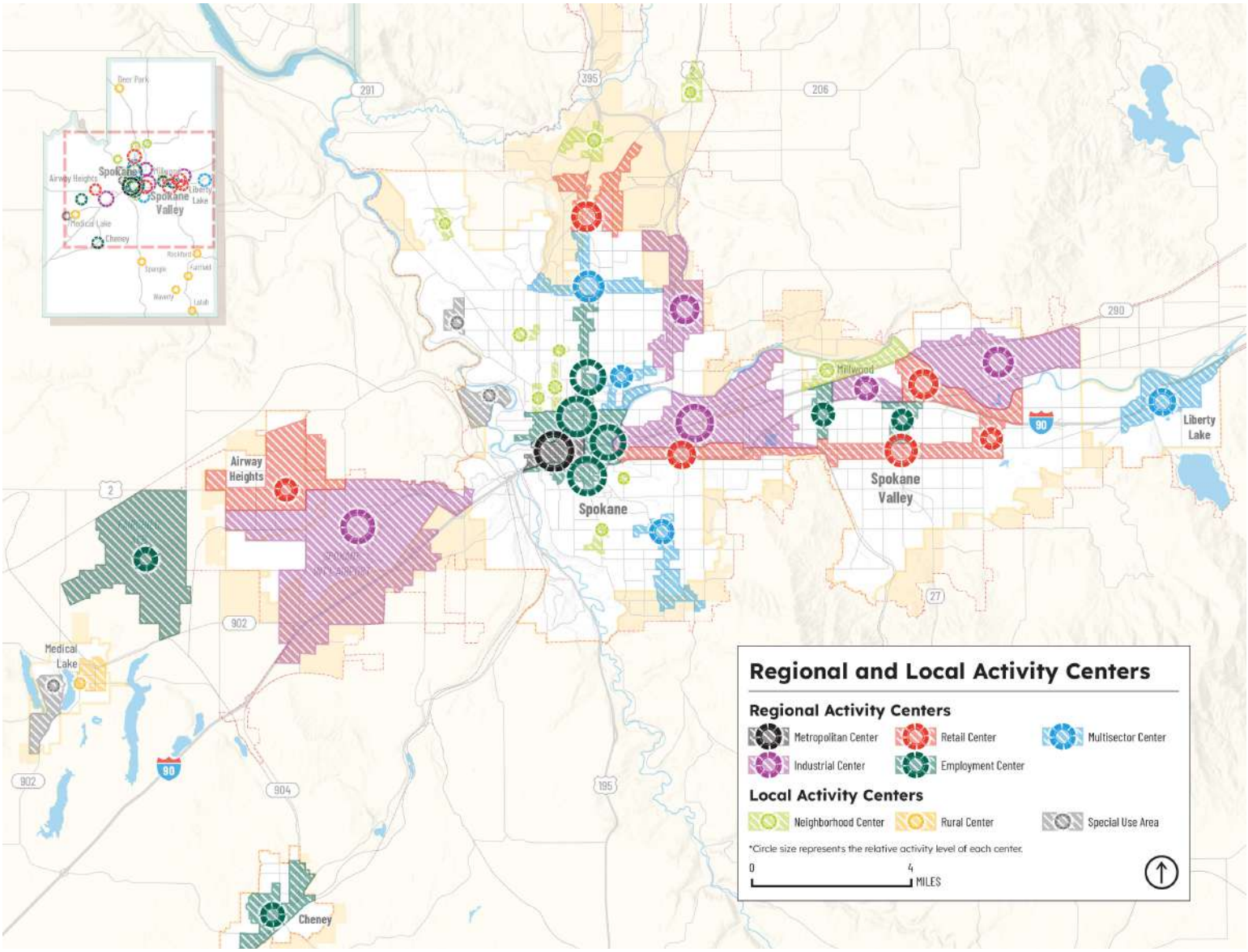


Figure 2.19 **Regional Activity Centers**

range of key data points, including employment, population, trip origins and destinations, floor area ratios, traffic volumes, transit usage, and freight movement. Each factor was assigned a weight and spatially analyzed using hexagonal binning to calculate an overall activity score. This score was then used to determine the location of activity centers.

Once the scoring methodology was calculated and applied, staff used land use patterns and other qualitative considerations to refine and delineate the borders of each activity center. Industrial, commercial, and mixed-use land uses were key identifiers in defining these boundaries. In general, activity centers tend to cluster near major transportation corridors—particularly along I-90 and the North Division Street corridor.

A map of the regional activity centers is shown in Figure 2.19.

To identify the potential locations of future activity centers, SRTC staff also analyzed vacant commercial and industrial land across the region. This analysis, illustrated in Figure 2.20, indicates where undeveloped commercial and industrial land is available; however, it does not account for existing developments or buildings that are vacant or underutilized. The results highlight that significant areas of available commercial and industrial land exist in a variety of locations throughout the region. These tools are used to support local decision makers in shaping the transportation system as infrastructure is built and development or redevelopment occurs.

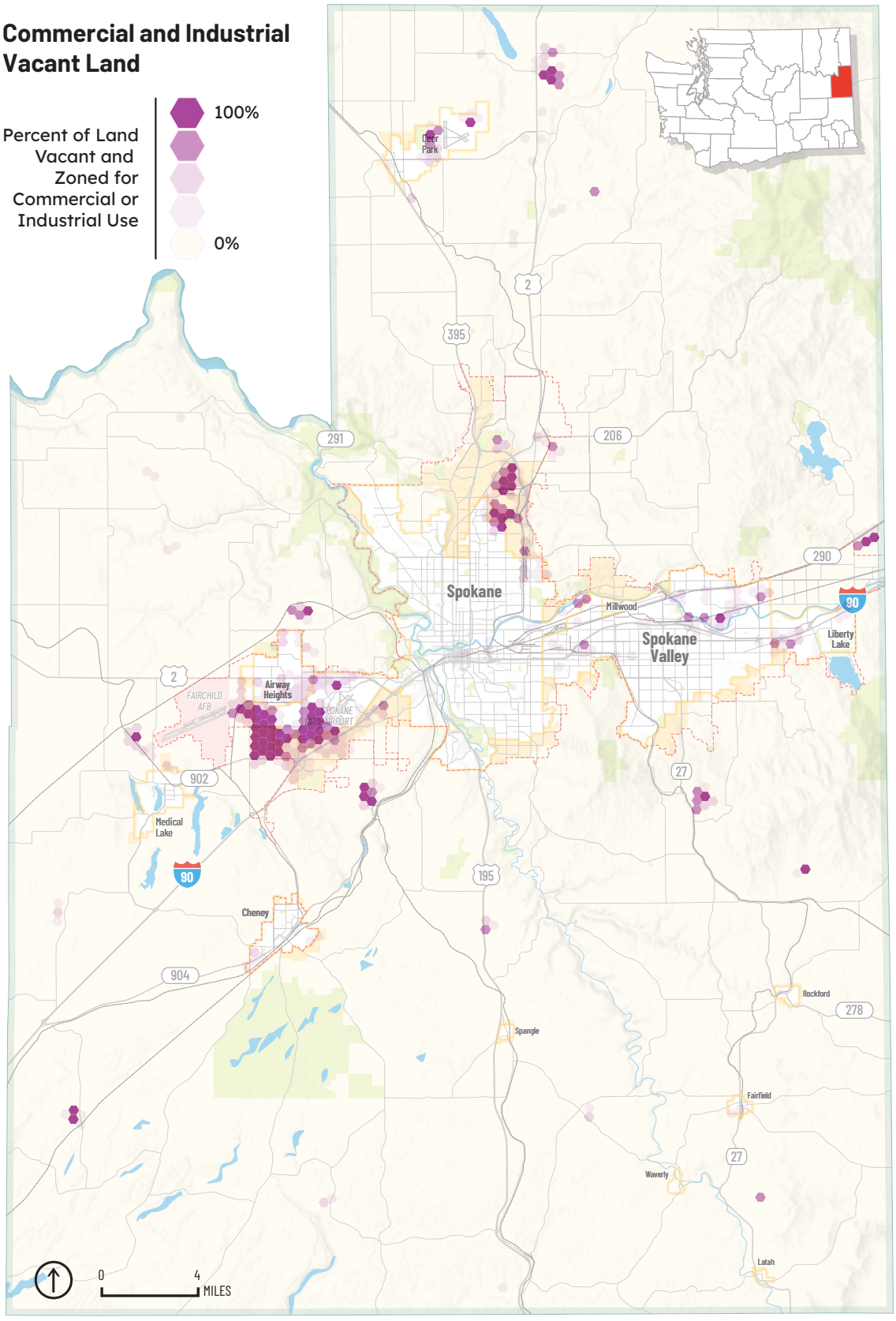


Figure 2.20 **Commercial and Industrial Vacant Lands**

Regional LOS Performance Measure Analysis

SRTC uses the travel demand model to analyze regional level of service (LOS) for area transportation facilities. LOS measures a user's experience on the road and at intersections based on the speed and number of cars using the road. The LOS of a road is designated by a letter grade of A (free flow) to F (near gridlock). Regional LOS is evaluated for the following modes: vehicular, transit, and non-motorized (combined biking and walking). The regional LOS analysis is based on changes to land use and the transportation system that will occur as a result of comprehensive plan updates or amendments by area jurisdictions. The analysis is part of SRTC's role as an RTPO. The regional LOS standards are detailed in the Comprehensive Plan Certification Manual available in the Growth Management section of the SRTC website.

Air Quality

Although the Spokane planning area is in compliance with clean air standards, the region continues to work to maintain and improve air quality. Pollutants pose a range of health impacts such as respiratory ailments, heart disease, and cancer.

Air quality progress has been made in our region over the last few decades, and Spokane is designated as an attainment area for carbon monoxide (CO) and particulate matter of 10 microns or less (PM10). In August 2025, the region reached the end of the air quality maintenance planning period and there will no longer be ongoing review, planning, and updates to air quality maintenance plans for these two pollutants. However, the last approved air quality maintenance measures, including contingency measures, will continue to apply to enable continuing attention to air quality.

Calls for Projects

SRTC periodically conducts call for projects as federal funds are available that are allocated to MPOs. The Call application is a tool to evaluate transportation projects for consistency with the Guiding Principles, as described in Chapter 1, and Horizon 2050. Projects that score the most points in areas such as economic benefit, safety, mobility, multimodal choice, and regional cooperation are prioritized. Utilized in the application review are various SRTC tools and planning processes—examples include the Congestion Management Process, regional activity centers, modal priority networks, and bicycle level of traffic stress analysis. The call for projects is a critical element for encouraging consistency with the long-range plan and moving projects forward to implementation.

Our Transportation Network

The transportation network refers to the variety of ways people and goods move throughout the region, e.g. transit, cars, rail, air, and everything in between. As recognized by the State of Washington, the overall transportation system should "function as one interconnected and coordinated system."[16] Spokane County's transportation system is made up of a multimodal network including an interstate, several highways, arterials, collectors, local roads, public transportation bus routes, paratransit service, vanpools, intercity/interstate bus service, railroads, airports, bike lanes, sidewalks, and multiuse paths.

Roadway Infrastructure

Roadways are characterized by their function in a community as well as in the overall transportation system. Based on their function, roadways are designed and constructed to

16 RCW 47-80

Figure 2.21 **SRTC Planning Area Mileage and Daily VMT by Functional Class**

Source: WSDOT 2023 HPMS Summary Data

Functional Class	Centerline Miles		Lane Miles		Daily VMT	
Interstate	45	1.0%	214	2.2%	2,666,029	25.1%
Other Freeway/Expressway	59	1.3%	205	2.1%	741,144	7.0%
Other Principal Arterial	199	4.4%	667	7.0%	3,269,564	30.8%
Minor Arterial	264	5.8%	581	6.1%	1,606,832	15.2%
Major Collector	614	13.6%	1,238	12.9%	1,029,577	9.7%
Minor Collector	318	7.0%	636	6.6%	212,459	2.0%
Local Access	3,019	66.8%	6,038	63.0%	1,077,894	10.2%
Total	**4,516**	**100.0%**	**9,579**	**100.0%**	**10,603,499**	**100.0%**

Totals may not sum due to rounding

ensure the movement of people and goods in a safe and efficient manner. Federal Functional Classification (FFC) data is collected on an annual basis and imported into SRTC's travel demand model with each model update. The model also includes a number of local roads to better capture local travel patterns and transit operations.

As of 2023, there are 4,516 centerline miles and 9,579 lane miles of public roadways in Spokane County.[17] Figure 2.21 shows the distribution of centerline and lane miles by FFC in the region.

An indicator of roadway function is to look at how well it is utilized. Using Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data to calculate VMT, one can see that the region's principal arterials account for roughly 7% of the region's total lane mileage, but carry the largest share of total VMT at 31% (see Figure 2.22).

Federal Functional Classification

State and local governments are challenged to fund the maintenance and preservation of our transportation system. Funding eligibility is based on functional classifications, as required by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973. Functional class determination is developed within the framework of Section 134 of Title 23, US Code, Metropolitan Planning. The following facilities make up Spokane's roadway system and are shown in Figure 2.23.

- **Freeways and Divided Highways:** These roadways carry a large amount of traffic at high speeds. They have limited access with freeway interchanges typically spaced at least one mile apart.

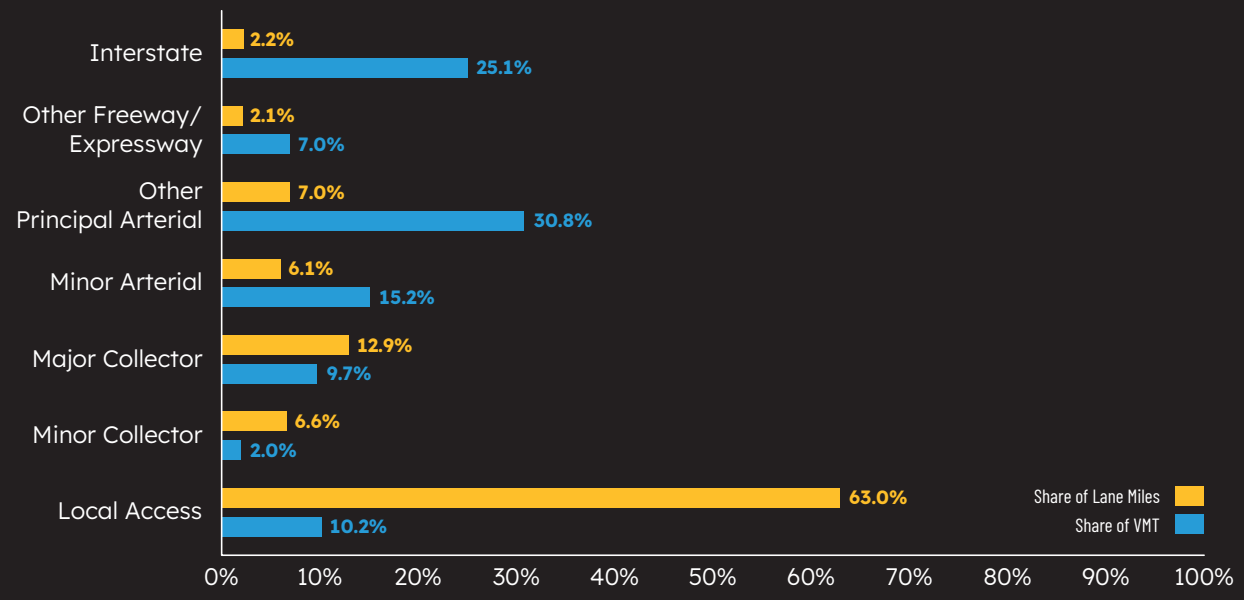
- **Principal Arterials:** These roadways carry large volumes of traffic to major destinations throughout the metropolitan area. They often connect to outlying areas via state highways or county roads. Typically, principal arterials have at least two lanes in each direction with curbs and sidewalks. Most major intersecting streets are controlled with traffic lights, and they generally have public transportation service.

- **Minor Arterials:** These roadways connect residential and business districts to the larger transportation system by accumulating traffic from lower classification roadways. They can have a variety of design characteristics depending on which part of a community they serve and the amount of activity in their vicinity. Minor arterial corridors generally have a mix of residential and commercial activity. Their classification is based primarily on how they contribute to

17 Highway Performance Monitoring System section. "Annual Mileage and Travel Information." WSDOT. https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/transportation-data/travel-data/annual-mileage-and-travel-information.

Figure 2.22 **Share of VMT and Lane Miles by Functional Class**

Source: HPMS



connecting the transportation system as opposed to their traffic volumes.

- **Collectors:** These roadways funnel traffic generated by a variety of local land uses onto a single roadway that connects to either a minor or principal arterial. They typically have one lane in each direction and traverse neighborhoods at slower speeds. They generally have lower volumes and are not designed to carry trips through a community. Unless located in a commercial or industrial area, they are not designed for heavy vehicles.

- **Local Streets:** These roads provide direct access to individual properties and are designed to meet the specific needs of local neighborhoods. They have slower speeds and lower volumes, with traffic control limited to stop and yield signs. They may or may not be paved or have curbs and sidewalks.

Indian Reservation Roads

The Indian Reservation Roads (IRR) are public roads which provide access to and within Indian reservations, Indian trust land, restricted Indian land, and Alaska native villages. The IRR Inventory is a database of all transportation facilities eligible for IRR Program funding by tribe, reservation, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) agency and region, congressional district, state, and county. Other specific information collected and maintained under the IRR Program includes classification, route number, bridge number, current and future traffic volumes, maintenance responsibility, and ownership.

The IRR Program addresses transportation needs of tribes by providing funds for planning, designing, construction, and maintenance activities for all public roads. It is jointly administered by FHWA's Federal Lands Highway Office and the BIA's Division of Transportation in accordance with an interagency agreement.

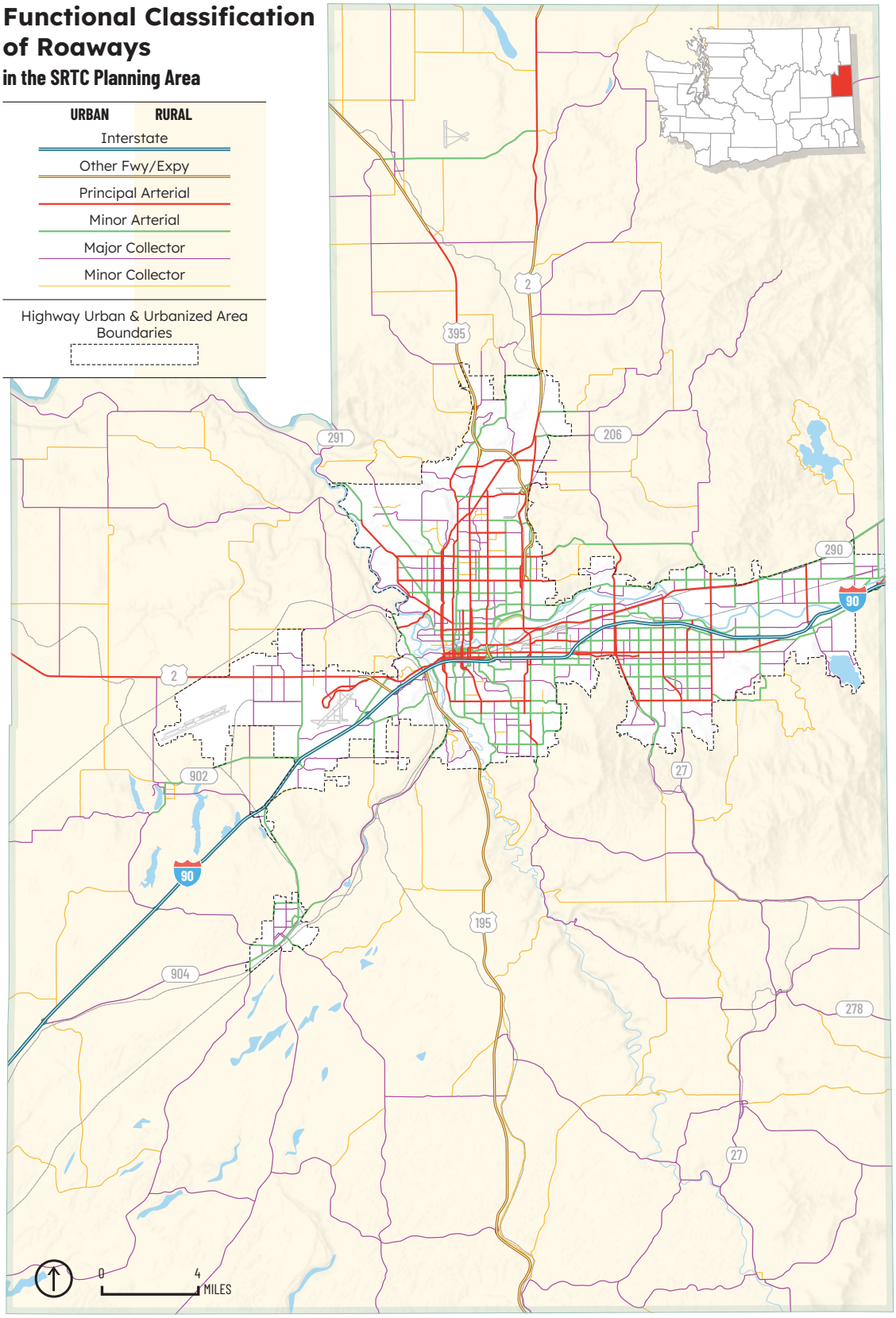
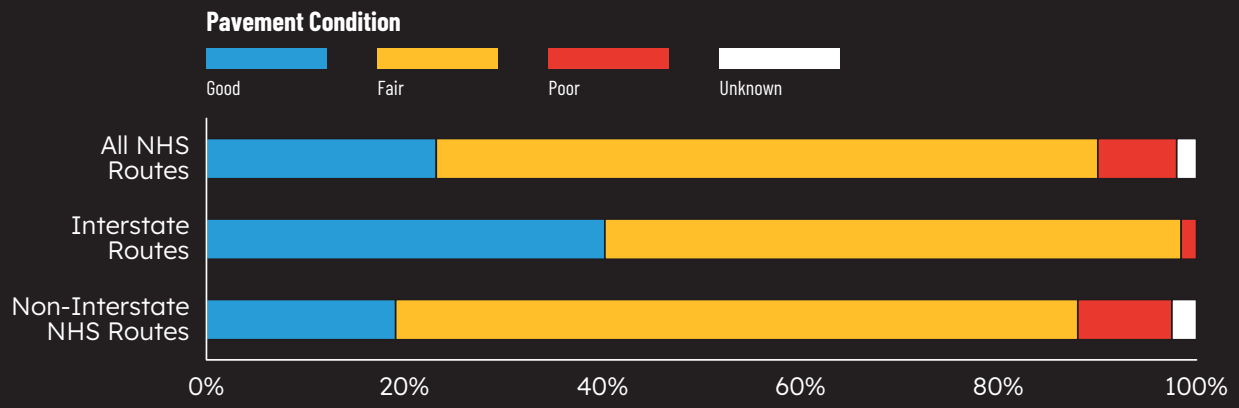


Figure 2.23 **Functional Class in the SRTC Planning Area**

Figure 2.24 **Percent of NHS Lane Miles by Pavement Condition**

Source: 2023 HPMS



Area Roadway Conditions

FHWA has instituted federal measures to assess the condition of pavement and bridges on the National Highway System (NHS). The NHS consists of the Interstate Highway System as well as other significant roadways. These include principal arterials, intermodal connectors, the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET), and major STRAHNET connectors.

States are required to set targets for these measures. In Washington, WSDOT has the responsibility to gather this data. Conditions for pavement, regardless of ownership, is reported as follows:

- **Interstate NHS Routes:** Percent of pavement in good condition and percent of pavement in poor condition.
- **Non-Interstate NHS Routes:** Percent of pavement in good condition and percent of pavement in poor condition.

The minimum requirement for WSDOT is that they must have no more than five percent of lane miles on the Interstate System in poor condition. Figure 2.24 shows the condition of NHS routes in the Spokane region. A map of the region's NHS routes is provided in Figure 2.25. The map includes all roadways that the pavement rule applies to. More information on pavement condition and associated performance can be found in the System Performance Report (Appendix D).

Much of the region's local infrastructure was built over half a century ago, and it is showing its age. The freeze-thaw cycle every winter causes potholing that grows into more serious damage if not repaired quickly. Plowing each winter scrapes off roadway striping and markings. Pavement conditions continue to decline due to budget shortfalls. Further discussion on the state of pavement is included in the Maintenance and Preservation sections of this chapter.

Vehicle Miles Traveled

Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is a measure of the number of miles traversed by a number of vehicles for a given time period—usually measured daily or annually. It is another indicator of usage of transportation facilities, most often motor vehicles on interstates, highways, and other road or street systems. Washington state uses the HPMS to estimate VMT. HPMS mileage is calculated annually. The number of miles traveled on the regional transportation network is impacted by factors such as population, age distribution of the users, and the number of vehicles per household. However, the greatest factor, by a significant margin, is how land uses are designated.

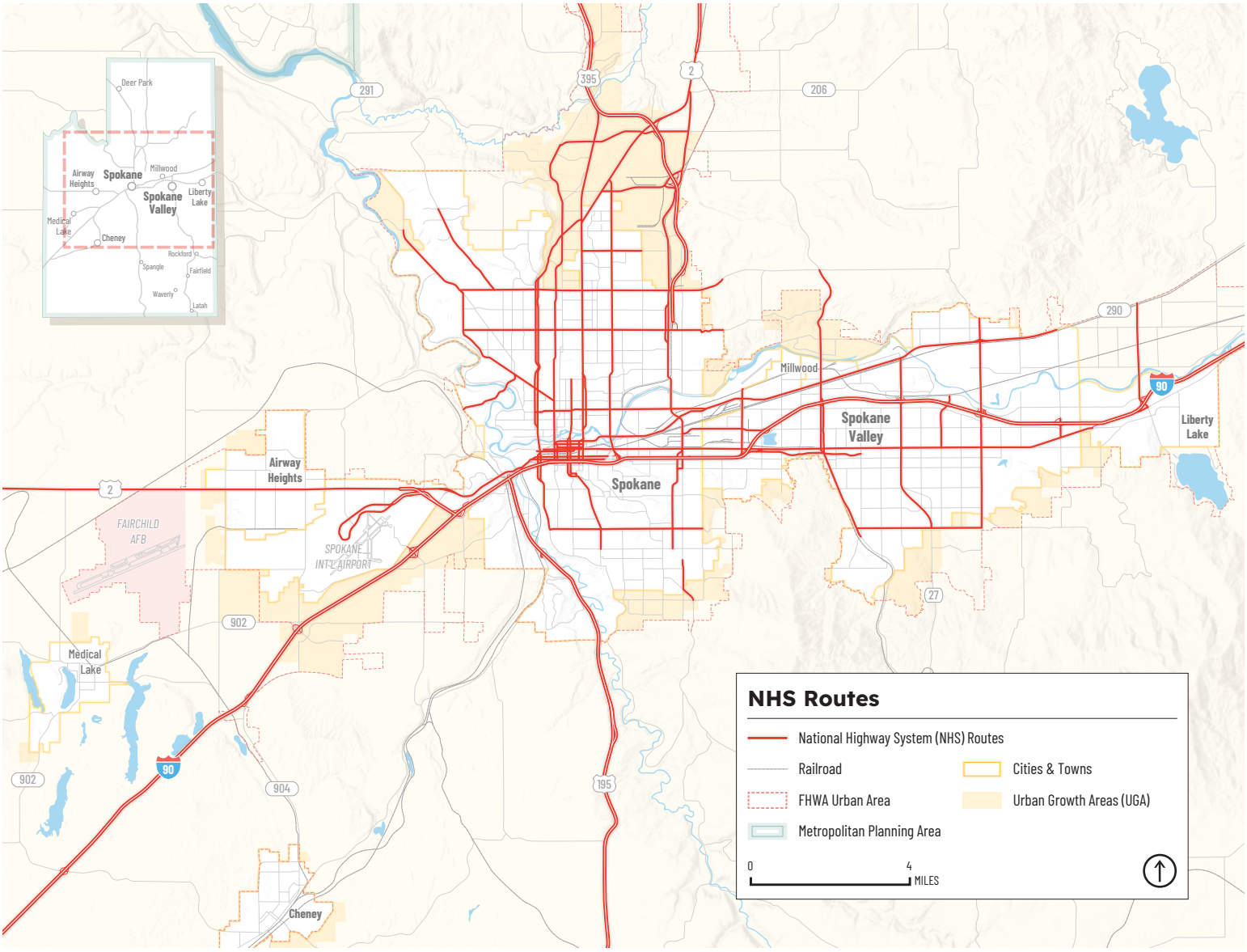


Figure 2.25 **NHS Routes in the SRTC Planning Area**

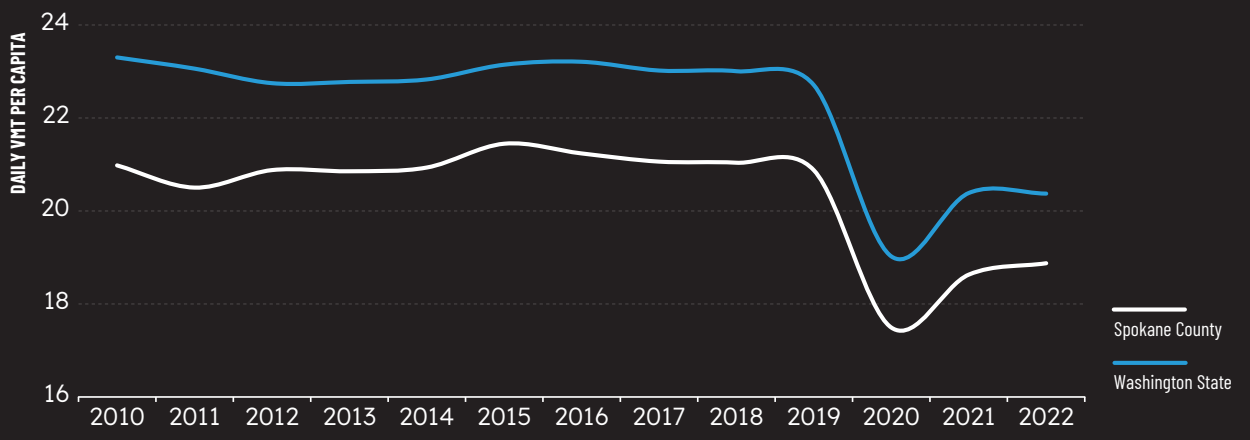
Figure 2.26 illustrates historical daily VMT per capita in SRTC's planning area in comparison to Washington state as a whole. VMT per capita is a measure of the average VMT per person. This per capita VMT indicator divides the total VMT for an area by its total population to account for population growth or loss. This is important to track since our region is experiencing population and economic growth. Reducing per capita VMT can help a region achieve air quality and congestion goals. SRTC is developing a VMT reduction framework including strategies to reduce per capita VMT in support of the aforementioned goals. The framework will include a methodology for monitoring VMT data with the potential of setting regional reduction targets.

Congestion

It has been the general practice of state and local transportation departments to mitigate congestion for the purposes of improving travel times and reducing the costs generated by vehicle delay. "The underlying assumption is that congestion relief is an unmitigated good" because vehicle delay costs Americans billions of dollars in wasted fuel and time each year. However, "the common misinterpretation of such statistics is that our cities would be so much more economically productive if only we could eliminate the congestion that occurs on urban streets." In fact, studies show that increased travel delay generally means a higher gross domestic product (GDP) per capita for cities across the United States. Simply stated, the presence of more automobiles stuck in traffic

Figure 2.26 **VMT Growth per Capita**

Source: WSDOT, 2022 HPMS VMT by County; OFM April 1, 2022 Official Population Estimates



indicates that more people are traveling to or from work, meetings, shopping, and recreation, "indicating the presence of a vibrant, economically-productive city."[18] Congestion can also encourage people to change travel behaviors by traveling shorter distances, living closer to work, traveling less, or shifting travel modes.

To balance the conversation, congestion does pose its share of problems. Certain industries would rather not develop in congested areas, such as freight shippers, trucking firms, or warehousing businesses. Congestion can add costs to goods and services. It can also have a negative impact on residents' quality of life if too much time is spent in congested conditions. It's important to understand the cause of congestion and if it is negative (i.e., delay from a poorly designed traffic signal) or positive (i.e., an event being held at an activity center).

Congested roads can be defined in various ways. One way to evaluate congestion is to look at the annual delay per auto commuter, which indicates the extra time spent during the year traveling at congested speeds, rather than free-flow speeds, by private vehicle drivers and passengers who typically travel in the peak periods. Figure 2.27 includes data from the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) that indicates how annual delay has changed per auto commuter over time. Our annual delay congestion levels compare similarly to other medium-sized urban areas.

There is general recognition that the Spokane region has regular congestion that occurs for a limited period during peak AM and PM commute times. It is often heightened in the construction season. SRTC has strategies regarding congestion in the Congestion Management portion of this chapter.

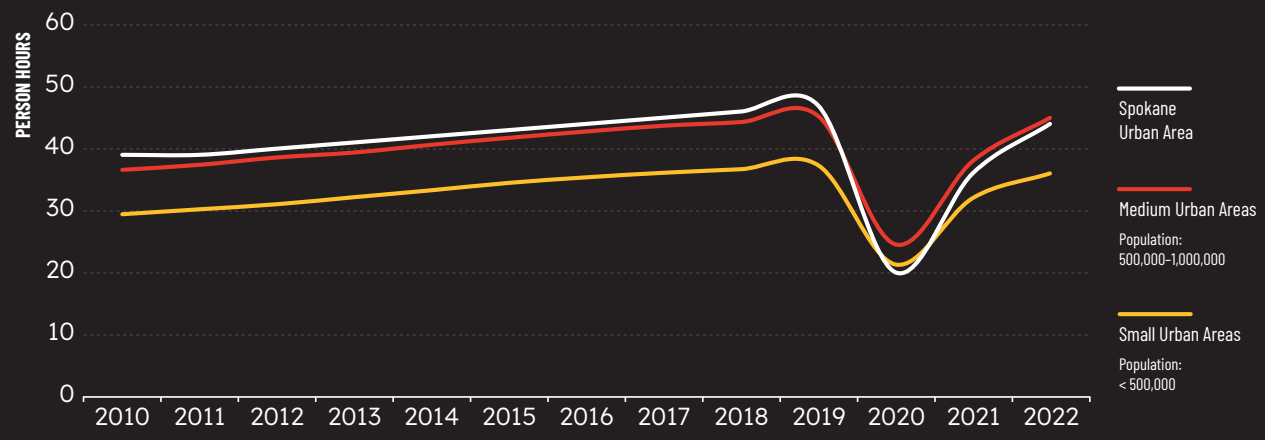
Under federal performance management rules, states and MPOs must track system performance and set targets related to congestion using the following measures:

- Percent of person-miles traveled on the Interstate System that are reliable.
- Percent of person-miles traveled on the Non-Interstate NHS System that are reliable.

18 Dumbaugh, Eric. "Rethinking the Economics of Traffic Congestion - Bloomberg." Bloomberg, June 1, 2012. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-06-01/rethinking-the-economics-of-traffic-congestion.

Figure 2.27 **Delay per Peak Hour Auto Commuter**

Source: TTI, 2023 Urban Mobility Report



Maintenance and Operations

Maintenance and operations activities include inspections, repairs, preventive maintenance, and overall operation of the system. Routine maintenance involves cleaning, maintenance of pavement markings and signs, crack filling, pothole patching, and surface treatments. Other operational activities can include winter snow plowing, de-icing, or sanding, as well as dust control and street sweeping.

Preservation

Preservation involves proactive maintenance to reduce expensive and disruptive rehabilitation or replacement of infrastructure before the end of its useful life. According to FHWA, pavement preservation programs are beneficial because they "preserve investments, enhance pavement performance, ensure cost-effectiveness, extend pavement life, reduce user delays, and provide improved safety and mobility."[19] As is the case for regions across the country, funding for preservation programs in the Spokane region continues to lag behind need.

Pavement rehabilitation is defined as a structural or functional enhancement of pavement which produces an extension in service life by substantially improving pavement condition and ride quality.[20] This can also include improving the load-carrying capacity. Reconstruction usually involves replacing most if not all the pavement surface and/or structure.

Roadway Infrastructure Challenges

The biggest challenge the Spokane region faces when it comes to roadway infrastructure is a shortage of funding for maintenance and preservation. Many jurisdictions report that it would take millions more dollars to catch up and keep up with street maintenance needs on an annual basis. With VMT expected to grow, roadways continuing to age, and conditions declining, combined with the benefit of relatively steady mild congestion levels, the opportunity for improved maintenance and preservation of the region's roadways should be prioritized. SRTC holds maintenance, preservation, and the ongoing operation of these facilities as one of its Guiding Principles, as detailed in Chapter 1.

19 Geiger, David R. "Pavement Preservation." U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration, September 12, 2005. http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/pavement/preservation/091205.cfm.

20 Hall, Kathleen T., Carlos E. Correa, Samuel H. Carpenter, and Robert P. Elliot. "Rehabilitation Strategies for Highway Pavements." TRB, May 2001. https://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_w35-a.pdf.

In 2024, Spokane County and the Washington State Transportation Commission reported a road preservation backlog of $425 million in the county. One approach to address the maintenance backlog is to increase funding through taxes, levies, or vehicle license tab fees. The City of Spokane utilized another tool, establishing a Transportation Benefit District (TBD) in 2010. According to the City's definition, a TBD is a quasi-municipal corporation and independent taxing district created for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, improving, providing, and funding transportation improvements within a defined area, or district. The district boundary is the city limits. The TBD assesses a $20 annual fee on vehicles registered within city limits to help fund maintenance and preservation activities for existing transportation facilities and programs. Ten percent of TBD funding goes to the City's pedestrian program. These activities are detailed in the City's Six-Year Pavement Maintenance Program. More information on the TBD can be found on the city's website.[21] In 2024, the City of Spokane Valley also adopted a similar fee structure on vehicle registrations to help overcome roadway maintenance and preservation shortfalls.

Bridges

The geography of the Spokane region, including rivers, valleys, and grade separated structures, has contributed to a roadway network that relies heavily on bridges. There are just over 300 bridges currently registered on the National Bridge Inventory (NBI) within the planning area. At the national level, 7.5% of the nation's highway bridges are structurally deficient (i.e., in poor condition) or are functionally obsolete (not suitable for its current use and is not able to handle current traffic volume, speed, size or weight).[22] Additionally, an estimated $125 billion in investment is needed to fix the backlog of bridge deficiencies in the US. Bridge inspections, maintenance, repair, reconstruction, or replacement if necessary, is an emphasis area in Horizon 2050.

Under federal performance management rules aimed at improving bridge condition, FHWA measures are applicable to all NHS bridges regardless of ownership or maintenance responsibility. States and MPOs must track bridge condition and set bridge condition targets for the following two FHWA bridge condition measures:

- **NHS Bridges:** (1) Percent of bridge deck area in good condition and (2) percent of bridge deck area in poor condition.

Federal rules for bridge condition are based on an assessment of the deck, superstructure, and substructure. For NHS bridges, states must ensure that the overall percentage of bridge deck area classified as poor condition does not exceed ten percent. States have established statewide targets for each of the pavement and bridge condition measures for a 4-year performance period. The targets were established in coordination with relevant MPOs to the maximum extent practicable. WSDOT and SRTC were involved in these discussions. More information can be found in the System Performance Report (Appendix D).

Bridge Condition

Data regarding the condition of the 141 NHS bridges in the region is shown in Figure 2.28. Updated data will be evaluated each year. Targets will be set for bridge performance and those goals will be monitored as required every two years. Figure 2.29 shows the condition and location of both NHS and non-NHS bridges in the region.

Bridge Maintenance and Preservation

Bridge preservation is defined as actions or strategies that prevent, delay or reduce deterioration of bridges or bridge elements, restore the function of existing bridges, keep bridges in good condition, and extend their life. This is also a safety concern for users in our region.

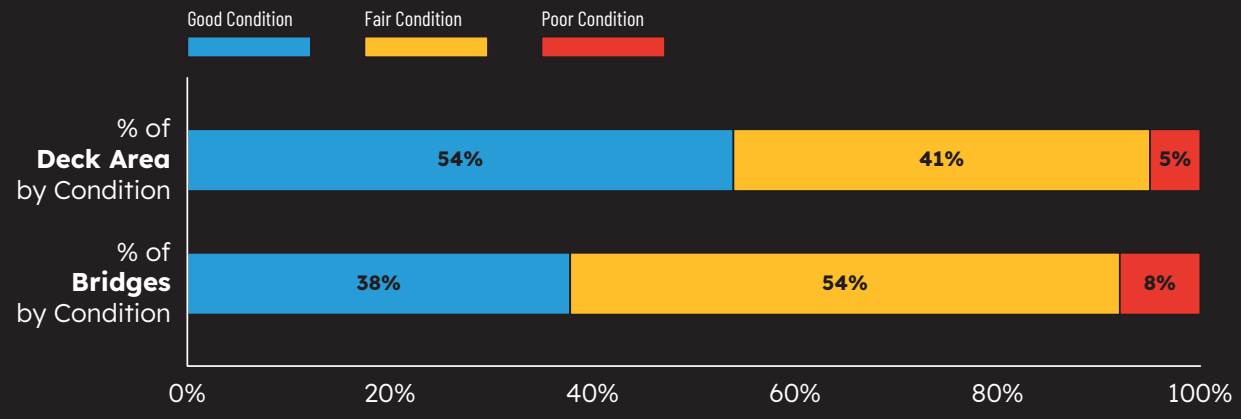
Effective bridge preservation delays the need for costly reconstruction or replacement by applying preservation strategies on bridges while they are still in good or fair condition and before the onset of serious deterioration. Bridge preserva-

21 Martin, Abigail. "Spokane's Transportation Benefit District." City of Spokane, Washington, February 14, 2011. https://my.spokanecity.org/streets/maintenance/transportation-benefit-district/.

22 2021 Infrastructure Report Card. American Society of Civil Engineers.

Figure 2.28 **NHS Bridge Condition in the SRTC Planning Area, 2024**

Source: 2024 NBI ASCII Files



tion encompasses preventive maintenance and rehabilitation activities.

Maintenance is a planned strategy of cost-effective treatments to existing infrastructure. For bridges, maintenance actions are applied to structural elements with significant remaining useful life. Examples of maintenance activities include but are not limited to:

- Bridge washing, cleaning, and painting
- Sealing deck joints
- Facilitating drainage
- Sealing concrete
- Removing debris
- Lubricating bearings

Bridge Challenges

As with roadway conditions, the biggest challenge with area bridges is funding expensive maintenance and preservation needs. According to FHWA's National Bridge Inventory (NBI) in 2024, there were a total of 307 bridges in Spokane County. This total includes the region's 141 NHS bridges. Of those, 9 are in poor condition and 76 are in good condition.

Although 2023 data indicates that the overall share of NBI bridges in Spokane County in poor condition has decreased since 2022 data was released, data over the past decade indicates a challenging trend. The amount of NHS bridge deck area in good condition has declined. At the same time, the amount of NHS bridge deck area in poor condition has increased slightly, and the amount in fair condition has increased significantly. This trend may indicate that more bridges will deteriorate into the poor category unless additional investments are made in bridge maintenance and preservation.

Technology

SRTC and its regional partners have worked to develop a Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) strategy for Spokane County and leveraging technological tools is a key part. TSMO aims to integrate multimodal, cross-jurisdictional systems, services, and projects to improve the efficiency and performance of the existing network. Effective implementation of TSMO preserves roadway capacity and improves security, safety, and reliability for travelers. Regional project examples can include signal coordination, traffic incident management, emergency preparedness, security programs, data collection, and traffic manage-

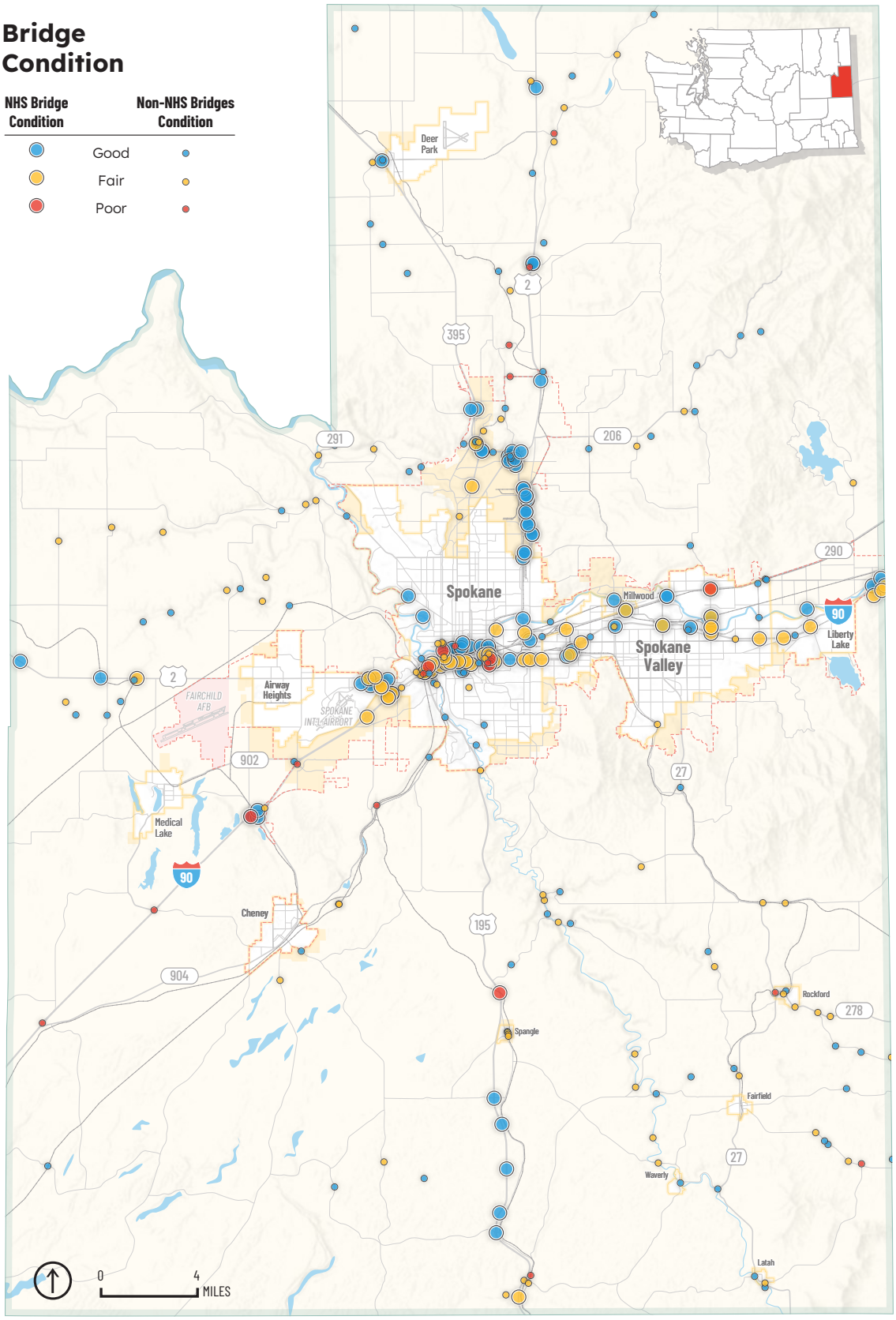


Figure 2.29 **Bridge Condition in the SRTC Planning Area, 2024**

ment centers, as well as many other examples of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).

Intelligent Transportation Systems

The Spokane region updated its Regional ITS Architecture Plan in 2019. Some of the strategies and projects in the plan include deploying transit signal priority and bus-only signals at key intersections, developing real-time traveler information and multimodal planning tools, and deploying operational data collection and communications infrastructure.

The Spokane Regional Transportation Management Center (SRTMC), anticipated to be based out of the WSDOT Eastern Region campus soon, is an example of an ITS strategy. It is a multi-jurisdictional control facility to support transportation management capabilities. SRTC is supportive of SRTMC functions through annual funding contributions and participation on its Executive and Technical Committees.

SRTMC coordinates day-to-day operations of the transportation system and responds to events and incidents on area roadways to maximize efficiency and facilitate, through communication, better route choices for travelers. Additional services include data collection and management for performance measurement, facilitating public transportation, operating live camera views of crucial facilities such as I-90, and facilitating emergency response.

The SRTMC operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It uses closed-circuit cameras, dynamic message signs, highway advisory radio stations, traffic measurement stations, and signal monitoring to keep traffic flowing smoothly. SRTMC staff monitor the status of these systems, and the data gathered can be used for the measurement of system performance. You can watch the real-time traffic cameras, check traffic flow rates, and find more information on the SRTMC website.[23]

Smart Mobility Plan

SRTC undertook a study in 2024 aimed at understanding the impacts of emerging technologies and to develop a set of strategies and actions to advance transportation innovation in support of Horizon 2050. The result was the Smart Mobility Plan, which was adopted by the SRTC Board of Directors in December 2024. The Smart Mobility Plan is listed among local plans and studies that inform Horizon 2050 (see Chapter 4).

Transportation Modes

The region's transportation system is made up of a variety of modes. These include private vehicles, transit, walking, bicycling, micromobility devices, freight, and rail. These travel modes rely on public and private infrastructure to function as an integrated system. The major roadway facilities in the region are publicly owned and maintained by the state, county, or local cities. The road network provides access to other modes such as air and rail. Rail lines are largely privately owned and must be coordinated with the surface street network. SRTC's transportation planning work is predominately focused on the surface street network and its applicable modes. The following section reviews all modes, their usage levels in our area, and challenges with each.

Freight

Freight movements within the region and across the nation are critical to the economy. Seaports, trucks, rail lines, and aviation all contribute to the shipment of agricultural goods, raw materials, and commercial products. Additionally, supportive infrastructure such as truck parking, intermodal hubs, and warehousing are important assets for freight activity and commerce.

Trucking is the main mode of freight transport in the Spokane area. 54 percent of the volume of goods that travel through the area is transported by truck, while 43% is moved by rail. However, 79% of the total value of freight is transported by

23 Spokane Region Travel Information Map, n.d. http://www.srtmc.org/.

trucks. This illustrates a common characteristic of products transported by truck (electronics, apparel, food, and other consumer goods) which have a higher cost per pound and may often have more time-sensitive delivery schedules. Freight moving by rail, on the other hand, is often heavier, has less time-sensitive delivery, and therefore lower unit costs.

The top commodities exported from the county are lumber/wood products, food and related products, chemicals or allied products, clay/concrete/glass/stone, farm products, fabricated metal products, machinery, transportation equipment, and electrical equipment. Major commodities imported into the county are similar to those exported along with pulp, paper, or allied products. Secondary traffic is also a major part of freight activity. Secondary traffic is the movement of goods within the area such as pick up and deliveries, transloading, warehousing, and inventory handling.

There are several regional freight facilities running east-west through the Spokane region. These facilities include the Spokane Intermodal Facility, Spokane Automotive Facility, and the Spokane Vehicle Facility, all located near the border of the City of Spokane Valley and the City of Spokane. The newest facility, the Spokane International Airport Rail-Truck Transload facility, was completed in 2022. These facilities, and other key aspects of the regional freight network, are visualized on SRTC's Freight Priority Network, which is detailed further in Chapter 4.

As part of Horizon 2045, SRTC staff created a Spokane Regional Truck Freight Profile. This document contains important regional freight information and informs our understanding of freight's relation to land use, activity centers, and the key roadway connections in Spokane County. The process included extensive stakeholder engagement with local employers and other freight representatives. Ultimately, the profile provides a data-driven picture of truck freight travel and therefore key infrastructure needs such as those found on the Freight Priority Network.

Inland Pacific Hub

The Spokane region has previously studied transportation-related freight assets and movements and developed strategies to raise the competitive profile of the area. The Inland Pacific Hub (IPH) was a prime example of this. The IPH was a partnership established by and composed of public and private sector representatives from Idaho and Washington. Completed in 2012, the project examined the possibility of establishing the Inland Pacific region as a multimodal global gateway to increase domestic and international commerce. The process resulted in a list of potential transportation investments designed to enhance economic opportunity.

Trucking

The Washington State Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS) classifies state highways, county roads, and city streets according to the average annual gross truck tonnage they carry. The FGTS identifies highways and roads most heavily used by trucks and provides data to support funding for projects that improve conditions for freight transportation. This information also supports planning for pavement upgrades, traffic congestion management, and other investment decisions. Jurisdictions are responsible for submitting updated tonnage and classification data to WSDOT, which is why some streets and roads change classifications at jurisdiction lines. The FGTS classifies roadways using five freight tonnage classifications: T-1 through T-5, see Figure 2.30.

Inbound and outbound truck flows are concentrated to the west and south of Spokane County. Flows to and from the north represent only two percent of tonnage for all inbound and outbound movements. To evaluate truck freight performance, truck travel time reliability (TTTR) is one of the performance measures monitored by SRTC. It is calculated by dividing the 95th percentile average annual daily travel time by the 50th percentile average annual daily travel time. If the ratio is more than 1.5, then the roadway travel time is not reliable.

Semi-tractor combinations and trucks with trailers over 10,000 gross pounds vehicle weight used in intercity or interstate hauling are required to use truck routes throughout Spokane County. These routes are to be used to the point nearest the pickup or delivery if the destination is not located on a truck route. Trucks that cannot avoid using non-truck routes are asked to call the jurisdiction they will be traveling through in

Figure 2.30 **FGTS Truck Corridors Classification Criteria**

FGTS Class	Freight Tonnage Classification Criteria
T-1	More than 10 million tons per year
T-2	4 to 10 million tons per year
T-3	300,000 to 4 million tons per year
T-4	100,000 to 300,000 tons per year
T-5	At least 20,000 tons in 60 days and less than 100,000 tons per year

advance, so officials can plan for disruptions to traffic or facilities.

Truck Freight Challenges

A significantly larger portion of freight movement is outbound than inbound, particularly for trucks, where outbound commodity flow via truck is 32% and inbound is 21%. This leads to a back-haul problem as many trucks travel back empty. This imbalance becomes an issue for many shippers, as it raises average per unit costs, and can be a barrier to increasing truck movements and attracting new shippers. At the same time, empty loads present an opportunity to ship other commodities back into the region and potentially lower costs for some products. An additional challenge is the availability of truck parking, as the high volume of freight trucks requires adequate space to park and take mandated breaks.

Rail

There are over 240 miles of railroad in Spokane County, with the largest rail line owners being BNSF, UP, and WSDOT, who owns the Palouse and Coulee City Railroad (PCC) network.[24] There are 300 road-rail crossings in Spokane County listed by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC). With the exception of the PCC network and the adjoining Geiger Spur (owned by Spokane County), all rail facilities in Spokane County are privately owned. In Washington state, the UTC is responsible for regulating the railroads and related industries. Nationally, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) engages in research and development efforts to improve rail safety, administers and implements rail safety regulations, and provides selective investments in rail corridors.

Railroads are categorized into classes based on the carrier's annual operating revenue, with Class I carriers earning over approximately $1.075 billion per year, Class II carriers earning between $48.2 million and $1.05 billion, and Class III carriers earning less than $48.2 million.[25] Class III short lines act as the rail equivalent of a "last mile" connection, bringing goods from more remote and rural areas to intermodal facilities and inland ports. As of 2019, there were approximately 1,900 miles of Class I railroad and 1,200 miles of Class III railroad across Washington state. No Class II railroads operate within the state.[26]

The current Washington State Rail Plan was adopted in 2020. Work is underway on an update, expected in 2026, which will include a multimodal connectivity analysis of stations around the state. Figure 2.31 shows the railway network in Washington state.

Freight Rail

For heavy loads and long trips, freight rail offers significant economic and environmental benefits when compared to truck freight. The heavier a good or cargo is, the more efficient it is to move

24 WSDOT. "Freight and Goods Transportation System - Rail Corridors." Washington State Geospatial Open Data Portal, n.d. https://geo.wa.gov/datasets/84ac4a62bda248de9465878dd965a6b8_1/explore?location=48.881522%2C-115.878490%2C6.92.

25 STB. "Economic Data." Surface Transportation Board, n.d. https://www.stb.gov/reports-data/economic-data/.

26 WSDOT. "Washington State Rail Plan." Washington State Department of Transportation, n.d. https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/statewide-plans/freight-plans/washington-state-rail-plan.

Figure 2.31 **Washington State Rail Map**

Source: Washington State Rail Plan 2019–2040, WSDOT

by rail. Therefore, rail freight tends to favor cargo that is heavy and less time sensitive.

Over the years, rail industry bankruptcies, acquisitions, and mergers have reduced the number of operating railroads in Spokane County. Today, BNSF and UP are the two Class I mainline operators serving the region. UP provides rail service to Canada through Eastport, Idaho as well as general freight rail operations in eastern Washington and northern Idaho. UP operates an average of six to ten scheduled trains a day through Spokane between Oregon and Canada. UP operates one dedicated pair of trains per day between Spokane and the connection to the UP east/west mainline at Hermiston, Oregon. BNSF does market intermodal service in the Spokane area, but it is typically trailer on flatcar (TOFC) service that is marketed through an IMC (Intermodal Marketing Company) like Swift or JB Hunt. Containers are loaded at the BNSF yard. Service is offered between Spokane and St. Paul, Minnesota or Chicago, Illinois.

Spokane is situated on the BNSF mainline between Portland/Seattle and Chicago. With increased international trade activity between the United States and pacific-rim countries, rail provides an efficient method of transporting freight from deep-water ports in Puget Sound and Portland to the east coast and Midwest. Presently, BNSF operates approximately 65 trains per day through the Spokane metropolitan area. With trains between 4,000 and 7,500 feet

long, their impact on the surface transportation system can be significant by blocking at-grade crossings for long periods of time.

Spokane County also has several short lines and branch lines. The Class III PCC short line system, the longest short-line railroad in the state, has been owned by WSDOT since it was acquired by the state in 2004 and 2007. The PCC system is actually comprised of three separate short lines located in Spokane, Grant, Adams, Whitman, and Lincoln Counties—of which two are significant parts of the Spokane County rail network. The CW line runs between Spokane County (Cheney) and Coulee City. The Spokane County-owned Geiger Spur has its junction with the CW line on the West Plains near Airway Heights and Fairchild Air Force Base. The P&L line runs from Spokane County (northeast of Cheney) to just north of Pullman and includes a state border crossing east of Palouse. Though it is owned by the state, rail service on the PCC system continues to be operated by private carriers who in turn assume maintenance responsibilities. The PCC Rail Authority, an intergovernmental authority of which Spokane County is a member, was created by the state legislature to provide business and economic development oversight, to strategize how to diversify the commodities, and to help ensure profitability of operators on the system. A key goal for the state has been to bring the system into a state of good repair.[27]

For the Spokane region, the PCC system is key to grain delivery, forming a critical part of the state's wheat supply chain. Wheat and other products travel on the PCC to Class I main lines and ultimately to transload facilities, ports, and barges. In 2023, Washington produced 3.2 million metric tons of wheat, of which approximately 20% to 25% is shipped on the PCC system.

Transload facilities in Spokane County include those operated by BNSF, UP, Spokane International Airport, and Inland Empire Distribution Systems, Inc. (IEDS). IEDS operates in the Spokane Industrial Park. Both BNSF and the UP serve the IEDS facility. A transload facility was constructed west of Spokane International Airport, including three new rail lines covering nearly two miles and a connection to the existing Geiger Spur line. This newest transload facility provides multimodal freight services to meet increasing demand for a larger transportation and logistics network from the area's commercial and industrial sectors.

Rail Freight Challenges

Operations on mainlines to/from west coast ports that pass through Spokane are approaching capacity and face constraints including at-grade crossings and single-track sections. Spokane County has 207 at-grade railroad crossings that are occasionally blocked by long trains.[28] Residents of some neighborhoods also complain about noise from train horns. The Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PENWER) has indicated that the stretch of tracks between Spokane Valley and Hauser, Idaho represent a choke point in the regional rail freight supply chain and that grade separation projects in this stretch, such as the BNSF/Pines Road Grade Separation project, are especially critical to avoid backups and stoppages.

Another significant obstacle that faces both freight and passenger rail is the limited supply of train sets. Train sets in the North American market are not pre-produced and must be custom ordered. As of January 2025, WSDOT's Rail, Freight and Ports Division indicated there is a 7-to-8-year backlog for new orders.

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission developed its Highway-Rail Grade Crossing State Action Plan in 2022. This document identifies rail grade crossings and pathway crossings that: a) have experienced recent grade crossing accidents or incidents; b) have experienced multiple grade crossing accidents or incidents; or c) are at high-risk for accidents or incidents.[29] This statewide plan identified 114 higher-risk crossings, including seven crossings in the Spokane region. One of these seven, on

27 Washington State Transportation Commission January 2025 Meeting; WSTC "Meetings 2025." Washington State Transportation Commission. https://wstc.wa.gov/meetings/.

28 Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, Inventory of Public Railroad Crossings, "Prioritization of Prominent Road Rail Conflicts in Washington State.", 2017. https://leg.wa.gov/JTC/Documents/Studies/Road%20Rail%20Study%202016/FinalReport_Road%20RailConflicts_January%202017.pdf.

29 Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, Washington Highway-Rail Grade Crossing State Action Plan (Olympia, WA: Washington UTC, February 2022), https://www.utc.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/Final%20UTC%20State%20Action%20Plan.pdf

South Brooks Road in western Spokane County, has been approved for funding for improvements through WSDOT's Section 130 program. The State Action Plan informs SRTC's planning efforts to resolve road-rail conflicts.

Previously, a 2017 Joint Transportation Committee study evaluated the impacts of prominent road–rail conflicts and developed a corridor-based prioritization process for addressing the impacts of these conflicts.[30] A resulting list of crossing priorities was meant as a first step to assist policy makers, state agencies, RTPOs, and local jurisdictions to understand crossing impacts. An older study, known as Bridging the Valley, was completed in 2002 and addressed separation of vehicle and train traffic on the 42-mile BNSF corridor that runs between Spokane and Athol, ID. Bridging the Valley included a proposed program of safety improvements and projects that would separate trains from automobiles with under or overpasses to improve public safety and reduce wait time at railroad crossings. To date, several of these projects are completed or planned in Spokane Valley, but many at-grade conflicts remain.

Passenger Rail

Amtrak's long-distance Empire Builder route provides daily passenger rail service to the region via the Spokane Intermodal Center in downtown Spokane. It connects Spokane with Portland, Oregon and Seattle to the west, and with cities as far east as St. Paul and Chicago. The Empire Builder has been in service since 1929, when the first train departed Chicago on the then Great Northern Railway (now BNSF).[31]

Recently, the Spokane region's role as a historical rail hub has again come into focus as part of the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority's Big Sky North Coast Corridor initiative. In 2023, the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority, comprised of eighteen counties across the state of Montana, was awarded a $500,000 planning grant through FRA's Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) program to scope the restoration of a passenger rail corridor between the Pacific Northwest and Chicago, generally following the now-defunct Amtrak North Coast Hiawatha route.[32]

Passenger Rail Challenges

In addition to the aforementioned backlog on new train sets, passenger train departure times in the Spokane region have made passenger rail an inconvenient mode choice for many residents. Currently, westbound Empire Builder trains en route to Seattle depart from Spokane at approximately 3:19 a.m. Those passing through en route to Portland depart Spokane at 3:49 a.m. Eastbound trains depart Spokane at 1:15 a.m. en route to St. Paul and Chicago. These times are often inaccurate due to delays and other circumstances. The inconvenience of these late night and early morning schedules as well as unreliable arrival and departure times is frequently expressed at public meetings.

Continued funding for passenger rail may pose another challenge. While passenger rail can be an important mode choice for travelers, expanding passenger rail offerings may require well-researched public investments into private facilities. Additionally, passenger rail projects supported through programs such as FRA's Corridor ID program depend on continued funding via reauthorization of the IIJA beyond 2026. Future phases of the Big Sky North Coast Corridor project depend on currently unsecured local match to move forward.

Regional Infrastructure Accelerator Program

The Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PENWER) operates a transportation program, the Regional Infrastructure Accelerator (RIA), which is funded by the USDOT's Build America Bureau. The RIA helps accelerate infrastructure project delivery through provision of technical assistance, building capacity in state and local project development, and identification of innovative financing solutions.

30 Joint Transportation Committee. Prioritization of Prominent Road-Rail Conflicts in Washington State, January 2017. https://leg.wa.gov/media/s2chyazq/finalreport_road-railconflicts_january-2017.pdf

31 Magliari, Marc. "Amtrak Customers Celebrate 90 Years of Empire Builder Service." Amtrak Media, June 11, 2019. https://media.amtrak.com/2019/06/amtrak-customers-celebrate-90-years-of-empire-builder-service/

32 Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority. "Connecting Communities, Strengthening Economies, Driving the Future of Passenger Rail." Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority, 2024. https://www.bigskyrail.org/.

One of the four key program areas included in the RIA is high performance rail.[33] Although high performance rail is not the same as high-speed rail, where trains may travel at speeds of at least 110 mph, high performance rail offers increased frequency, reduced travel times, better on-time performance, and all-weather reliability. As defined by PENWER, "high performance rail encapsulates a multi-stakeholder approach to rail by identifying, evaluating, and pursuing multiple rail improvement projects that, when bundled, promise to significantly reduce passenger train delays and improve freight velocity along major northwest rail corridors." One of the RIA's emphases is that, although freight and passenger rail must share the same tracks, investment in rail transportation has co-benefits for both freight and passenger rail operations. Improvements such as alleviation of at-grade crossings as well as investments in sidings, extensions, switches, port access, and passenger station platforms promise to improve the flow of rail traffic and increase access to rail for both goods and people. Through investments such as these, RIA promises to bring environmental benefit, community benefits, and benefits to the host railroads by bolstering supply chains.

The RIA is establishing a Regional Rail Working Group that will convene leaders and partners across four states (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana) to discuss challenges and opportunities for the Pacific Northwest's freight and passenger rail system.

Air

The Spokane area is served by public and private airports that provide access to the national aviation system. Publicly-owned airports and privately-owned airports open for public use are included in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). The NPIAS identifies public-use airports that are eligible to receive federal funding for improvement. Inclusion in the NPIAS means an airport plays a significant role in national air transportation. However, even if a public-use airport is not listed in the NPIAS, it may still qualify for state-level funding, provided it meets certain criteria. Spokane International Airport and Felts Field are two key airports, which together provide scheduled and non-scheduled passenger and freight service as well as corporate and general aviation access to the community. The City of Spokane and Spokane County jointly own Spokane International Airport, Felts Field Airport, and the Airport Business Park. The Spokane Airport Board, consisting of seven appointees from the two governmental bodies, operates these facilities which are funded with airport-generated revenue and grants. The facilities are financially self-sufficient from revenues generated from leases, fees, and concession agreements. No funding for these facilities comes from local public tax dollars.

Spokane International Airport's 2014 20-year master plan includes existing conditions, a forecast of future operations, an environmental review, a financial plan, and planned facilities to meet future needs.[34] An update to the master plan has not yet been undertaken since 2014.

The Airport Board has pursued safety, capacity, and efficiency investments aimed at maximizing the two Airports' contributions to the regional economy as well as enhancing passenger customer experience through upgrades and modernization. These improvements include an extension of the inbound roadway leading to the terminal, acquisition of new snow removal and aircraft rescue and firefighting equipment, construction of new parking lot facilities, aircraft parking ramp expansion, taxiway and taxilane rehabilitation, site preparation for a convenience store and gas station, airport surface roadway access development, terminal building upgrades, security and IT infrastructure upgrades, and baggage handling system upgrades. Additionally, the airport is embarking on a terminal renovation and expansion project, which will modernize and add additional gates, passenger screening area, ticketing, and concessions in the existing C Terminal facilities constructed in the early 2000s and ultimately, create a consolidated checkpoint and baggage claim area for passengers to enter and depart the airport.

33 RIA Northwest. "High Performance Rail." PNWER Regional Infrastructure Accelerator, n.d. https://www.rianorthwest.org/.

34 Spokane International Airport. "Spokane International Airport (GEG) Master Plan." Spokane International Airport, 2014. https://business.spokaneairports.net/airport-master-plan/.

Several airfield and landside improvements have been made at Felts Field as well, which has stimulated additional private investment in hangar development and aviation services. A new aviation fueling facility was recently completed to improve aircraft self-fueling safety and convenience. In addition, Northwest Flight Service constructed a 13,000 square foot hangar to house their flight school, aircraft maintenance, and flight rental business, and Historic Flight Foundation relocated their classic and antique aircraft collection from Everett's Paine Field into a new 21,000 square foot hangar. Continued investment in hangar capacity, continuation of the contract tower services provided by the FAA as well as investments in surface access and terminal area infrastructure will be critical to the continued success and growth of the airport. The Felts Field Master Plan will be updated to guide capital improvements over the next 20 years.

Local airports such as Mead, Deer Park, and the Coeur d'Alene Airport also contribute to the regional air transportation system. These general aviation airports allow private and business aircraft to be based closer to their homes or businesses. While general aviation airports typically do not have the same level of facilities, amenities, and navigational aids, their ability to reduce air traffic for practice operations and general aviation activity at Spokane International Airport makes them an important part of the overall transportation system.

In 2017, Spokane International Airport, in collaboration with the City of Spokane and Spokane County, formed the S3R3 Solutions Public Development Authority (PDA) to provide physical infrastructure and a revenue sharing model within the PDA's 9,000-acre boundary that provides the PDA with revenue for investment in infrastructure development and other related initiatives to retain and expand commerce in the immediate vicinity of Spokane International Airport. In October 2021, S3R3 completed the construction of a 34,000 square foot airside sorting facility for Amazon Air on land leased from Spokane International Airport, which is the realization of the vision for the creation of the PDA. Additionally, the Spokane Airport Board serves as the Grantee for Foreign-Trade Zone Number 224, and Spokane International Airport property includes an 1,800 acre qualified Opportunity Zone and a Community Empowerment Zone.

In addition to the aforementioned airport infrastructure improvements, WSDOT has programmed improvements to I-90's Geiger Boulevard (Exit 276) and Medical Lake (Exit 272) interchanges. $26 million was included in the 2015 Transportation Package approved by the Washington State Legislature which improves access and efficiency to the Interstate Highway System. Improvements to the Medical Lake Interchange and Geiger Boulevard were completed in 2021. In 2018, Spokane County was awarded a $14.3 million BUILD Grant from the USDOT for infrastructure improvements along Geiger Boulevard, including reconstructing a section of the road and adding new utilities infrastructure to support the addition of commercial and industrial development in the West Plains. Additional emphasis is being placed on rail infrastructure to complement this area's extensive transportation infrastructure and respond to the demand for industrial development. The airport has since built a rail-truck transload facility, which was completed in 2022 and funded in part by a $11.3 million USDOT BUILD Grant, which now provides multimodal freight movement services for the area's commercial and industrial sectors.

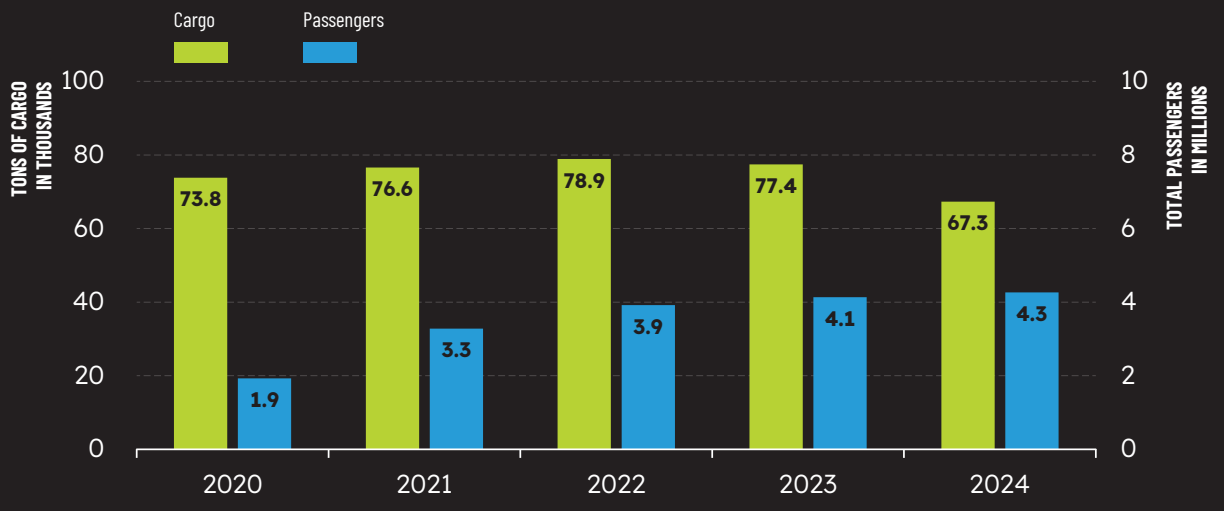
Spokane County is also home to Fairchild Air Force Base (FAFB), the largest employer in Eastern Washington. Over 6,000 military personnel and civilian employees work at FAFB; home to the 92nd Air Refueling Wing of the Air Mobility Command's Eighteenth Air Force. The Base supports over 60 KC-135s. The community and Washington's Congressional delegation has been working diligently to establish Fairchild as a Center of Excellence for the KC-135 to ensure their viability until there are sufficient KC-46A refuelers in the national fleet.

Airport Usage

In 2024, Spokane International Airport processed 4,264,875 total passengers and 67,297.7 U.S. air cargo tons. The Airport encompasses 6,400 acres of land. Spokane International Airport is the second busiest passenger airport in Washington state and is classified by the FAA as a small hub. Passenger service is provided by seven major carriers including Alaska, Allegiant, American, Delta, Southwest, Sun Country, and

Figure 2.32 **Spokane International Airport Passengers and Cargo**

Source: Spokane International Airport



United. The Airport currently supports year-round nonstop service to Atlanta, Boise, Chicago O'Hare, Dallas Fort Worth, Denver, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Oakland, Orange County, Phoenix, Phoenix-Mesa, Portland, Sacramento, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, and Seattle as well as seasonal service to Chicago's Midway Airport. FedEx, UPS and Amazon Air provide scheduled, daily air cargo service. While Spokane International Airport also serves private and business aircraft needs, its primary role is air passenger and air cargo transportation. Historical passenger and cargo data for Spokane International Airport is shown in Figure 2.32.

Felts Field is a 400-acre general reliever airport that had 65,109 aviation operations in 2024 and is home to over 200 aircraft and nine commercial tenants. Felts Field has a Fix Based Operator and avionic services available and consists of two paved runways and a turf landing strip as well as the ability to accommodate water landings on the adjacent Spokane River.

Economic Impact of Air Transportation

Spokane International Airport is the work site for over 3,000 people serving a variety of aviation and non-aviation related businesses. A WSDOT study indicated that the airport provides the region with $1.8 billion in annual economic impact. INWAC currently supports a workforce of over 8,000 and has an annual payroll of nearly $325 million, and FAFB's annual economic impact is estimated at $523 million.[35] That adds up to an economic impact of well in excess of $2 billion for the in-air transportation contributions.

Air Transportation Challenges

Federal policy issues regarding chronic underfunding of the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) and lack of action to modernize the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) as well as the continued economic regulation of airports pose substantial financial challenges for the industry and has limited, truncated, or caused deferral of capital improvement projects at Spokane International Airport and Felts Field. Additional issues of incorporation of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) into the National Air Transportation System, preserva-

35 "Team Fairchild". Economic Impact Statement Fiscal Year 2020. https://www.fairchild.af.mil/Portals/23/FINAL-6_FY20_Economic_Impact_analysis.pdf?ver=hx6fZvqpED4mNQegddpfZw%3D%3D

tion of Contract Weather Observers and the Contract Tower Program, complex regulatory activities and uncertainty at the federal and state level and lack of a National Aviation Policy all create ongoing challenges to the air transportation industry. Operating under extensions of federal law and continuing resolutions make long-term systemic change difficult to achieve. Preserving the long-term viability of the Airport Improvement Program and an increase of the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) are significant priorities. The current PFC level of $4.50 is a cap set by Congress. To the extent that this cap is not eliminated or increased, the Airport's ability to implement projects on a pay-go basis will continue to be diminished, which may require the issuance of more debt than would be necessary. More debt issuance will directly impact airline rates and charges and limit the ability of the Airport to implement its full capital improvements and asset preservation programs.

Contract Weather Observers provide human weather observations that augment automated systems and correct current and forecasted weather conditions. Protection of Contract Air Traffic Towers, such as the one at Felts Field, and the other 264 across the country is an ongoing concern.[36]

Public Transportation

In the Spokane region the primary fixed-route public transportation system is operated by Spokane Transit Authority (STA), and several other smaller-scale providers also offer public transportation services. These include charter bus operators, regularly scheduled inter-city bus providers, taxi/shuttle services, tribal transit, and specialized transportation providers. Each of these public transportation services contributes to access and mobility for all people.

STA provides fixed route, paratransit, and rideshare services in the Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA). The PTBA, shown in Figure 2.33, is 248 square miles, encompassing 14% of the county area and 85% of the population. As of 2024, STA operates 51 fixed routes with a fleet of 174 buses. The fleet is comprised of diesel, hybrid electric, all electric, and diesel double-decker buses. Facilitating bus access, there are currently 14 park and ride lots throughout the region.

Paratransit is a shared ride, wheelchair accessible service for those eligible under ADA guidelines. STA's paratransit service area is generally within three-quarters of a mile of all fixed bus routes. STA's rideshare program is a service for commuters that provides a vehicle for a group of 3 to 14 persons. Users pay a fee based on where the rideshare starts and ends, as long as the journey starts or ends in the PTBA.

In 2016, voters approved STA Proposition 1 to fund a 10-year plan to maintain, improve, and expand public transit service as the region grows. New revenue from the local sales tax rate increase (0.1% increase effective April 1, 2017 and a second 0.1% effective April 1, 2019) allowed STA to increase overall service by 25% throughout the region. We are reaching the end of the 10-year program, known as STA Moving Forward, and more than 25 projects were planned to expand and reach new areas, provide more trips along major corridors, improve customer amenities, and reduce overall travel times. Notable projects that have been completed include:

- Completion of the West Plains Transit Center near I-90 exit 272
- Completion of City Line
- Route 4 Monroe-Regal High Performance Transit improvements
- Route 6 Cheney High Performance Transit improvements
- Route 95 (Mid-Valley) and Route 94 (I-90 corridor) service enhancements
- Later night service on Saturdays throughout the transit system

STA's comprehensive plan, Connect Spokane, is a long-range vision for transit in the region containing the principles and policies that define how STA provides public transportation in the

36 FAA. "FAA Contract Tower Program." FAA Contract Tower Program | Federal Aviation Administration, July 25, 2025. https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ato/service_units/mission_support/faa_contract_tower_program.

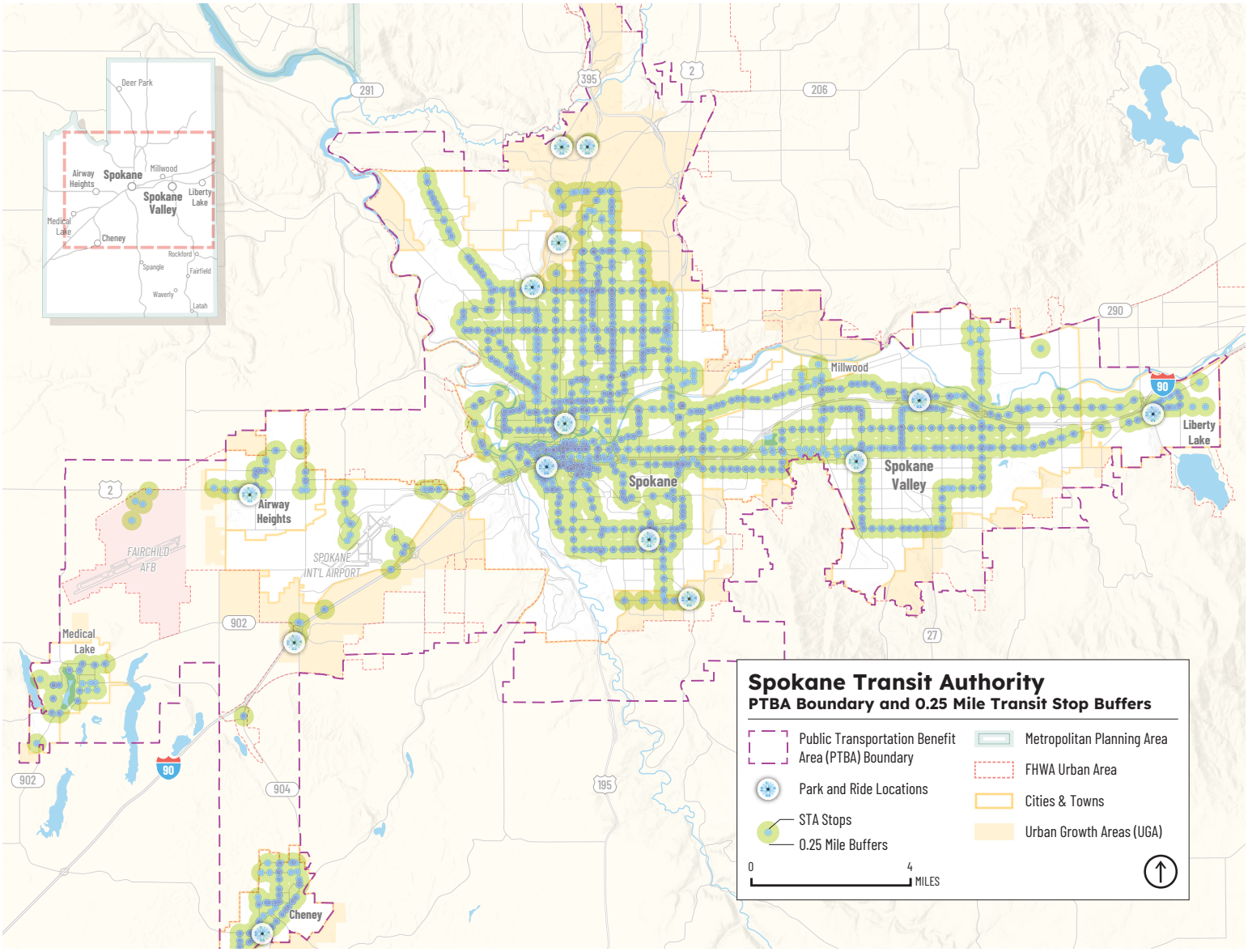


Figure 2.33 **PTBA and STA Bus Stops**

PTBA. The policies guide decisions for the future of transit service, activities, and programs.

STA provides a shorter-term view on future routes and improvements in the Service Improvement Program (SIP), found in STA's annual Transit Development Plan (TDP). The SIP includes a three-year outlook on proposed service revisions by year and is updated annually with an accompanying public engagement process. SRTC planning processes establish consistency with STA's long-range, short-range, and strategic planning work, which are the source for transit projects and priorities in Horizon 2050.

One other facet of the local transit network is Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), which has been deployed in the region with routes such as the City Line. FTA defines bus rapid transit as a high-quality bus-based transit system that delivers fast and efficient service. BRT lines may include dedicated lanes, traffic signal priority, elevated platforms for near-level boarding, enhanced stations, and other improvements to improve speed, reliability, and passenger experience.

STA's City Line is the first BRT route to be fully implemented in the Spokane region, having opened in July 2023. Funding for the project was a blend of federal, state, regional, and local dollars. During its development, the locally preferred alternative identified BRT vehicles using electric propulsion as the preferred mode along a corridor from Spokane Community College on the east end through downtown Spokane to the Browne's Addition neighborhood on the west

end. The City Line offers high-frequency service to riders along its route, with buses arriving at stops every fifteen minutes or less.

Other Public Transportation Services

Special Mobility Services, Inc. (SMS) provides rural and intercity shuttle services to/from and within Spokane County. The Spokane Tribe of Indians operates the Moccasin Express, which has three regular daily routes: service from Wellpinit–West End, Wellpinit–Ford, and Wellpinit–Spokane. The Spokane Tribe also operates a paratransit service available to elderly and low-income individuals. It provides service from the Spokane Reservation and the surrounding area to Wellpinit, Spokane, Airway Heights, Cusick, Colville, Chewelah, and Inchelium. COAST is an on-demand shuttle service based in Colfax, WA that provides transportation to Spokane from areas south of Spokane County. Other service providers, such as SNAP, offer specialized transportation to qualified individuals to help fill gaps in the public transportation system. All of these services are documented in the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Spokane County. A listing of public transportation and intercity bus facilities in the region is shown in Figure 2.34.

Public Transit Ridership

10,166,876 passenger trips were taken on STA fixed bus routes in 2024, higher than pre-pandemic counts in 2019. Paratransit in 2024 provided 390,956 passenger trips and rideshare service provided 103,270 passenger trips. Paratransit and rideshare services combined for over 30,000 more passenger trips in 2024 than in 2023.

Public Transit Economics

STA's current 2025 annual budget reflects $155 million in revenues with the bulk from local sales tax ($116 million) and operating revenues ($7.8 million). STA also receives federal preventative maintenance (Section 5307) funding totaling $12.8 million. Operation of the fixed route system alone is an $89.7 million undertaking. Sales tax provides about 74% of the agency's operating revenue. Paratransit operations cost nearly $22 million annually, more than 16% of STA's budget.

Figure 2.34 **Public Transportation and Intercity Bus Facilities**

Commuter Vanpool Provider

- **Spokane Transit Authority**

Public Transportation Facilities

- **STA Administration Offices and Maintenance Facilities**
- **STA Plaza**
  Served by STA, WSDOT Gold Line, Spokane Tribe Moccasin Express
- **Park and Rides**
  - Country Homes
  - Five Mile
  - Hastings
  - Fairwood
  - The Arena
  - Jefferson Street/I-90
  - South Hill
  - Liberty Lake
  - Pence-Cole Valley Transit Center
  - Mirabeau Point
  - Airway Heights
  - Cheney K Street Station
  - Moran Station
  - West Plains Transit Center

Intercity Bus Facilities

- **Spokane Intermodal Center**
  Served by WSDOT Gold Line, Greyhound, Northwestern Trailways, Amtrak (including Amtrak Thruway Motorcoach), STA, Spokane Tribe Moccasin Express
- **Spokane International Airport**
  Served by STA, WSDOT Gold Line

Public Transportation Challenges

To expand transit over the next 20 to 30 years so it can continue serving people and meeting the region's needs, adequate funding will be required. Another challenge is the expectation of STA service in areas developed without pedestrian- or transit-supportive infrastructure and land use, which limits the ability to provide efficient service. Stakeholders frequently express a desire for expanded transit options, including higher frequency, longer service hours, and additional routes. The public has also repeatedly emphasized the need for improved coordination of services, such as a central source of information on all available public transportation services. At the same time, traditional commuting patterns are shifting, driven by technologies that enable remote work and greater flexibility for many jobs. Transit must adapt to these challenges, moving beyond the historic model of concentrated travel to the CBD five days a week, and instead evolve to accommodate increasingly diverse and asymmetric travel patterns.

Although several organizations provide some form of public transportation, gaps remain in services for the elderly, disadvantaged, disabled, and residents living outside the PTBA. In particular, there is an unmet need for public transportation between Spokane, northern Idaho, and smaller outlying towns. Beyond Moccasin Express, SMS, and COAST, few services exist—and even fewer that are affordable for people on fixed incomes—to provide consistent transportation between Spokane and surrounding communities.

Active Transportation

Active transportation choices like biking and walking help create a complete transportation system. Using active transportation can:

- Reduce out-of-pocket costs for residents, especially for short trips less than five miles
- Benefit public health by providing more options for physical activity
- Complement the use of public transit
- Increase community safety and perception of safety by putting more eyes on the street
- Reduce air and water pollution and conserve land by providing alternatives to using motorized vehicles
- Aid planning for future population growth and transportation demand by offering alternatives

Overall, connectivity of active transportation networks and the safety of its users are of primary importance to SRTC, as reflected in the Safety and Quality of Life Guiding Principles.

Safe and Complete Streets

In 2012, SRTC adopted a Safe and Complete Streets Policy and Checklist to ensure that all users are routinely considered during the planning, designing, building, and operating stages of roadways. It also ensures elements of the Safe and Complete Streets policy are incorporated into Horizon 2050.

Complete Streets are roads designed and operated with all users in mind, including drivers and passengers, bicyclists, public transportation riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities.

The Safe and Complete Streets Checklist is the mechanism to implement the Policy. SRTC conducts occasional "calls for projects" when transportation funding is available. Local jurisdictions are invited to submit applications for projects they would like to see funded. The projects are ranked and prioritized and the ones determined to be top priorities receive funding. The Safe and Complete Streets Policy requires that these project applications be accompanied by a Safe and Complete Streets Checklist to show that the needs of all users have been considered in the design of the project. Additionally, any new project seeking inclusion in the annual TIP must be submitted with a Safe and Complete Streets Checklist. Complete streets have also become integrated into member agency planning activities, with local ordinances adopted in the jurisdictions of Airway Heights, Medical Lake, Spokane, Spokane Valley, and Spokane County.

Walking

Walking is the oldest and most universal form of travel. It requires no fare, no fuel, no license, and no registration. Walking and other forms of pedestrian travel such as using a wheelchair or

walker is the most affordable and available form of personal transportation.

Most pedestrian trips are less than a mile, but when walking is combined with transit, the distance a person can travel without relying on an automobile expands significantly. Strong pedestrian connections to transit are therefore essential to increasing the use of both active transportation and transit as viable alternatives to driving. The 2022 SRTC Household Travel Survey found that walking accounted for just over 9% of all person trips in the Spokane region.

For people to walk to destinations, communities need to provide the proper environment and facilities. To support this, SRTC advocates for the design of complete streets with focus on sidewalks and trails, controlled street crossings at appropriate locations, and adequate buffering to ensure an accessible and comfortable pedestrian environment. At the local level, land use planning is strongly linked to the viability of walking/rolling as a mode choice.

Bicycling

Nearly half the trips in the United States are three miles or less and can be accomplished in 20 minutes with an ordinary bicycle. The electric bicycle increases the 20 minute ride distance to over five miles. It is these shorter trips that are most achievable by bike. With the addition of bike-friendly transit, bicycle trips in the Spokane region can be extended beyond their typical length. The 2022 SRTC Household Travel Survey found that bicycle trips accounted for 1% of all person trips.

In Washington state, bicycles are legally considered vehicles. Therefore, they are allowed on all public streets and roads, except those specifically excluded because of safety considerations. Bicycling on sections of I-90 and US 2 are prohibited due to safety issues related to high volumes and speeds of traffic. Overall, of the approximately 1,497 miles of functionally classified roadway in Spokane County, only 18 miles have bicycling prohibitions.

Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress

In 2023, a study was conducted at SRTC to assign a bicycle level of traffic stress (LTS) to most major roadways within Spokane County. The levels of stress ranged from one to four, with one being the least stressful (complete separation from street traffic) and four being the most stressful (shared roadway with higher speed traffic). The 2023 study concluded that 30% of SRTC's Bicycle Priority Network are stress level one routes, 10% are level two, 15% are level three, and 45% are level four. This effort will inform future planning efforts to prioritize improvements and create more lower-stress connections in our region.

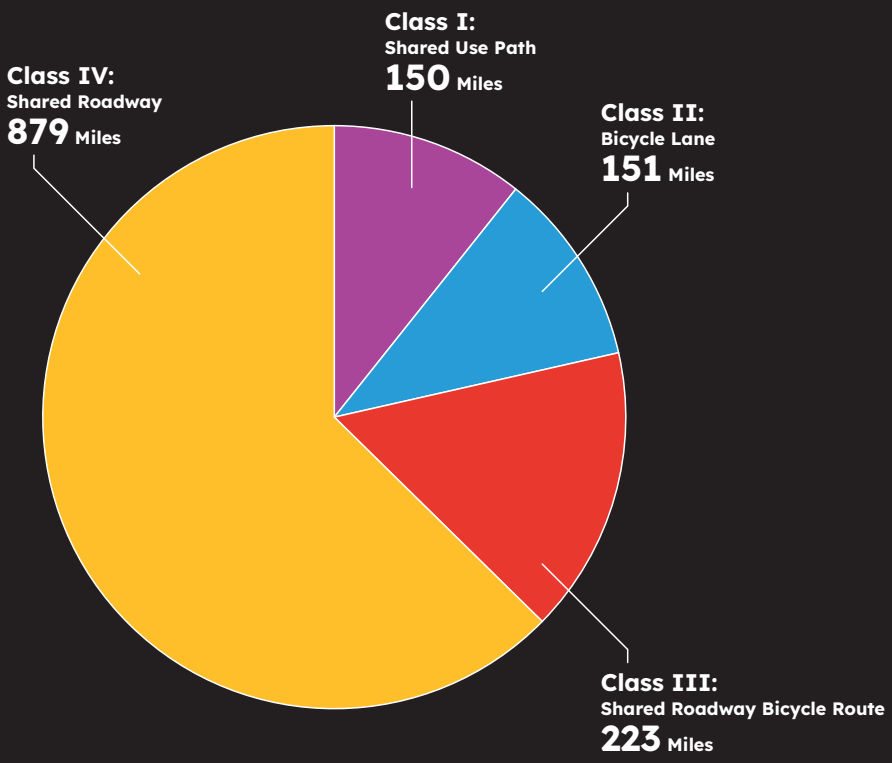
Active Transportation Facility Inventory

Local jurisdictions have developed a network of interconnected trails and paths to form a regional active transportation system. Recent and planned improvements include enhancements to existing trails, such as the Ben Burr Trail in southern Spokane connecting to downtown, the Appleway Trail in Spokane Valley, and the Fish Lake Trail connection. The Centennial Trail, which runs along the Spokane River from Lake Spokane in the west and continues east into Idaho, serves as the backbone of the regional trail system.

Several jurisdictions have also updated their bicycle plans to include more potential bicycle facilities and amenities. Key bicycle corridors have been established to guide and direct public investment in the system, such as the Centennial Trail which allows bicyclists to bypass high-volume arterials and congested intersections between Spokane Valley and the Spokane CBD. The Children of the Sun Trail, part of the US 395 North Spokane Corridor, is another example of a newer regional bicycle and pedestrian facility. SRTC's planning area includes approximately 1,399 miles of Class I through IV bicycle facilities. These classifications are defined as follows:

- **Class I—Shared Use Path:** Facilities on separated right-of-way with minimal cross flow by motor vehicles. Preferred width of 12 feet.
- **Class II—Bike Lane:** Portion of the roadway designated by striping, signing, and pavement marking for the preferential or exclusive use of bicycles. Minimum usable width of 5 feet with an additional 8-inch stripe.
- **Class III—Shared Roadway Bicycle Route:** Bicyclists and motorists share the travel lanes. Routes may include signage or

Figure 2.35 **Mileage by Bicycle Facility Type in the SRTC Planning Area**



road markings. Typically found on roads with lower traffic volumes and speeds, though conditions may vary.

- **Class IV—Shared Roadway:** Bicyclists and motorists share travel lanes on roads with varying traffic volume and speeds.
- **Class X—Bicycles Prohibited:** Bicycles are prohibited from using the roadway.

As of 2025, Spokane County has more than 300 miles of paved bike lanes and paths, including 22 miles added since Horizon 2045 was adopted in 2021. Additional secondary paths and bike routes are being established to continue the network throughout the region. Figure 2.35 shows current mileage by bicycle facility type in the Spokane region. More information regarding the location of the bicycle facilities mentioned in this section is available in SRTC's Spokane Regional Bike Map, available online and updated annually via the SRTC website. It is also provided as a traditional paper map that is available free of charge at various locations or by contacting SRTC directly. The paper bike map is updated every four years, with the most recent update occurring in February 2025.

Sidewalk construction has been fairly consistent within the City of Spokane during neighborhood and business development. In unincorporated areas, however, sidewalk development is intermittent. Historically, Spokane County road standards did not require sidewalks along arterials or in residential neighborhoods. As a result, many developing suburban areas have limited pedestrian facilities, which significantly restricts access and mobility for elderly residents and individuals using wheelchairs. Recent sidewalk inventory analysis indicates that approximately 60% of the sidewalk network is missing within the PTBA.

In recent years, growing attention has been placed on the use of AI-assisted technologies

to evaluate aerial imagery to help map sidewalk networks and sidewalk gaps around the country. In Washington, under the direction of the state legislature, the University of Washington's Taskar Center for Accessible Technology has been working with WSDOT and other partners around the state on the OpenSidewalks initiative, which aims to create a comprehensive, high-quality pedestrian network dataset that includes detailed sidewalk data across the state. As of 2025, the effort continues to collect data, and progress can be viewed through their interactive TDEI Viewer at viewer.tdei.us.

The City of Spokane Valley has relatively newer sidewalks, as many areas were developed more recently than in the City of Spokane or Spokane County. However, many arterials and most local streets still lack sidewalks entirely. In the City of Liberty Lake, all new residential subdivisions are required to include separated sidewalks with appropriate lighting. All jurisdictions within the region incorporate land use and transportation policies aimed at providing sufficient infrastructure, connectivity, supportive land use patterns, and density, as well as education, encouragement, and enforcement programs to make walking a convenient and safe option. According to national survey estimates, approximately 3% of Spokane County workers rely on active transportation to travel to and from work.[37]

Active Transportation Usage

The region utilizes several permanent counters to monitor multi-use trail usage. Counter locations include the Centennial, Children of the Sun, Fish Lake, and Appleway trails. The counters analyze the flow of both pedestrians and cyclists at these locations. Figure 2.36 shows monthly usage at counter locations where 2022 data is complete. The counter located on the Children of the Sun Trail, near Parksmith-Mead, shows counts from 2024, as it was installed after 2022.[38]

Active Transportation Challenges

The region's pedestrian system is in various states of repair. In older neighborhoods and business districts, many sidewalks have deteriorated and need replacement or major repairs. There is no systematic program to keep sidewalks maintained or replaced after their useful life, though comprehensive and modal plans across the region recognize the need to address this issue. Snow and ice removal during winter is another challenge faced by jurisdictions. It is often raised as a concern by members of the public, and year-round access to sidewalks and transit stops is particularly important for people with mobility impairments. SRTC is continuously engaged in discussions with jurisdictions, agencies, and the public to develop solutions to improve access and safety, particularly as it relates to serving the needs of disabled populations. Additionally, the growth of micromobility devices has introduced new ways to move around but also increased potential conflicts among all active transportation users.

Across the region, there are gaps in the regional bicycle network. Many trails, lanes, and other bicycle facilities exist but do not connect to other bicycle facilities in a comprehensive way. Safety is another major concern for active transportation users. In response, SRTC pursued and received a grant in 2023 to develop a Regional Safety Action Plan (RSAP), which is referenced in various sections of Horizon 2050. By reviewing crash data from 2018 to 2022, the RSAP found 57 fatal and serious injury (FSI) crashes involving cyclists and 208 involving pedestrians in Spokane County. In 2022 alone, Spokane County saw 232 pedestrian-involved crashes, resulting in eight fatalities and 49 serious injuries.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), a pedestrian is killed on American roads every 70 minutes. Nationwide, there were 7,522 pedestrians killed in 2022—roughly the same number as it was in 1975 but representing an 83% increase from 2009, the lowest year on record. Bicyclist fatalities reached 1,105 nationwide in 2022. Overall, "outside the vehicle" users—such as cyclists, pedestrians, and motorcyclists—share of all traffic fatalities rose to an all-time high of 36% in 2022.[39]

37 ACS. "American Community Survey Data 2017-2022 1-Year Estimates." Census.gov, 2022. https://data.census.gov/.

38 Eco-Counter, Ecovisio, 2020-2024.

39 Media, NHTSA. "NHTSA Overview of Motor Vehicle Crashes in 2022." NHTSA, April 20, 2023. https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/traffic-crash-death-estimates-2022. NHTSA Overview of Motor Vehicle Crashes in 2022.

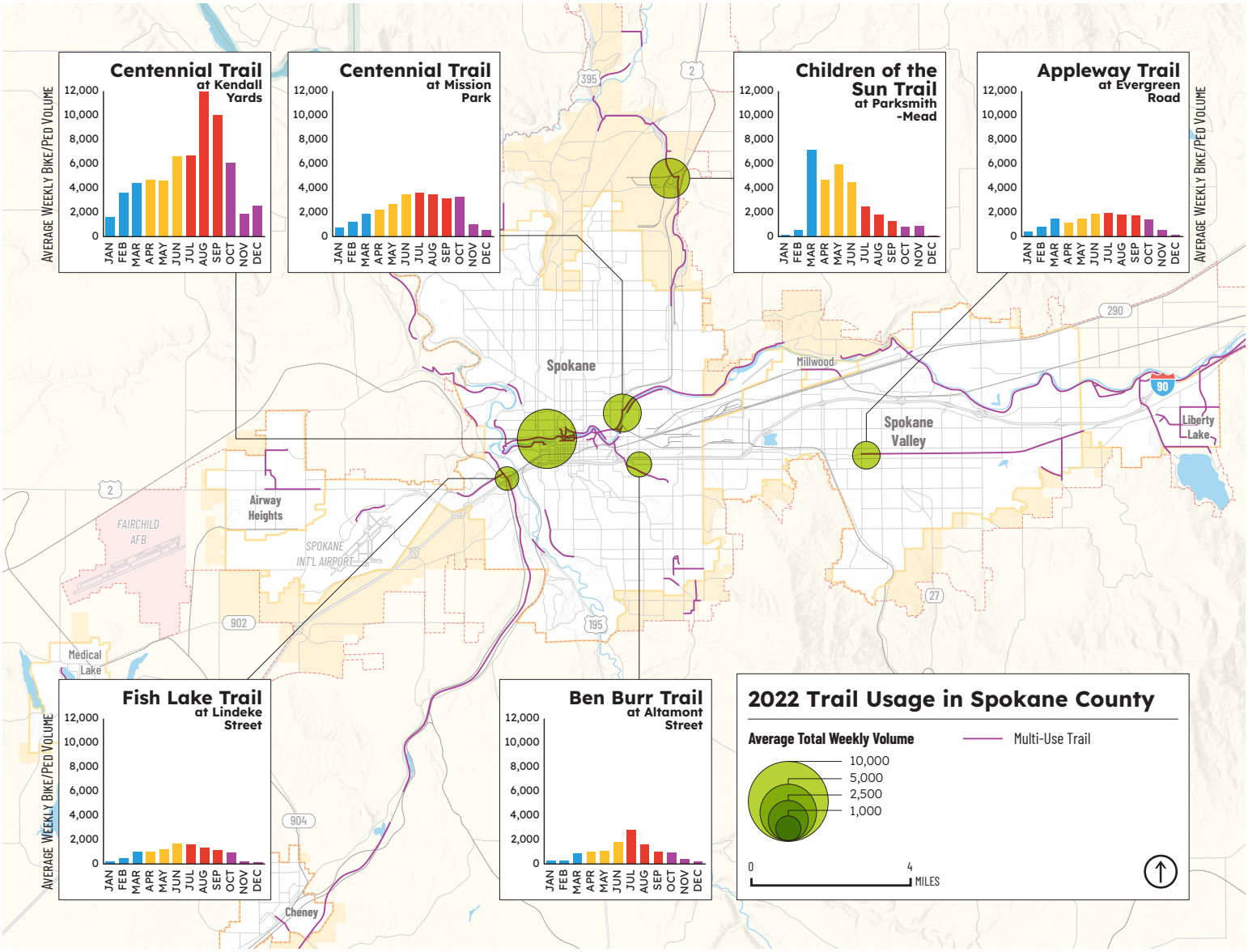


Figure 2.36 **Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Usage in the SRTC Planning Area**

Performance-Based Planning & Programming

Performance-Based Planning and Programming (PBPP) is the use of agency goals and objectives and performance trends to drive the development of strategies and priorities. PBPP is a system-level, data-driven process to identify strategies and investments that provides a link between system management and the long-range investments SRTC and its partners make in the region. It is aimed at ensuring states and MPOs invest money in transportation projects that collectively make progress toward the achievement of defined targets. Several programs contribute to SRTC's ability to make investment decisions based on performance.

Transportation Safety

Horizon 2050 considers the federal safety planning factor—increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users—and the state's safety transportation goal—to provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system. SRTC coordinates with state and local agencies to develop strategies to ensure the safety and security of the regional transportation system, as well as monitoring certain parts of the transportation system including collision information, education initiatives, and other safety and security efforts.

FHWA's Safety Performance Rule supports the data-driven performance focus of the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and establishes five performance measures to guide the program. These measures, based on a five-year rolling average, are:

- Number of Fatalities
- Rate of Fatalities per 100 million VMT
- Number of Serious Injuries
- Rate of Serious Injuries per 100 million VMT
- Number of Non-motorized Fatalities
- Number of non-motorized Serious Injuries on all public roadways

The region's safety performance is shown in Figure 2.37.

Safety Performance Measure

Each year, WSDOT establishes statewide targets for each of the five safety performance measures. WSDOT coordinates with MPOs, including SRTC, to establish the targets. WSDOT then reports targets to FHWA in the HSIP report, due in August of each year. WSDOT must make significant progress toward meeting its safety targets or obligation authority for WSDOT funding programs could be impacted and redirected to HSIP funding. SRTC can either agree to support the WSDOT target or establish a numerical target specific to its planning area. On February 13, 2025, the SRTC Board approved resolution R-25-05 to plan and program projects so that they contribute to the accomplishment of the WSDOT HSIP target. The new statewide targets follow a five-year rolling average trendline instead of using the state identified Target Zero trendline.

Target Zero

The Target Zero: Strategic Highway Safety Plan is a data-driven plan developed to identify Washington state's traffic safety needs and guide investment decisions toward reductions in traffic fatalities and serious injuries.[40] Target Zero provides a framework of specific goals, objectives, and strategies for reducing traffic fatalities and disabling injuries. It outlines three priority levels based on the percentage of traffic fatalities and serious injuries between 2019 and 2023.

40 "Washington's Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2024." Target Zero, November 26, 2024. https://targetzero.com/.

Figure 2.37 **Safety Performance Measures and Tracking**

Source: WSDOT

Safety Performance Measure	Annual Totals in the SRTC Planning Area					5-Year Average 2019–2023
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
1. Number of Fatalities	30	52	57	41	60	**48.0**
2. Fatality Rate Fatalities per 100 Million VMT	0.764	1.510	1.556	1.081	1.551	**1.292**
3. Number of Serious Injuries	126	191	191	218	218	**188.8**
4. Serious Injury Rate Serious Injuries per 100 Million VMT	3.211	5.546	5.214	5.747	5.634	**5.070**
5. Non-Motorist Fatalities and Serious Injuries	47	54	56	57	87	**60.2**

This effort is also supported by SRTC's RSAP, which was adopted by the SRTC Board of Directors in December 2024. The RSAP is a comprehensive planning document which contains in-depth information about regional crash data, road user behavior, public feedback, and strategies to mitigate crash severity and prevent the crash entirely. When the SRTC Board adopted the RSAP, it also committed to regional Target Zero goals, with the first milestone being a 50% reduction in fatal and serious injury crashes by 2030, and zero fatal and serious injury crashes by 2042. Figure 2.38 displays a map of the Spokane region and areas of its roadways identified as the High Injury Network (HIN). The HIN is a series of intersections and roadway segments which have been identified due to higher rates of crash incidents.

Safety Challenges

The RSAP highlights significant safety challenges facing the Spokane region. In 2022, Spokane County had the highest rate of FSI pedestrian crashes in the state, and the county experienced a 66% increase in fatal and serious injury crashes between 2019 and 2022. Younger travelers have been particularly affected by these trends: nearly a quarter (24%) of bicyclists involved in crashes are middle or high school students, while almost a quarter of drivers suffering fatal and serious injuries are new drivers aged 15 to 24.

Road user impairment, speeding, and driver distraction are major factors that have contributed to FSI crashes in Spokane County. Nineteen percent of these crashes involved at least one person impaired by alcohol and/or drugs, 22% a distracted driver, and 23% a speeding driver. Poor lightning conditions and inclement weather can also disproportionately impact pedestrians.

Despite these challenges, SRTC is committed to reducing serious injuries and fatalities and reaching its safety targets. This commitment has guided program funding and project evaluation criteria for safety within the project prioritization process. While traditional engineering solutions remain important, many primary and secondary causes of collisions are behavioral and cannot be addressed through design alone. As distracted driving becomes an increasingly significant factor, new educational programs and engineering solutions will be necessary. Figure 2.39 displays some of the different factors influencing FSI crashes from 2018 to 2022, highlighting that 19% of FSI crashes in the Spokane region involved a form of impairment. SRTC was awarded a Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Supplemental Planning and Demonstration Grant aimed at creating an education campaign to change transportation network user behavior. One of the primary objectives of this campaign will be to identify effective methods of communication for the most vulnerable network users.

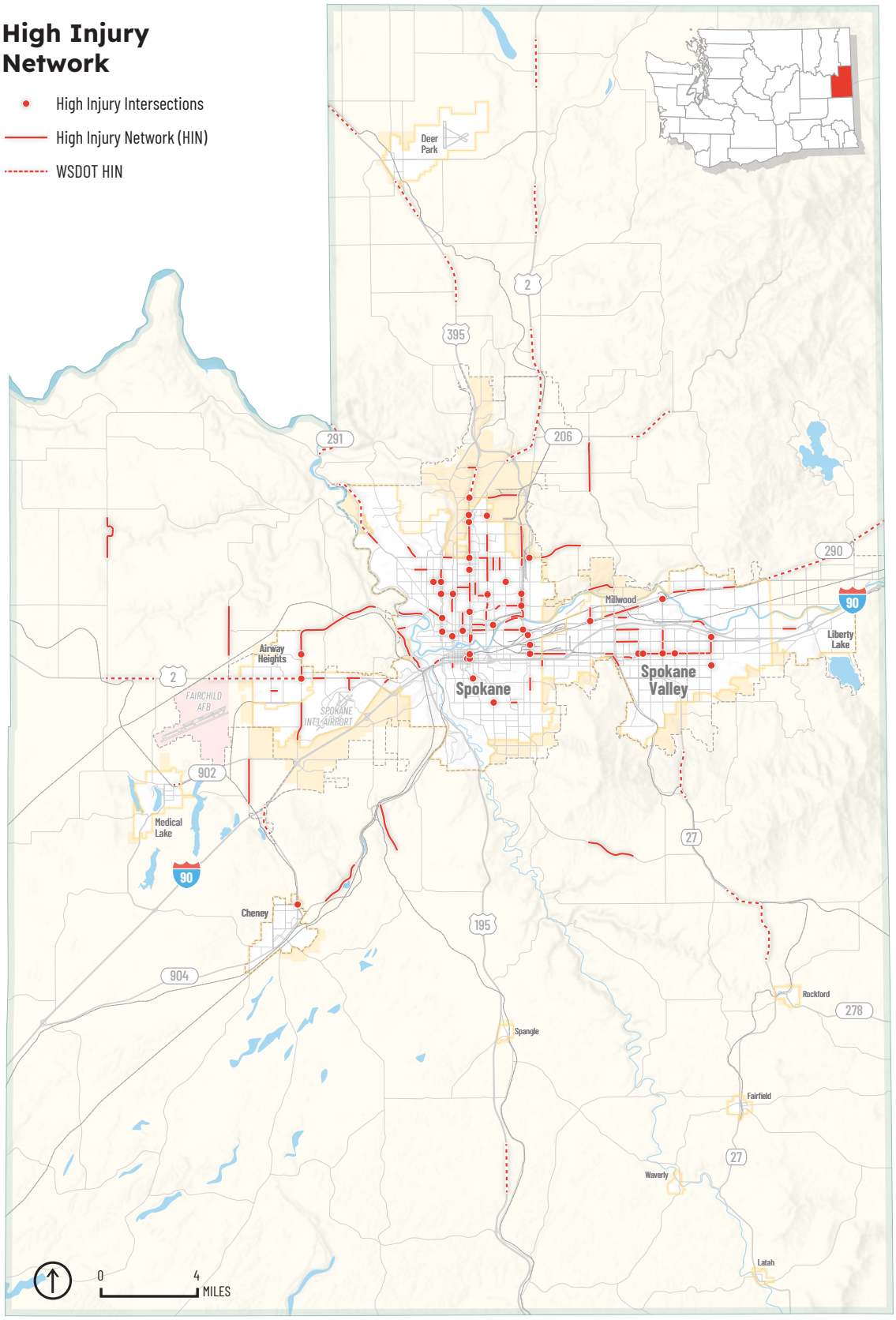
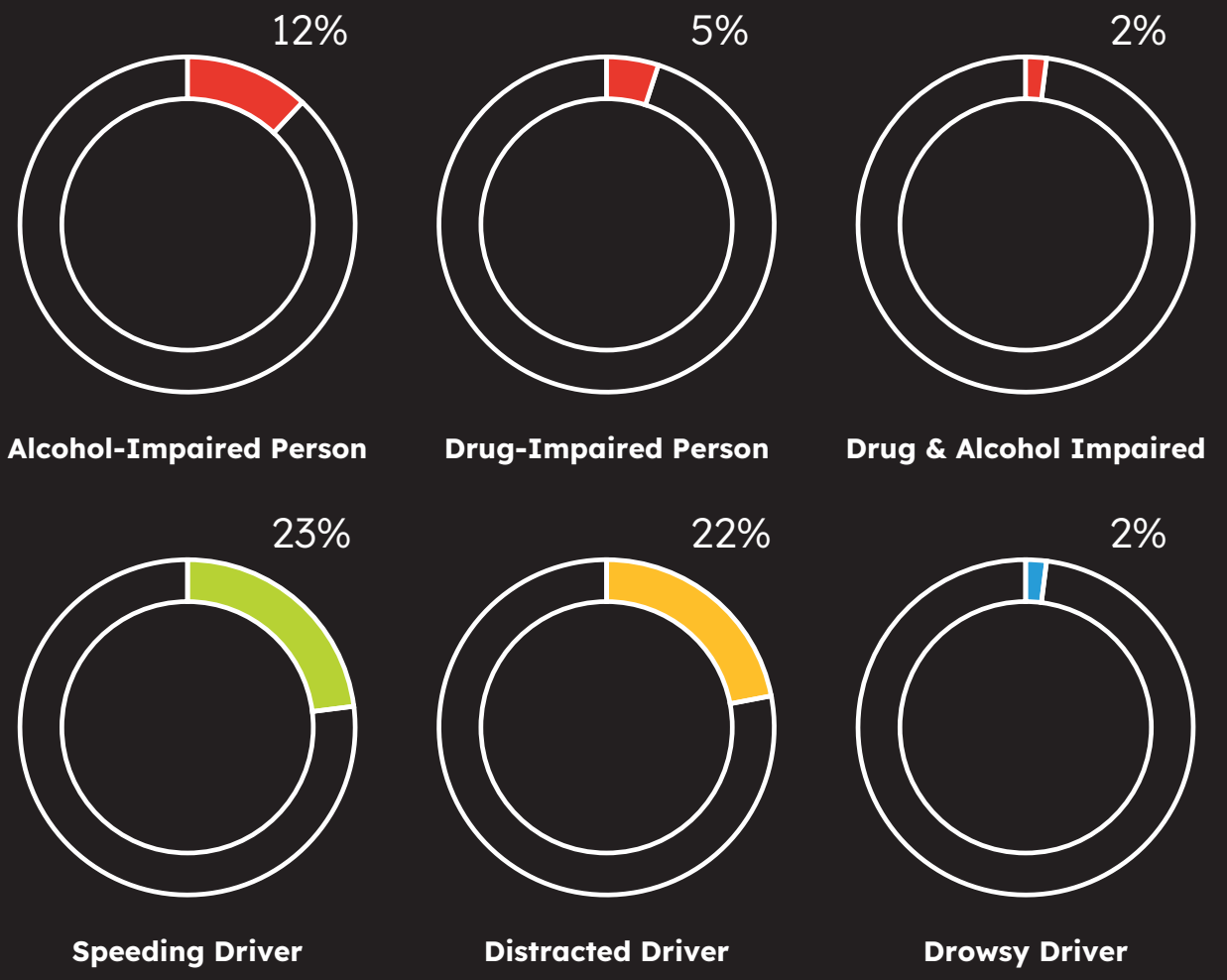


Figure 2.38 **SRTC High Injury Network**

Figure 2.39 **FSI Crash Causation Factors**

Source: SRTC Regional Safety Action Plan analysis of WSDOT Crash Data from 2018–2022



While MPOs face no penalties, WSDOT is subject to consequences if the state has not met or made significant progress toward achieving its performance targets after two years. In such cases, WSDOT must:

- Dedicate its obligation authority equal to the apportionment for HSIP to the state for the prior year to highway safety improvement projects until the USDOT Secretary determines that the state has made significant progress or met the targets

- Annually submit to USDOT a safety implementation plan until the USDOT Secretary determines that the state has made significant progress or met the targets

Transportation System Security and Resiliency

An important consideration of Horizon 2050 is the security of the regional transportation system, which can be defined as the freedom from intentional harm and tampering that affects motorized and non-motorized travelers and may also include harm from natural events or disasters. Security goes beyond safety and includes planning to prevent, manage, or respond to threats to a region and its transportation system and users.[41] Many jurisdictions have developed emergency preparedness plans to address emergencies that could impact the regional transportation network, including everything from blown tires to terrorist attacks and natural disasters.

In 2024, SRTC completed the SRTC Resiliency Plan, which outlines the largest environmental and human-caused threats to the region, including what mitigation efforts should be made to curb the potential threats. It is one of the key plans referenced in Chapter 4.

Emergency Management

There are several local and regional agencies which participate in regional emergency management and preparation efforts. WSDOT defines an emergency as a situation involving natural phenomena, disasters, casualties, national defense or security measures. WSDOT's Maintenance Manual details their response to such events.[42] The purpose is to reduce the vulnerability of the state transportation system from disasters, to respond effectively to them, and assist in the aftermath of any emergency involving damage to the transportation system.

Spokane County Emergency Management is the coordinating agency during major emergencies and disasters for citizens, response partners, and elected officials. This includes synchronizing communication flow between federal, state and local governments as well as local agencies and the citizens of the greater Spokane area. It provides a Greater Spokane Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, which has a section devoted to essential services, infrastructure, and critical facilities. In conjunction with Emergency Management, the Greater Spokane Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) has an Operations Plan that provides standardized guidelines, procedures, duties, and responsibilities for the ECC during an emergency or disaster. More information on Spokane County Emergency Management can be found online.[43]

STA addresses compliance with Washington state's Safety Transportation Goal. STA's Security Coordinator facilitates resources to use in case of an emergency or disaster, using an "All Hazards" approach. That means there are basic response actions taken initially on most emergencies, regardless of the emergency or disaster. Once the situation is assessed and identified, individualized response guidelines particular to each emergency type—e.g., medical assistance, vehicle collisions, fire, severe weather, earthquake, hazardous materials spills, et cetera—are implemented.

Infrastructure Condition

One of SRTC's responsibilities is to track the condition of transportation infrastructure throughout the area. Through Transportation Performance Management, SRTC is specifically responsible for reporting bridge and pavement conditions on the NHS. To this end, SRTC utilizes data produced and maintained by WSDOT as well as the National Bridge Inventory (NBI) and Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data produced and maintained by FHWA.

Pavement condition is reported in nominal terms—good, fair, or poor—and is based on

41 USDOT, FTA, and FHA. "The Transportation Planning Process Key Issues." U.S. Department of Transportation, Updated September 2007. https://highways.dot.gov/media/48411. Publication Number: FHWA-HEP-07-039.

42 WSDOT Maintenance Manual. M 51-01.13. May 2023.

43 "Spokane County Emergency Management Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan." Spokane County Washington, March 2021. https://www.spokanecounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/40021/Spokane-County-CEMP-March_2021.http://www.spokanecounty.org/1921/Plans-Agreements.

several different pavement performance metrics for each roadway segment. The specific set of metrics that factor into each condition rating depends on the type of pavement, such as asphalt or Portland cement. More information on the rating system is included in FHWA's HPMS Field Manual, which can be found on the FHWA website.

Bridge condition is also reported in nominal terms—good, fair, or poor—and is based on the methodology established as part of the NBI. As part of regular bridge inspections, bridge components are each rated with a numeric score. The overall condition rating for each bridge is determined by the lowest score among the rated components. Although SRTC is required to report on bridge performance on the NHS, SRTC tracks performance annually for all NBI bridges within its planning area. That information is displayed earlier in this chapter in Figure 2.28.

SRTC supports statewide bridge and pavement condition targets developed by WSDOT for the current four-year performance period. These targets were adopted by the SRTC Board in April 2023. More information on bridge and pavement condition is included as part of the System Performance Report in Appendix D.

Transportation Demand Management

At a regional level, SRTC partners with local agencies on transportation demand management (TDM) programs, like Spokane County's Commute Trip Reduction (CTR), to help with congestion management.

Commute Trip Reduction

The CTR program was created by the Commute Reduction Efficiency Act to encourage employees to ride the bus, vanpool, carpool, walk, bike, work from home, or compress their workweek.[44] In 1993, CTR was implemented in Spokane County at affected worksites with 100 or more employees. Commute Smart Northwest, a division of Spokane County, is the local implementer of our region's CTR program. The program supports voluntary and required worksite participants. Worksites meeting the following criteria are required to participate in the CTR program: 100 or more employees, starting their day between 6-9 a.m., and work at least 35 hours per week. The 2024 worksite survey reported that there were 46,969 employees at worksites in the CTR program. The program has established goals focused on the non-drive alone rate (NDAR) and VMT.

With 101 Commute Smart employers participating within seven jurisdictions throughout Spokane County, nearly 36% of all employees have used an alternative commuting option to get to work, whether occasionally or on a regular basis. According to employee submitted data, those participating employees are removing nearly 850,000 miles from being driven on our roads weekly, resulting in a reduction of over 785,000 tons of air pollution. Collectively, the jurisdictions and employers are making the region a better place to live, play, and commute by reducing traffic congestion, air pollution, and fuel consumption.

Commute Smart Northwest works with participating employers to match employees with alternative transportation methods to driving alone, offers benefits and prizes to employees and workplaces which participate, and recognizes "champion" commuters yearly at their CTR Awards Banquet. Some services Commute Smart has implemented include:

- Creating CommuteSmartNW app
- Bike safety classes with League of American Bicyclists-certified trainers
- Expanding Commute Smart program to smaller businesses in the downtown corridor and University District
- The annual Spokane Bike Swap and Expo
- Providing incentives for first time participants using alternatives to driving alone

CTR Challenges

Challenges faced by the Spokane County CTR program include:

44 Chapter 468-63 WAC

- Last-mile infrastructure gaps near CTR worksites that make commuting by transit, bicycle, or foot more difficult (i.e. lack of bicycle lanes, sidewalks, or safe pedestrian crossings, and transit frequency, schedules, and proximity of stops).

- Urban sprawl has become an increasing concern in our region, with the pattern of growth in the past several years putting more pressure on communities to connect distal residential areas with commercial and service hubs within the urban core.

- State funding has only increased once since 1993 and is not keeping pace with inflation, which limits the amount of time CTR staff can spend on individualized program development and expansion for CTR worksites.

- The increase in fatal and serious injury collisions in our region has had a particularly salient impact on non-drivers, especially active transportation users.

- High Employment Transportation Coordinator (ETC) turnover, limited ETC time and resources to dedicate to the program, and difficulty convincing employers and employees to invest in and participate in the program.

- Cross-agency collaboration is needed to ensure seamless transitions between local jurisdictions. Commuters who live in one jurisdiction but work in another need to have facilities for active transportation or transit in order to safely and efficiently use those modes as opposed to driving alone.

Air Quality

Air quality is one of SRTC's performance management areas and is addressed through related efforts such as congestion management and TDM, which directly impact air quality conditions in the region.

As part of federal Transportation Performance Management requirements, SRTC tracks carbon monoxide (CO) and particulate matter 10 microns or less (PM10). Until August 2025, the region was in an air quality maintenance planning period, as noted in the Technical Tools for Transportation Analysis section earlier in this chapter. While air quality has improved and the region is no longer classified under the air quality maintenance category, SRTC is still required to track and report on air quality regarding CO and PM10 in the region. SRTC reports on air quality improvements that come from projects funded by the SRTC Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) awards.

SRTC agreed to support statewide targets for air quality for the current four-year performance period through SRTC Board action in May 2023. More information is provided in Appendix D.

Congestion Management

Congestion can be defined in various ways, as discussed earlier in this document. Congestion management involves applying strategies to enhance transportation system performance and reliability by minimizing congestion's negative effects on the movement of people and goods. The Congestion Management Process (CMP) is a systematic, regionally accepted framework for managing congestion. It delivers accurate, up-to-date information on the transportation system's performance and evaluates strategies to manage congestion that meet state and local needs. It is meant to be integrated throughout the metropolitan transportation planning process.

SRTC is responsible for implementing the CMP in accordance with federal requirements, with support from regional partners. The CMP is particularly significant in metropolitan areas designated by the EPA as air quality nonattainment areas. In these areas, any transportation project that significantly increases capacity for single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs), such as new roadways or lane additions, must be addressed through the CMP to receive federal funding.[45] This includes undergoing an evaluation of lower-cost alternatives, such as travel demand management and operational improvements. When effective, such strategies bring about perfor-

45 CFR § 450.322(e)(f)

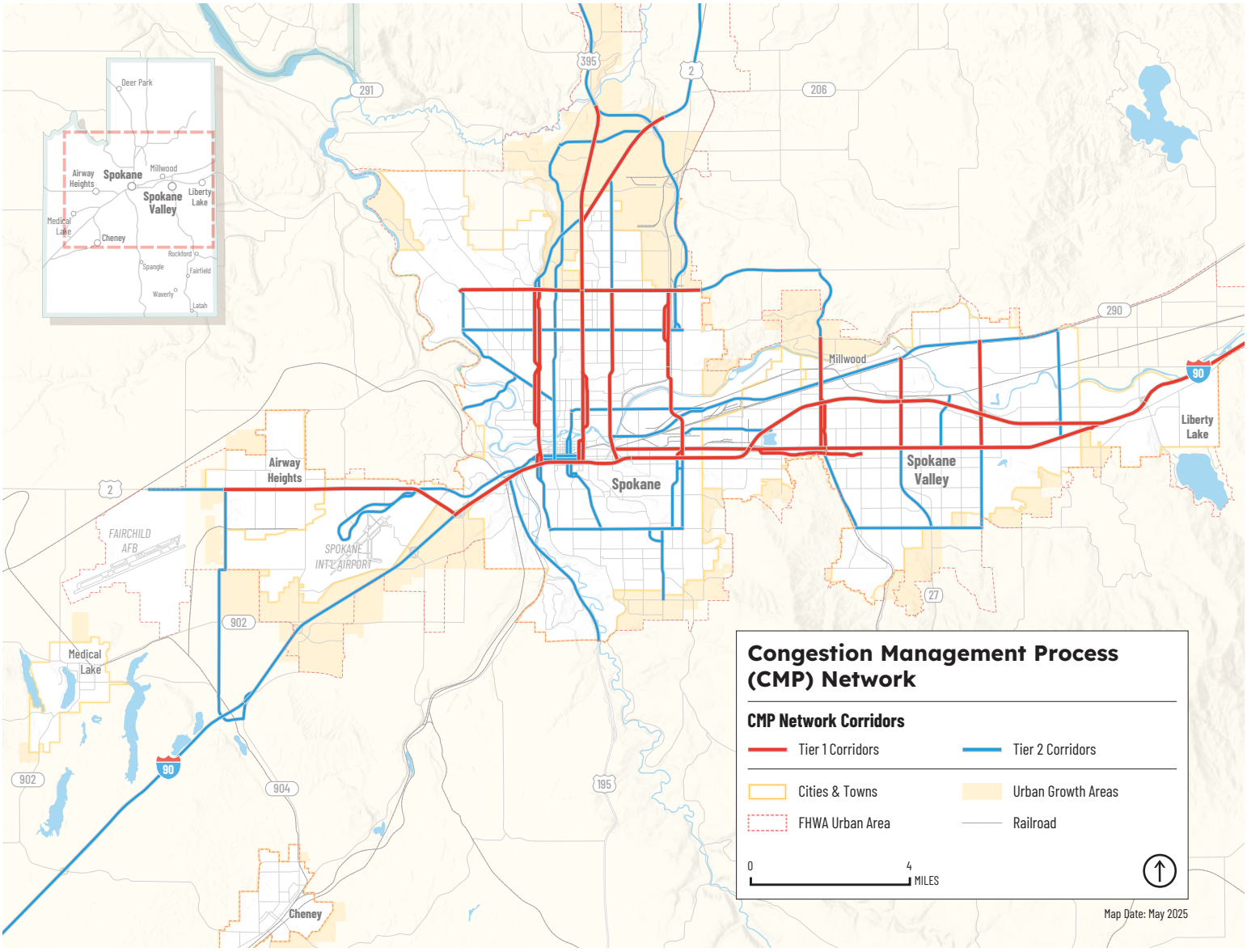


Figure 2.40 **CMP Network**

mance gains in place of more costly expansion projects.

The most recent CMP was approved by the SRTC Board in May 2025. SRTC also maintains a multi-jurisdictional working group to continually coordinate and track the effectiveness of the process. Key components of the CMP include:

- Regional objectives for congestion management
- Identification of the CMP network and corridor analysis
- Multimodal transportation system performance measures
- Identification and evaluation of congestion management strategies
- A structured process for evaluating projects that expand SOV capacity
- Ongoing evaluation of the process and strategies

The CMP network, illustrated in Figure 2.40, consists of 57 individual corridor segments, which serve as the basic unit for describing, analyzing, and reporting system performance in the CMP. These corridors were delineated in consultation with staff from SRTC member agencies, with consideration of travel patterns and connections to regional activity centers and other key des-

tinations. Once delineated, CMP corridors were categorized into two tiers:

- **Tier 1 corridors** are identified as the region's highest priorities for congestion relief, either due to high congestion levels or strategic importance. These corridors receive detailed analysis and congestion management strategies.

- **Tier 2 corridors** are monitored due to their regional importance; however, specific strategies will not be assigned to these corridors in the CMP unless conditions worsen.

To ensure alignment with federal requirements, SRTC developed a CMP/MTP compliance process, outlined in Figure 2.41. This process applies to all Regionally Significant projects proposed in Horizon 2050 that would increase the SOV capacity of the roadway network. It ensures such projects have undergone a least-cost planning evaluation and are fully consistent with the CMP. This ensures that decisions about adding roadway capacity are reviewed and vetted by regional stakeholders and decision makers in an open and transparent manner.

CMP Challenges

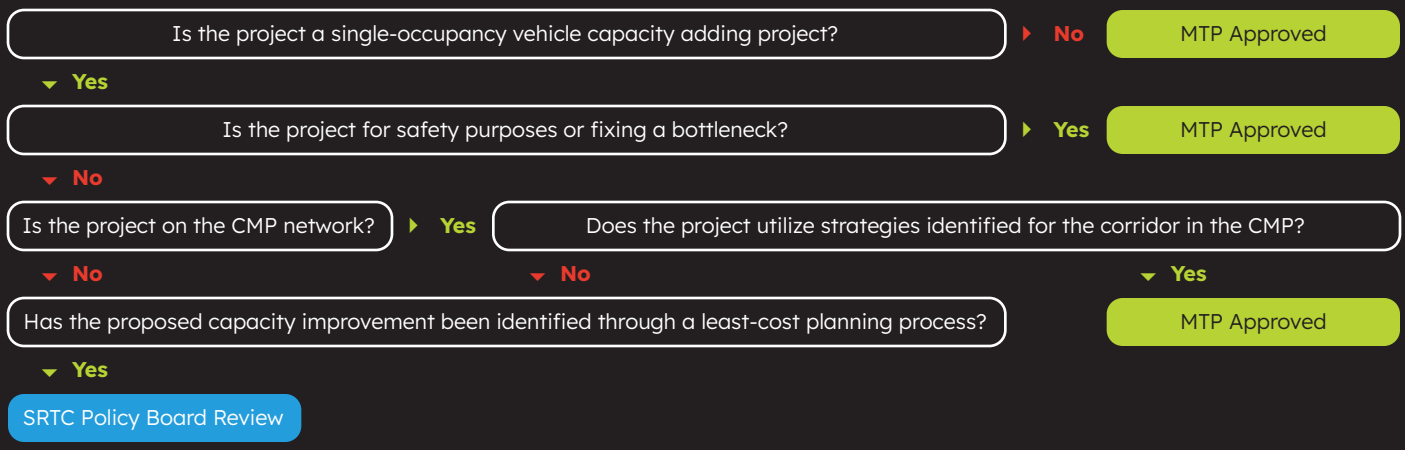
Data for the CMP is compiled from a variety of sources. Data sources and analytical tools have been changing every year. It will remain a question whether the state DOTs or the MPOs and local jurisdictions will be tasked to gather the needed information, which could take more time and resources.

Highway System Reliability

As part of the agency's commitment to a reliable transportation system—and as part of its responsibilities to set performance targets and track performance—SRTC reports on travel time reliability on the NHS. Under federal Transportation Performance Management requirements, SRTC is responsible for adopting performance targets, or supporting the state's targets, for travel time reliability and freight reliability. Highway system performance measures describe how reliable the travel time is through a particular corridor. SRTC's specific responsibilities include tracking the miles traveled on interstate and non-interstate NHS roadways that are reliable. SRTC must adopt targets for each four-year performance period and most recently set targets through SRTC Board action in May 2023. More information on highway system reliability is included as part of the System Performance Report in Appendix D.

Next in Chapter 3, the plan looks at transportation trends, forecasted land use, and projected demand for the movement of people and goods through the year 2050.

Figure 2.41 **MTP and CMP Consistency**



3 WHERE WE'RE GOING

Introduction

How forecasted changes in population, employment, and other conditions will impact the transportation system

In order to understand the potential mobility needs in the year 2050, the plan must explore the expected conditions including employment and population growth, commercial activity, and land use development. These changes factor in the amount of people and goods moving through and around the planning area and the distribution of those trips on the network. One of the tools SRTC uses to analyze future conditions is a travel demand model. Travel models are developed to replicate the existing conditions in a base-year and then forecast demand for a future year based on a variety of growth assumptions.

In addition to modeling the trends for travel demand, we must consider the multiple ways in which people may move around (i.e., transportation mode) as well as changing technology that may be available to help support that demand. This might mean increased biking as a result of e-bikes or increased transit ridership in downtown or other areas that are more densely developed. In addition, the deployment of advanced technologies may increase the safety and efficiency of our transportation network. These types of changes are not predicted by a travel model. As the Horizon 2050 timeline moves forward, multiple factors like automated and connected vehicles, artificial intelligence, global supply chains, and climate impacts will shape how people and goods move. By identifying emerging challenges and opportunities, we can plan for a transportation system that meets our future needs.

Future Conditions

The SRTC travel demand model starts with an alternative described as the "Baseline," because it assumes that the only improvements to the regional transportation system are those projects and programs that are funded and programmed in the TIP. The 2050 Baseline alternative allows for a point of comparison and analysis to build alternatives. It is also required for environmental and financial review processes.

The US Census Bureau's demographic data, which is provided at various geographic levels, is utilized to assist in projecting future conditions. These demographic data points include population, employment, age distribution, income range, household composition, and residential location, all of which directly relate to transportation behavior.[1] The US Bureau of Economic Analysis and the Federal Reserve also produce economic forecasts. These forecasts are produced in ranges due to the uncertainty in projecting birth and death rates, immigration, and future economic conditions. While not all demographics can be accurately forecasted in the future, SRTC monitors and evaluates local, regional, and national trends to ascertain the expected impact to our transportation system.

Other uncertainties stem from possible changes in our economy and shifts in technology. It is difficult to predict how quickly technological changes will be adopted in our region and the scale of impact, whether it be economic shifts due to artificial intelligence (AI) or vehicles transitioning to newer forms—driverless, connected, shared ownership models, et cetera. This may be inevitable, but the timeline is not clear; what is certain is a multimodal street network will be necessary to move people and goods around the region—regardless of the form of transport. With growth, there is confidence that maintaining and enhancing our street network for all modes will continue to be a prudent path for both the near and long term.

Demographic Trends

The population for Spokane County is projected to reach 669,671 in 2050, an increase of nearly 120,000 over the estimated 2022 population of 550,700.[2] Employment is expected to grow at an even higher rate. Changes in employment are largely driven by the metro area, which serves as an activity center for a wider geography of workers both in and outside of Spokane County. Additional details regarding projected population and employment growth, as well as SRTC's forecasting methods, are provided in Appendix B. Forecasting is also undertaken by local jurisdictions, which may use different assumptions to test growth scenarios as they update their comprehensive plans.

According to the US Census Bureau, forecasts throughout the country include a large increase in senior populations through 2050. The aging of the baby boomer generation is the primary reason the senior population is forecasted to grow. On a national scale, older adults (age 65+) are projected to outnumber children (under 18) by 2034.[3] Increases in life expectancy and potentially slight decreases in fertility rates also contribute to the higher share of senior populations. See the current and future population pyramids for SRTC's planning area provided in Figure 3.01. The figure shows how the region's population is expected to change, by both age cohorts and sex.

Household characteristics are also changing, with fewer households with children and fewer people per household, as illustrated in Figure 3.02. What do these changing demographics mean for long range transportation planning in our region? Population growth typically results in increased travel and, depending on the physical layout of a community, could also result in an increase in both vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and vehicle hours traveled (VHT). With continued growth in population and employment, it is expected that this will drive demand on all transportation systems.

Travel behaviors are often different between various age groups. The 35- to 44-year-old age cohort tends to travel the most followed by those aged 25 to 34. People aged 16 to 24 are

1 Demographics and Transportation in the United States 2050. Nathan Guequierre. 2003.

2 OFM. 2022 Growth Management Act Population Projections for Counties: 2020 to 2050. Retrieved February 11, 2025, from https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics/population-forecasts-and-projections/growth-management-act-county-projections/growth-management-act-population-projections-counties-2020-2050; OFM. April 1 Postcensal Estimates of Population: 1960 to Present. Retrieved February 11, 2025, from https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics/population-estimates/historical-estimates-april-1-population-and-housing-state-counties-and-cities#:~:text=Intercensal%20estimates%20are%20estimates%20that,Last%20updated%20March%2021%2C%202024).

3 Vespa, Jonathan. "The U.S. Joins Other Countries with Large Aging Populations." Census.gov, March 13, 2018. https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2018/03/graying-america.html#:~:text=Although%20declining%20fertility%20plays%20a,as%20older%20adults%20outnumber%20kids.

Figure 3.01 **SRTC Planning Area Population Pyramids**

Source: OFM GMA Supplemental County Projections

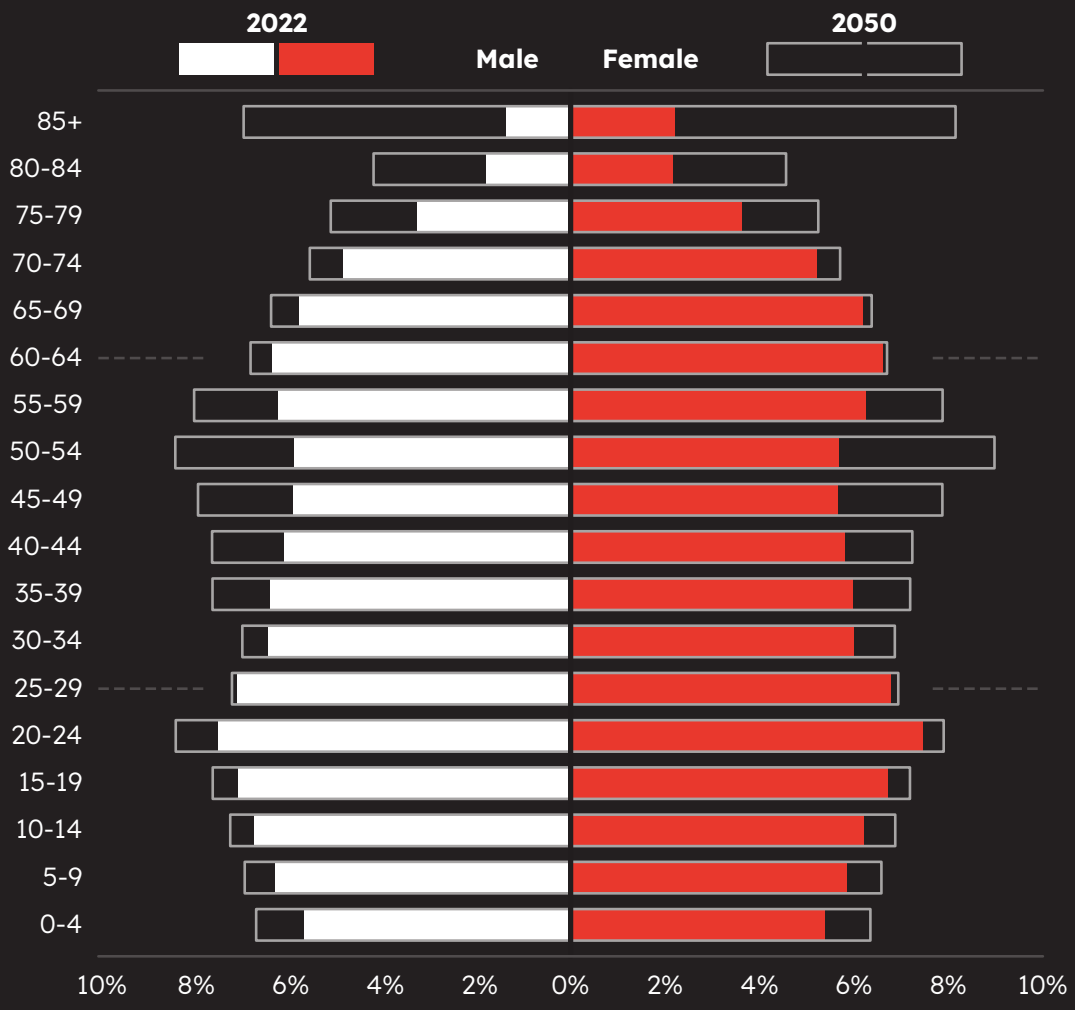


Figure 3.02 **Household Size by Decade in the SRTC Planning Area**

Source: US Census Bureau

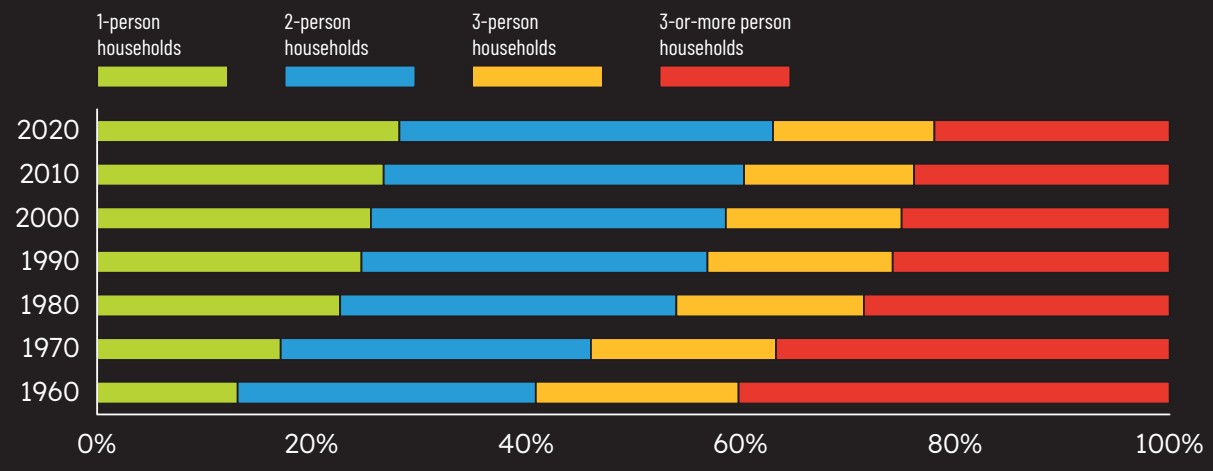


Figure 3.03 **Forecasted Household Growth in the SRTC Planning Area**

Household Type	2022 Base Year Households		2050 Forecast Households	
	Number	Share of Total	Number	Share of Total
Single-Family Households	159,456	72.4%	192,944	70.5%
Multifamily Households	60,740	27.6%	80,550	29.5%
Total Households	220,196	100.0%	273,494	100.0%

more likely than those in other age groups to bicycle for transportation, while those in older age cohorts are more likely to drive, especially when commuting to work. At the same time, older age cohorts (65+) are less likely to have a work commute and, at the upper end of the age pyramid, have greater reliance on transit and other mobility services.

Different household types (i.e., traditional single family, younger couples, single persons, families with no children, et cetera) have different travel behaviors. These trends are subject to a variety of economic factors, such as fuel prices and housing affordability. The built environment (i.e., existing development and land use) also has a large impact on transportation mode choice. The development of land use forecasts for the Spokane region is an important factor for looking at future travel demand.

Forecast Methodologies

A travel demand model simulation of future transportation conditions in 2050 is one tool used to evaluate potential system needs and deficiencies. This first 2050 alternative is described as the "Baseline" because it assumes that the only improvements made to the 2022 transportation system are those already committed by agencies or jurisdictions in the near future and programmed in the SRTC TIP. As described in Chapter 2, information on the existing transportation system was used to build a travel demand model from the 2022 base transportation network in Spokane County. The forecasted population and employment growth for 2050 were applied to the 2022 base model network to predict future traffic conditions. The resulting 2050 Baseline model contains the vehicular and transit networks as of 2022, with the addition of funded projects that are programmed for completion in the next four years.

Land Use Forecast

SRTC incorporates households, employment, hotel/motel rooms, and higher education commuter students into its regional travel demand model to forecast the number of trips generated by different land use types. Using adopted employment forecasts that align with the GMA population forecasting process, SRTC applies persons-per-household ratios to estimate the number of people in single-family (SF) and multifamily (MF) households (see Figure 3.03).

Future trends suggest that MF housing may grow at a faster rate than SF housing, as an aging population is expected to downsize from SF to MF units. This shift would increase housing density, which directly affects trip generation by influencing where trips begin and end. Housing and employment densities together shape transportation system needs between these activity centers.

In close coordination with regional partners, SRTC staff applied the Board-adopted forecasting methodology to the travel demand model to map projected growth. Figure 3.04 illustrates projected 2050 housing density, and Figure 3.05 shows projected 2050 employment density. More information on how household and employment data is collected, forecasted, and allocated to each Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ)—as well as represented in the travel demand model—is provided in the SRTC travel forecasting documentation in Appendix B. Land use decisions are made by local governments as part of their comprehensive planning activities, and the current cycle of comp plan updates is expected to be complete in 2026. Future model

updates will incorporate changes to planned land use, as needed.

Regional Activity Centers

Regional activity centers play a central role in shaping regional and local travel patterns. They are defined as areas of regional significance "where economic, social, and civic activity, and key infrastructure assets, are concentrated."[4] These centers are identified and categorized using multiple factors, including overall level of activity, as well as its employment and land use composition.

Different types of activity centers serve distinct functions and have unique transportation needs. Regional industrial centers are typically freight-focused, located along major shipping routes, and benefit the most from freight-related road improvements. Conversely, regional retail and employment centers are more closely tied to businesses that attract employees and customers that use transit, making them well-suited for multimodal transportation investments.

As described in Chapter 2, SRTC analyzes regional employment trends to better understand how activity may shift in the future. Current employment forecasts indicate that activity in 2050 will remain generally consistent with existing centers, while also expanding to accommodate additional jobs. Targeted economic development strategies are also shaping several key locations across the region, including:

- The West Plains/Spokane International Airport area where focused investments, along with supportive zoning and other policies, are promoting aerospace and manufacturing growth.
- Fairchild Air Force Base, which is a significant regional employment hub and a focal point for federal investment in equipment and personnel.
- The Northeast Public Development Authority (PDA), which is positioned to continue to grow as an industrial and shipping hub due to its proximity to the North Spokane Corridor freeway.
- Spokane's CBD, the region's metropolitan center, will continue to be the region's focal point for employment, entertainment, services, and regional events.

Figure 3.06 and Figure 3.07 highlight the location of regional activity centers in relation to future employment and population growth in the region.

Land Use Analysis

SRTC's 2050 land use forecasts anticipate increased densities in several areas across the region, such as downtown Spokane, along with continued low-density development in the region's urban periphery. This forecasted pattern of development is a baseline scenario that was guided by current Spokane County and city comprehensive plans at the time of this update. The 2050 land use forecast is directly related to potential impacts on the regional transportation system.

4 Rowlands, D. W., & Loh, T. H. (2023). PAS Memo 116: Identifying activity centers: A how-to guide. American Planning Association.

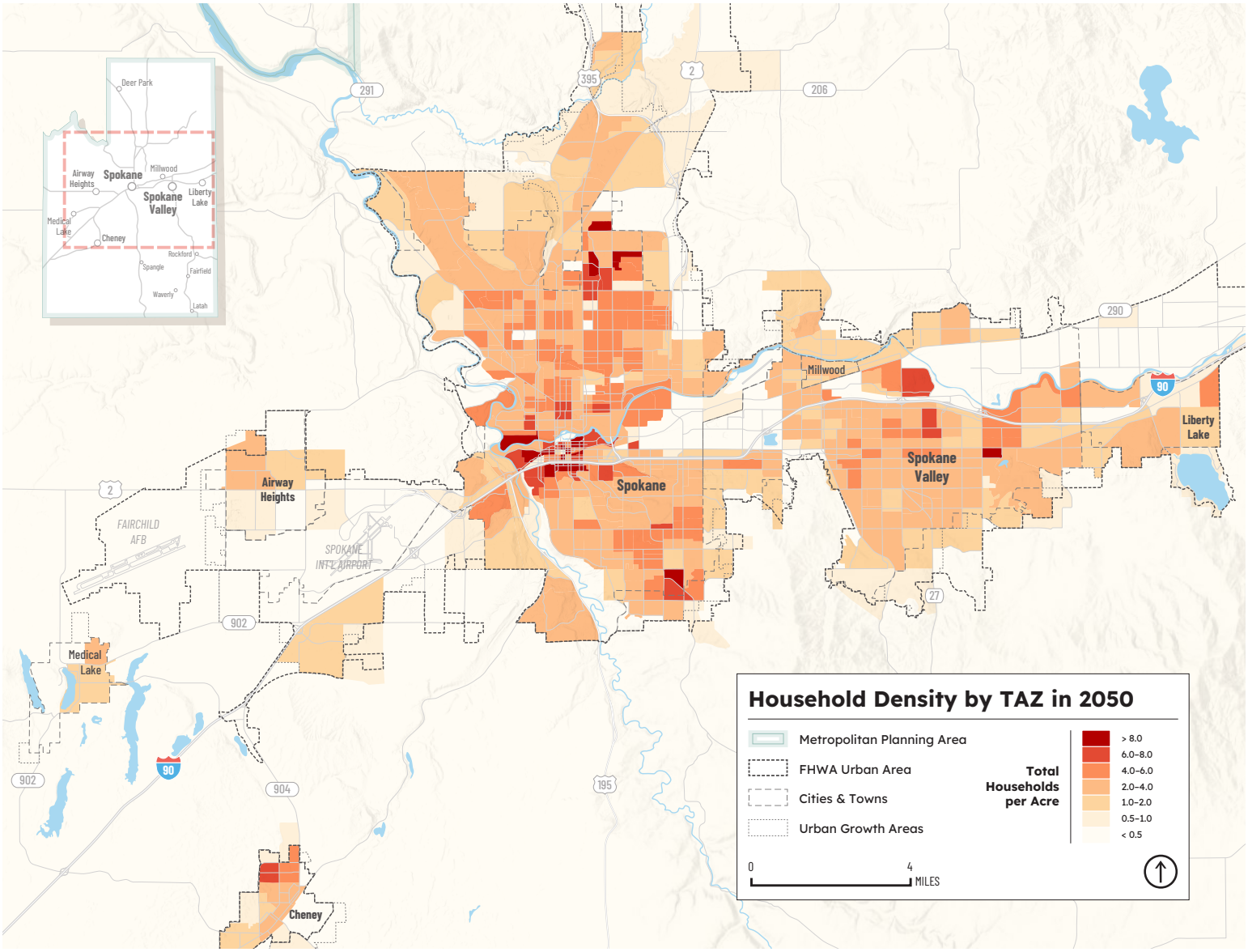


Figure 3.04 **2050 Household Density by TAZ**

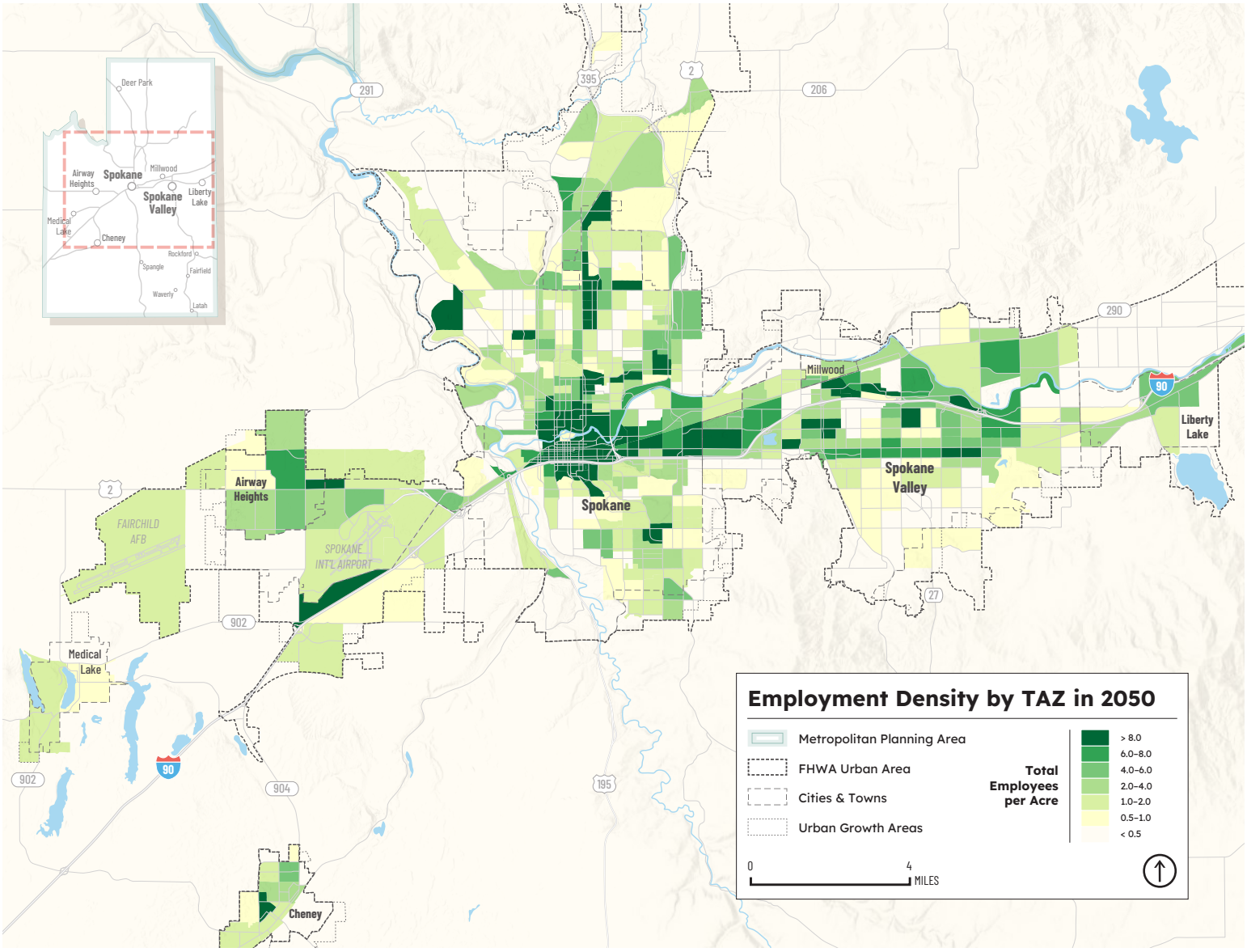


Figure 3.05 **2050 Employment Density by TAZ**

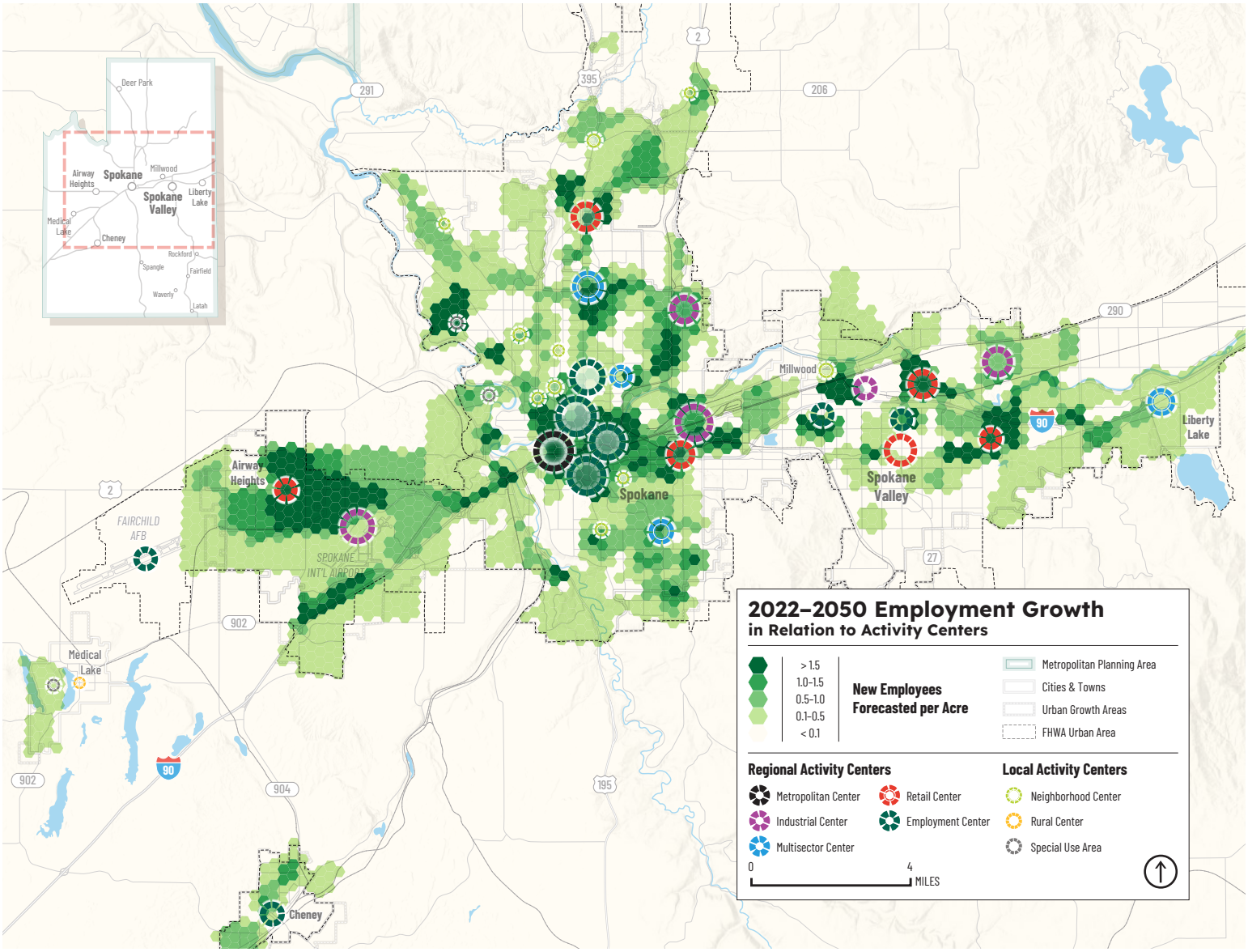


Figure 3.06 **Employment Growth in Relation to Regional Activity Centers**

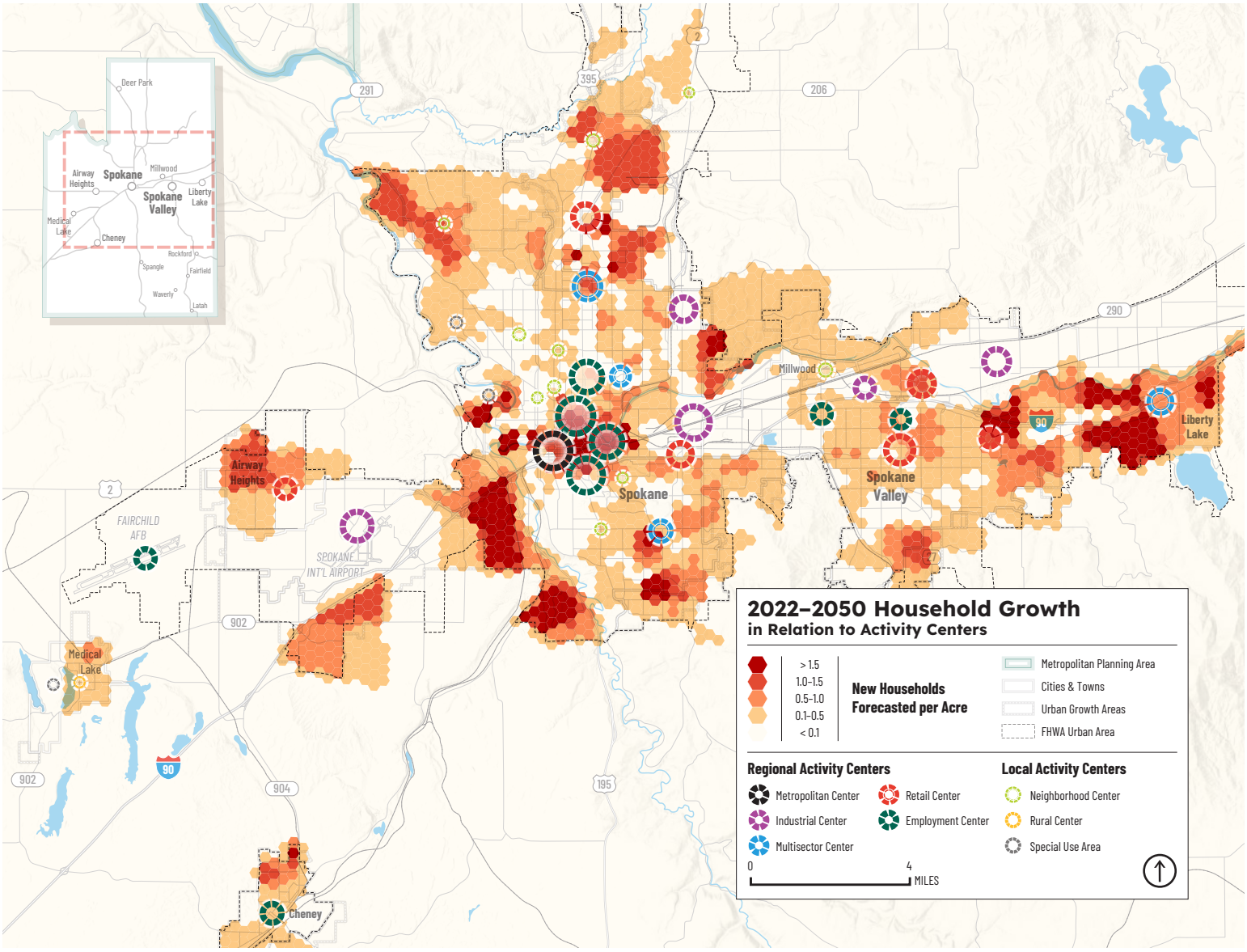


Figure 3.07 **Household Growth in Relation to Regional Activity Centers**

Future Transportation Conditions

The forecasted conditions and projected performance for various transportation networks and programs indicate how we're trending as a region and can accentuate areas of concern. This section highlights what we expect from the region's transportation system through 2050.

Needs Analysis

In preparing for the MTP update, SRTC conducted a needs assessment process. It summarized existing and recently completed studies, plans, and local Capital/Transportation Improvement Programs to establish a comprehensive list of future projects and programs. The totality of regional needs was considered through the lens of recent SRTC projects including the Smart Mobility Plan, Resiliency Plan, Congestion Management Process, Regional Safety Action Plan, and Regional CTR Plan.

The Needs Assessment informed capital project needs and associated costs for the region, including maintenance and operations and preservation. It has been previously documented that road preservation needs are significantly greater than revenue, and combining that with maintenance and operations, the cost to reach a state of good repair for all roads in the SRTC planning area is estimated at over $16 billion through 2050. The revenue to achieve this is simply not available based on our current system, and this shortfall is detailed further in Chapter 4.

The Needs Assessment also highlighted key corridors for investment, where multiple inter-related capital projects are identified. The process produced a regional matrix of projects and programs. The matrix captures projects that are being pursued or may be pursued by SRTC member agencies in the next 10 years, beyond that potential capital project investments are less documented. Long-term needs were explored through one-on-one interviews with member agency staff and elected officials and by examining local long-range planning efforts. The region's transportation system needs are expressed through categories of need that are described in Chapter 4, including regionally significant projects, program areas, maintenance and operations, and preservation. The Needs Assessment and its outputs are further described in Appendix E.

Future Traffic Conditions

The regional travel demand model is used to estimate forecasted increases in traffic and public transportation usage. For this chapter, the Baseline scenario is used to illustrate what conditions may be like in the year 2050 without major transportation investments. Figure 3.08 illustrates the forecasted increase in daily person, walk/bike, vehicular, and transit passenger trips from 2022 to 2050 for the 2050 Baseline scenario.

VMT and VHT

Figure 3.09 reports daily and PM peak hour VMT and VHT, which were derived from SRTC's 2022 Base and 2050 Baseline models. VMT and VHT are planning measures showing the growth of travel by miles and can indicate congestion by revealing how much time vehicles spend on area roadways. These results are used for further comparison with future alternatives. Both daily and PM peak VMT and VHT are expected to increase by 37% or more in the Baseline scenario.

Both VMT and VHT per household are forecasted to increase by 2050 as well, possibly due to the higher levels of congestion in the Baseline alternative (see Figure 3.10).

Congestion

As stated in Chapter 2, congestion can indicate more people are traveling and mean higher economic growth. It can also change travel behaviors and create a shift in travel modes. On the

Figure 3.08 **Daily Trips in 2022 Base and 2050 Baseline Model**

	2022 Base	2050 Baseline	% Increase
Total Person Trips	2,208,782	2,806,610	27%
Total Vehicle Trips	1,750,921	2,388,674	36%
Total Transit Passenger Trips	21,979	25,726	17%
Total Walk/Bike Trips	160,465	202,867	26%

Figure 3.09 **Total VMT and VHT in 2022 Base and 2050 Baseline Model**

	2022 Base	2050 Baseline	% Increase
PM Peak Hour VMT	810,123	1,111,688	37%
PM Peak Hour VHT	21,558	32,813	52%
Daily VMT	10,287,110	14,377,277	40%
Daily VHT	260,477	391,404	50%

Figure 3.10 **Household VMT and VHT in 2022 Base and 2050 Baseline Model**

	2022 Base	2050 Baseline	% Increase
PM Peak Hour VMT per Household	3.67	4.06	11%
PM Peak Hour VHT per Household	0.10	0.12	20%
Daily VMT per Household	46.65	52.49	13%
Daily VHT per Household	1.18	1.43	21%

less appealing side, congestion impacts many elements of a community, including personal travel times, costs to shippers, air quality, and fuel consumption. From a regional perspective, Spokane has recurring congestion that lasts for a limited period during the AM and PM peaks. Recurring congestion is predictable, primarily caused by high traffic volumes during peak commuting hours that exceed road capacity, and it is often seen at the same locations and times each day (access points, bottlenecks). In contrast, non-recurring congestion is unpredictable, caused by unexpected events such as traffic incidents (crashes, disabled vehicles, et cetera), weather, or construction activities. Nationally, non-recurring congestion is estimated to account for 55% of traffic delays, while 45% of delays are recurring congestion.[5] Spokane County exhibits a somewhat more predictable system, with recurring congestion being the greatest share of traffic delays at just over 60%.[6]

It is essential to define what constitutes congestion in the Spokane region. While Spokane does not experience the same level of traffic congestion as larger metropolitan areas like Seattle, commuters in Spokane may have a lower tolerance for travel delays compared to those in more congested cities. Analysis of congested conditions was carried out through SRTC's Congestion Management Process, completed in 2025. Although the CMP did not reveal widespread peak congestion, it evaluated corridors

5 Texas A&M Transportation Institute. "Congestion Pie Chart for Different Sources of Congestion." August 2021.

6 Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS), Congestions Causes for the National Highway System (NHS), 2019.

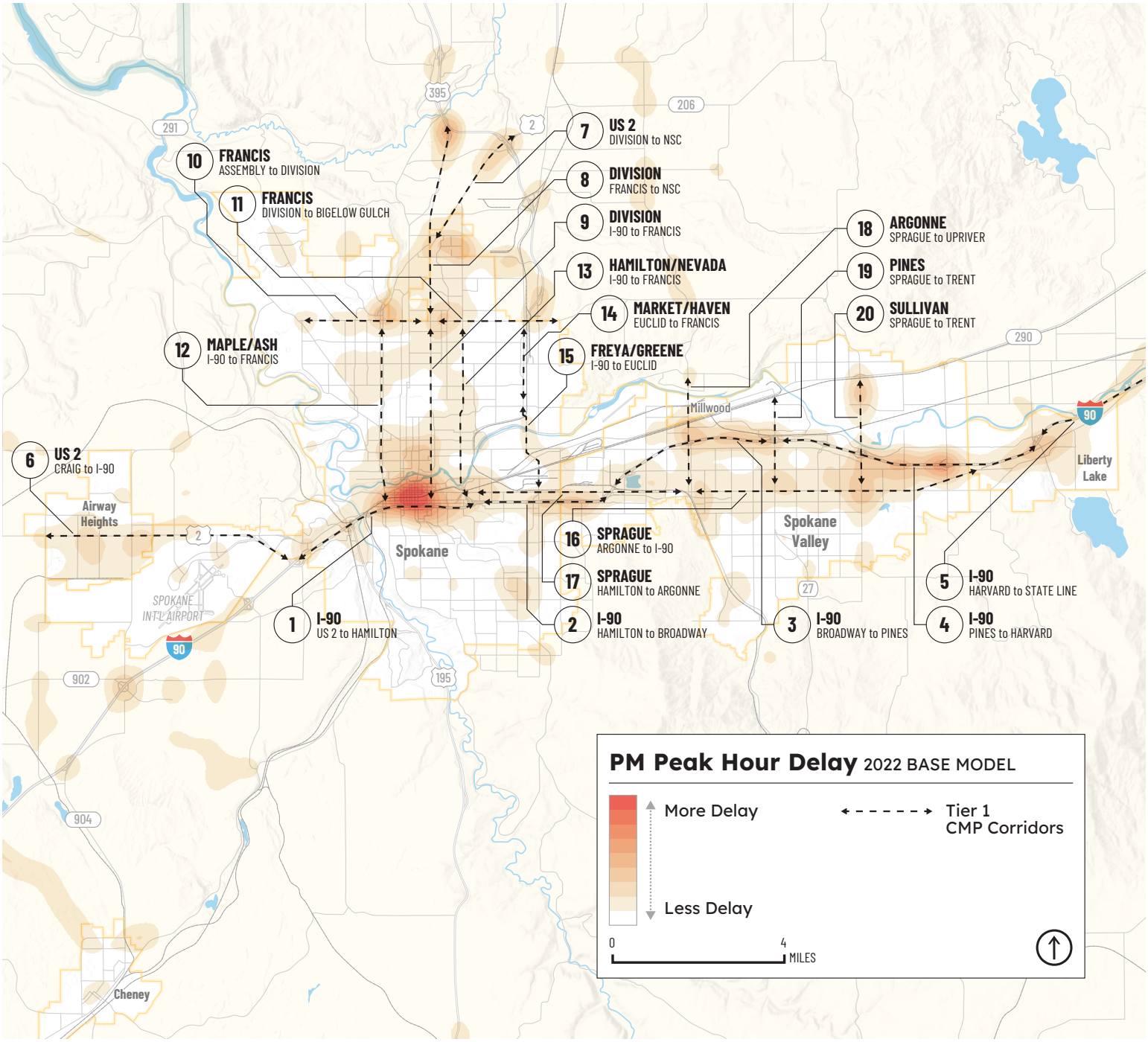


Figure 3.11 **PM Peak Hour Delay in 2022 Base Model**

with the most significant delay and classified them as Tier 1 CMP corridors. Travel demand on these Tier 1 corridors was then projected to 2050. Travel demand model analysis indicates more potential congestion can be expected in the future. These corridors will continue to be monitored as CMP strategies are implemented to mitigate congestion.

The results from SRTC's 2050 Baseline travel demand model help identify future recurring congestion on regional corridors. Making no other roadway improvements to support future growth is not realistic. However, the Baseline alternative allows for a direct comparison of the impacts of future growth on the current transportation system. Also, the travel demand model is able to predict growth in recurring congestion where there are capacity constraints. It does not help predict non-recurring congestion.

PM Peak Hour Travel Time Index

ON TIER 1 CMP CORRIDORS | 2022 BASE MODEL

The Travel Time Index (TTI) compares travel times during congested conditions to those under free-flow conditions. A value of 1.0 indicates free-flow travel, while higher values reflect increased congestion. For example, a TTI of 1.5 means a trip that takes 20 minutes in free-flow conditions takes 30 minutes during the PM peak.

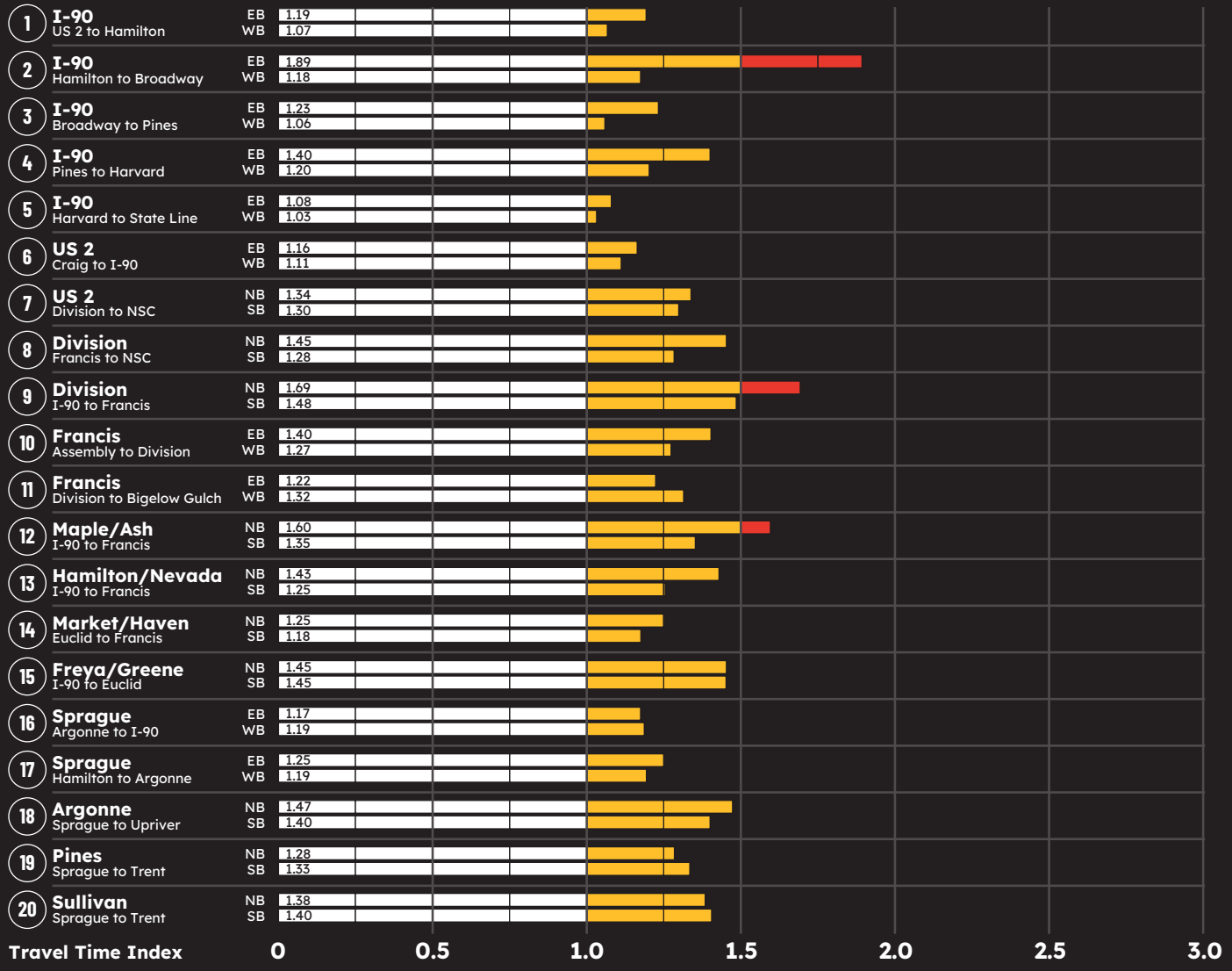


Figure 3.12 **Travel Time Index on Tier 1 CMP Corridor in 2022 Base Model**

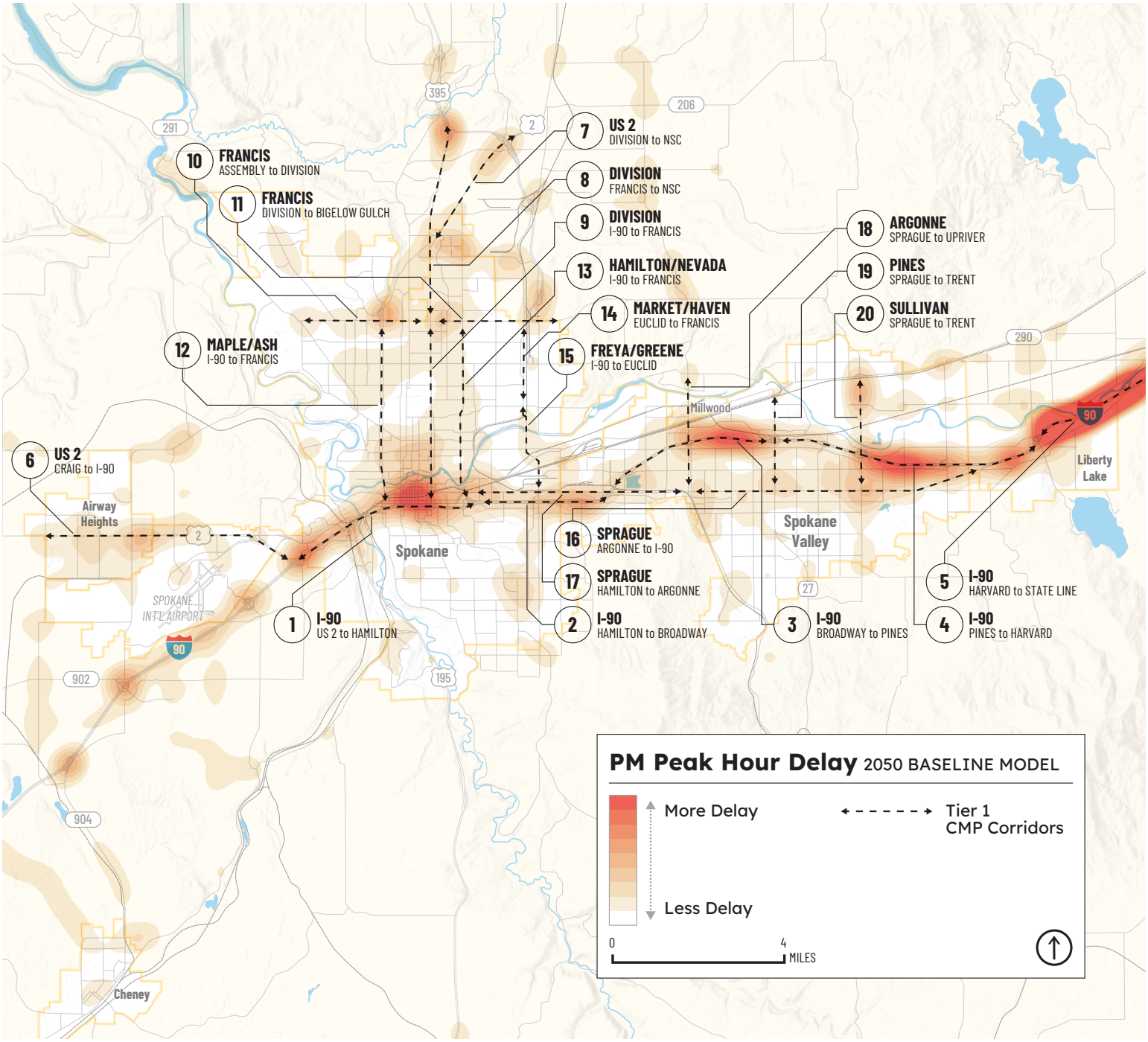


Figure 3.13 **PM Peak Hour Delay in 2050 Baseline Model**

Figure 3.11 and Figure 3.13 show PM peak delay, while Figure 3.12 and Figure 3.14 illustrate the change between free-flow and PM peak travel times in the 2022 Base model compared to the 2050 Baseline model. The increased delay and resulting travel times are a result of population and employment growth. Of note are segments of I-90, Sprague Avenue, and the north-south corridors of Division Street, Maple/Ash, and Hamilton/Nevada. Chapter 4 will include a comparison of the increase in PM peak hour delay with a Build alternative of projects that have been identified through this planning process.

Safety and Security

Safety improvements will continue to be a high priority for regional transportation investments and an indicator of system performance. Since 2017, the SRTC Board of Directors has annually expressed a commitment to reducing and ulti-

PM Peak Hour Travel Time Index

ON TIER 1 CMP CORRIDORS | 2050 BASELINE MODEL

The Travel Time Index (TTI) compares travel times during congested conditions to those under free-flow conditions. A value of 1.0 indicates free-flow travel, while higher values reflect increased congestion. For example, a TTI of 1.5 means a trip that takes 20 minutes in free-flow conditions takes 30 minutes during the PM peak.

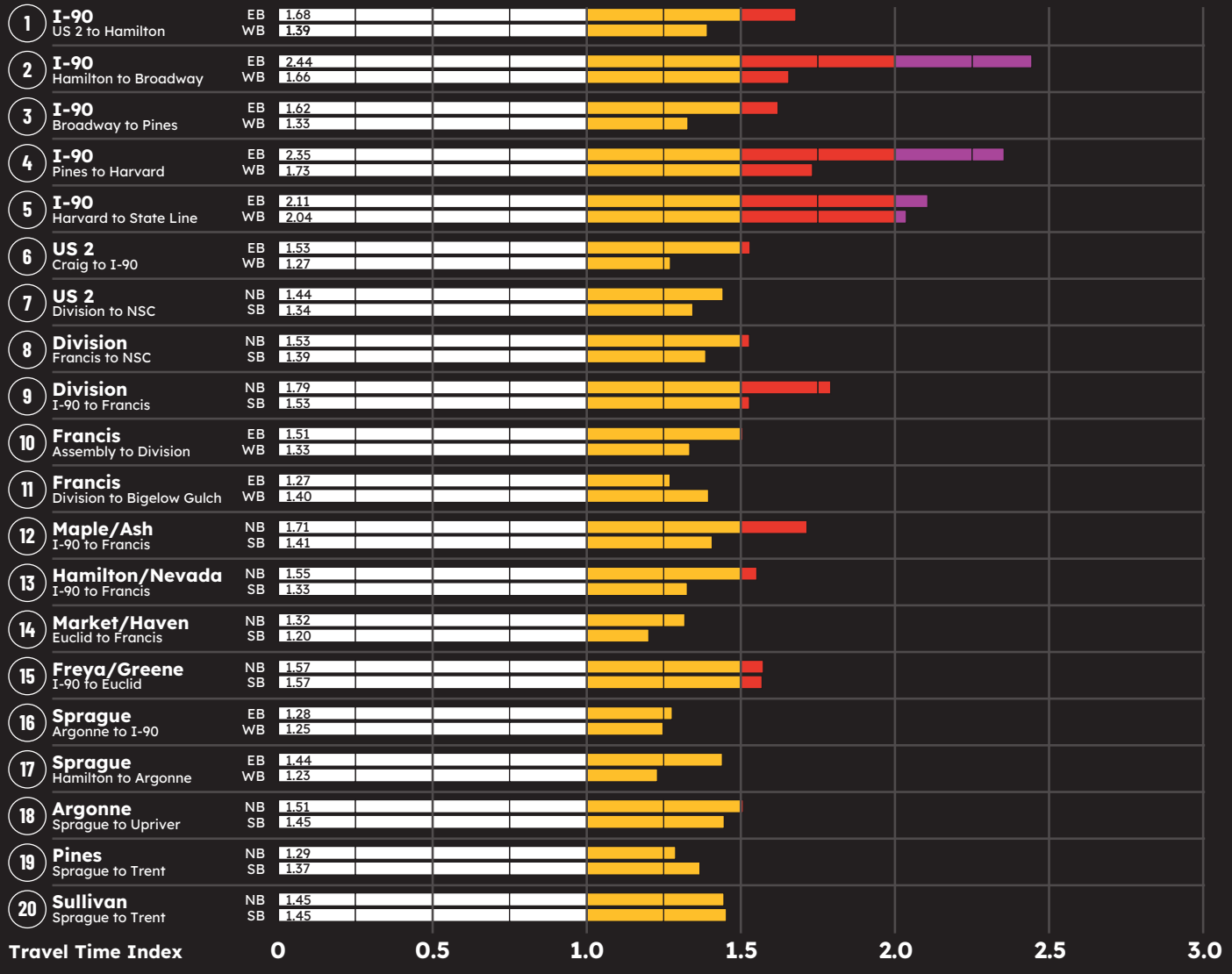


Figure 3.14 **Travel Time Index on Tier 1 CMP Corridor in 2050 Baseline Model**

mately eliminating fatal and serious injury (FSI) crashes on roadways in the planning area. This commitment is especially important in an environment that shows these crash types have been on the rise.

Moving forward, Horizon 2050 emphasizes strategies that reduce vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle collisions. This is embodied in the Safety and Security Guiding Principle and associated policies that support improvements to eliminate safety deficiencies, promote education and enforcement programs, and stress proper maintenance of the transportation system. To ensure investments are moving the safety needle, evaluation criteria for project programming and funding will be utilized by SRTC to ensure safety-related projects are weighted appropriately.

Across the state, safety is an emphasis area, and WSDOT conducted a Safety Summit in Spokane in summer 2025. SRTC will continue to support safety and security efforts locally through agency coordination, project identification, and funding prioritization for critical transportation infrastructure and programs. This is reflected in the Safety and Security program area, one of the essential investment categories outlined in Chapter 4.

Regional Safety Action Plan

The SRTC Regional Safety Action Plan (RSAP) is an important resource to understand where safety issues are located and why they are happening. The RSAP analyzed fatal and serious injury crash data from 2018 to 2022 to identify trends, contributing factors, and roadways with disproportionate crash severity. Through this analysis, a High Injury Network (HIN) has been identified with corridor-level concentrations of fatal and serious injury crash types (see Figure 2.38 in Chapter 2). The crash data shows 913 individuals were either seriously injured or died on the region's road network during the five-year time frame. Of these crashes, 19% involved at least one person impaired by alcohol and/or drugs, 22% a distracted driver, and 23% a speeding driver. The findings indicate that much progress is needed in modifying driver behavior beyond just engineering solutions. Vulnerable road users, essentially those outside of a vehicle, are especially at risk. Pedestrian crashes comprise only 3% of all crashes yet comprise 23% of FSI crashes.

The RSAP applies the principles of the Safe System approach. The Safe System is USDOT's adopted framework for roadway safety. It prioritizes eliminating crashes that cause death and serious injury through a holistic approach, and the RSAP offers a menu of strategies to mitigate risk for all users on our roadways. It is an ongoing effort to fund and implement these recommended safety measures.

While safety trends have been very concerning over the last few years, there is strong potential in technological solutions to mitigate risk on the transportation system. Driver-assist technology, also known as Advanced Driver Assistance Systems, refers to electronic systems in vehicles that enhance safety and driving comfort by assisting the driver. These systems utilize sensors and cameras to provide warnings and can take actions to prevent or mitigate collisions with other cars or people, helping with tasks like lane keeping and maintaining a safe distance. The highest level of driver assistance is automation. Autonomous vehicles exist today but are used in very narrow applications and subject to much public and regulatory scrutiny. The future prognosis is continued advancements in vehicle technologies, which promise to limit human error and enhance safety for all road users. However, this is a long-term vision, as vehicles without such technologies will be on our roadways for years to come, and in many cases, be unaffordable to segments of the traveling public.

Transportation Security

Transportation security encompasses several key elements aimed at safeguarding people, goods, and infrastructure within the transportation system. These elements include risk assessment and management, physical security measures, procedural security measures, and cybersecurity measures. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) was created in the wake of 9/11 to strengthen the security of the nation's transportation systems while ensuring the freedom of movement for people and commerce. TSA is most widely involved in aviation security and cargo screening, regardless of where or how the cargo is moving.

Threats to transportation system security stem from human-caused disruptions and natural events and a rising concern in cybersecurity and outside threats. The general expectation is

that security will become a routine consideration for how we manage the transportation system, with rising incidents of extreme weather and nefarious actors attacking digital infrastructure. It is incumbent on all modes of transportation to build security mechanisms and capacities to predict and respond to threats or disruptions.

Resiliency Assessment

To evaluate system vulnerabilities, SRTC conducted a Resiliency Assessment in 2024. The assessment primarily focused on potential threats to the road system (e.g., wildfire, flood). System risks were evaluated based on the probability of an event, the vulnerability of the facility, and the ability of the system to recover. A resilient system is one that can withstand and quickly bounce back from major disruptions. The work resulted in a Resiliency Plan, which identified pinch points on the system, levels of risk, redundancy concerns, and mitigation strategies. The Resiliency Plan is available on SRTC's website.

Performance Measures

Transportation Performance Management (TPM) is a strategic approach that ties federal investments and policy decisions to system performance. States and regions must set performance targets for the transportation system in several key areas—such as safety, infrastructure condition, congestion, system reliability, freight and economic vitality, and air quality.[7] In practice, it allows SRTC to track progress in these critical areas and ensure that transportation policy and investments are grounded in data and measurable results. It provides evidence-based links between long-range planning and on-the-ground outcomes. USDOT specifies rules for performance measurement and target setting for state DOTs, MPOs, and transit agencies. Areas of concern for this region include safety, pavement condition, and bridge condition. Performance measures are discussed at greater length in Chapter 2, and specific data measures and targets are detailed in the System Performance Report included in Appendix D.

Asset Management

Transportation assets are the physical elements, such as pavement, bridges, culverts, signs, and other roadway features that make up the transportation system. It also includes public transit fleets and facilities. Transportation asset management is the process of maintaining and preserving assets by strategically planning and investing state, federal, and local funds to obtain the best long-term benefit. To achieve this for the road system, WSDOT developed maintenance and preservation practices to establish a consistent approach for identifying transportation facility needs and deficiencies during all stages of an asset's lifecycle. The goal is to maintain the performance of the facility before it drops below acceptable standards, but not so soon that resources are wasted. Asset management is a tool to make progress toward performance targets for pavement and bridge condition as well as public transit assets.

STA produces a Transit Asset Management Plan on an annual basis. It provides an update on STA's strategy to maintain and improve its transit assets, including buses, facilities, and other infrastructure.[8] WSDOT has the requirement to write the Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP) for our state.[9] This includes:

- A summary listing of pavement and bridge assets on the NHS, regardless of ownership
- A condition description of those assets, with pavement listings separated for interstate and non-interstate
- Asset management objectives and measures
- Performance gap identification
- Life cycle cost analysis used to manage preservation
- Risk management analysis with results of the periodic evaluations of facilities requiring repair or reconstruction due to emergency events
- A 10-year financial plan

7 23 USC 134(h)(2); 49 USC 5303(h)(2); 49 USC 5304(d)(2).
8 Spokane Transit. "Transit Asset Management Plan." 2025.
9 WSDOT. "Transportation Asset Management Plan." June 2022.


THE
CRESCENT
SERVICE
BUILDING
STEAM

- Investment strategies

SRTC coordinates with local jurisdictions to report pavement and bridge conditions for our region in the WSDOT TAMP.

Future Freight Conditions

Between 2022 and 2050, statewide freight movements in Washington state are forecast to increase 45%, from 603 million tons of cargo to 872 million tons. For reference, US tonnage is expected to increase 44% from 2022 to 2050. Focusing on the SRTC planning area, growth in freight tonnages is expected to be around 35% to 2050.[10]

Many factors impact where, how, and what freight will travel on the system in the future. Washington is one of the five highest wheat producing states in the country, with production concentrated on the east side of the state, west and south of the Spokane region. Wheat supply chains rely on trucks, rail, barges, and international cargo ships to reach markets. Agricultural and food products will continue to be one of the higher volume commodities in the state.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Inland Pacific Hub (IPH) project provided a wealth of information that has informed previous iterations of the MTP. One of the biggest issues identified during the IPH study was the large lane imbalance for the region. Lane imbalance is the difference in the amount of goods shipped outbound compared to inbound. This creates increased costs and logistical issues for shippers, which impacts area businesses. Despite local growth, most of the regional freight movement will continue to be through-traffic, which uses capacity and causes wear on the highway and rail transportation system but generates very little economic benefit to the region. The situation is a natural by-product of being located along national freight corridors such as I-90 and two Class I rail lines.

Despite the amount of through-traffic, the Spokane region will continue to serve as a critical freight logistics hub. Secondary traffic, which is primarily warehousing and intermodal container transfers at transload, consolidation, and distribution facilities, is expected to experience some of the largest growth locally. This has been realized in recent years through Amazon's 640,000 square foot fulfillment center that opened on the West Plains in 2020, expansion of Spokane International Airport and opening of its transload facility, and advanced manufacturing activities across the region.

In 2025, The US Senate passed the Promoting Resilient Supply Chains Act. This bipartisan piece of legislation promises to strengthen supply chains and create manufacturing jobs through collaboration between the government and the private sector.[11] If ultimately confirmed through congress and signed by the president, the bill would provide for the establishment of a government-wide working group to promote resilient critical supply chains and prepare for potential shocks, including identifying bottlenecks.

Truck Freight

Most freight in the region is transported by truck, and continued growth in trucking is expected to keep pace with the growing population and demand for goods. The prominence of trucking is indicated in statewide data. With 346 million tons moved by truck in 2022, it is forecast to increase to 536 million tons in 2050, easily the most utilized freight mode across the state.[12] In our cities and towns, e-commerce has caused an upswing in home delivery from vans and medium-duty vehicles; it is difficult to discern if this is a net-positive or negative in terms of how many trips are generated versus how many personal shopping trips are displaced. Regardless, truck freight will continue to rely on a well-maintained street network with key connectivity to activity centers, especially industrial, air cargo, and manufacturing zones. SRTC monitors freight performance through system reliability targets including the truck travel time reliability index.

10 WSDOT. "Washington State Freight System Plan." Washington State Department of Transportation, 2022. https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/WA-State-Freight-System-Plan-2022_0.pdf.

11 US Congress. "H.R.2444 - Promoting Resilient Supply Chains Act of 2025." Library of Congress, March 27, 2025. https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/2444.

12 WSDOT. "Washington State Freight System Plan." Washington State Department of Transportation, 2022. https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/WA-State-Freight-System-Plan-2022_0.pdf.

As an industry, trucking is challenged by high demand, driver shortages, fuel costs, and cyber-attacks to supply chains. This may be overcome as autonomous trucks and delivery bots are deployed and through efforts to implement AI solutions for route optimization, fleet management, and security. Technological advancements in alternative fuels and electrification offer future promise for a more environmentally sustainable trucking fleet.

Several still-relevant issues were raised as part of the earlier IPH effort and in roundtables conducted for Horizon 2045. The primary concern was about north-south movement and support for the completion of the North Spokane Corridor. Also, the need to improve or expand bypass routes, such as the now-completed Bigelow Gulch Road improvements, was consistently heard. Another issue was the need to address regulatory differences across neighboring states and Canada. Finally, there is an identified need to consider the availability of truck parking. The key facilities for maintaining truck flow are shown in the Freight Priority Network, described in Chapter 4.

Rail Freight

The need for efficient logistics, driven in part by e-commerce and delivery, is driving the growth of intermodal transport, which combines rail with other modes like trucks. Railroads are focused on investments in terminal upgrades and new intermodal complexes to increase capacity for rail to truck transfers. Modernization of technology is driving the future of rail transport, through predictive analytics and AI (to optimize operations), automation, advanced inspection systems, and communication infrastructure for real-time tracking and monitoring of freight.

At the state level, freight tonnages shipped by rail are projected to increase 44% through 2050, starting from a 2022 base year of 95.6 million tons.[13] Increasing volumes of rail shipments are dependent on the status of proposed bulk commodity port projects in western Washington and Oregon. This could have the downstream effect of increasing the number of trains traveling through the Spokane region. Currently, most rail freight in the region is just passing through—over 81% by tonnage and more than 92% of the value of goods on rail is through-freight. While the exact number of future train traffic is unknown, SRTC will monitor this and evaluate if conditions change.

To mitigate the impact of train traffic on the street network, the continuation of key rail grade separation projects along the Class I rail lines is paramount. Moreover, efforts to enhance passenger rail service through Spokane could introduce new capacity conflicts as both freight and passenger lines share the same tracks. The region's key railroad facilities are shown in the Freight Priority Network, described in Chapter 4.

Air Freight

The commodities transported by air carriers are mostly high value, time-sensitive products that many businesses depend upon. The air cargo market is experiencing a period of sustained growth, driven by e-commerce and evolving customer demands. Therefore, strengthening the opportunity to use air cargo is a high priority of many stakeholders and an asset for economic development. Customer needs are evolving with some sectors prioritizing reliability and speed over cost competitiveness. For these reasons, air cargo traffic will likely continue to rise, with e-commerce acting as a major driver for air cargo space. More information on forecasted use is provided in the following Future Air Transportation Conditions section.

Future Air Transportation Conditions

Aviation demand forecasts are used to determine what improvements should be made at airport facilities and can help predict traffic and noise impacts. The region's primary passenger and air cargo facility is Spokane International Airport. The following information draws from the Spokane International Airport Master Plan (Chapter 2 Aviation Forecasts) and the Washington State Freight System Plan.

13 WSDOT. "Washington State Freight System Plan." Washington State Department of Transportation, 2022. https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/WA-State-Freight-System-Plan-2022_0.pdf.

Air Passenger

Passenger activity at Spokane International Airport is forecasted to 2030. The number of passengers boarding that depart from the Airport, or enplanements, is projected to grow from 2 million in 2019 to 3.1 million by 2030, an increase of 55%. The Airport provides domestic flights to several major cities and has continually added new direct routes, including to Atlanta and San Diego in recent years.

Air Cargo

Growth in air cargo at Spokane International Airport is also expected to increase. The annual forecast for 2030 is for nearly 72,000 tons of air cargo to pass through the Airport. According to WSDOT's State Freight System Plan, air tonnages at the state level are projected to see the greatest percentage change, more than doubling from 310,000 tons in 2022 to 633,000 tons in 2050.[14] Spokane International Airport is one of the airports identified with capacity constraints to meet future demands in the air cargo market, meaning new air cargo warehouses and aircraft parking expansion will be needed.[15]

Future Multimodal Conditions

Affordable, convenient, and safe year-round public transit, walking, and biking options are needed for our community. This is a common theme heard in SRTC's public outreach activities. Shifting trips to these modes can offset increases in travel time and delay and optimize existing capacity on the transportation network. SRTC policies in the Quality of Life Guiding Principle support these modes, and progress here will provide benefit to traditionally underserved users. Transit is an extension of the pedestrian and bicycle network, allowing users to extend the length of their trips or reduce the burden of physically demanding routes. Outside of transit use, better tracking and monitoring tools are needed for active transportation modes to gauge if investments are meeting user needs.

Public Transportation

Spokane County's population is expected to grow by over 100,000 by 2050, which will mean a need for additional transportation services. SRTC monitors trends in age dependent populations (see Figure 2.09), disabled populations (see Figure 2.10), veterans, and other sectors of the public that are traditionally known to use public transportation. The Millennial and Gen Z generations have shown a desire for alternatives to vehicle ownership and fewer have driver licenses compared to previous generations. Together these demographic preferences and changing trends point to a continued future demand for public transportation.

In 2024 STA completed its next 10-year strategic plan, called Connect 2035. The plan articulates STA's strategic roadmap for bus, paratransit, and rideshare services to the year 2035.[16] Through a coordinated public process, common themes heard by STA include more frequent buses, opportunities for additional High Performance Transit investments, expanded service on weeknights and weekends, recognition of new or expanded service locations, and need for further safety and security improvements.

A core investment in Connect 2035 is completion of Division Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Division Street BRT is the next project in STA's BRT network, with City Line being the first to open in 2023. Running along the Division Street corridor in north Spokane, Division Street BRT is a transit improvement project that will expand the existing bus service (Route 25) and run for 10 miles from downtown Spokane north to Mead. The project's preferred alternative was identified through a multi-jurisdictional study led by STA and SRTC, known as DivisionConnects. The project is estimated to launch in conjunction with the completion of the North Spokane Corridor in 2030.

Additional capital investments identified in Connect 2035 include transitioning to a zero-emission fleet, upgrades and expansion of

14 WSDOT. "Washington State Freight System Plan." Washington State Department of Transportation, 2022. https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/WA-State-Freight-System-Plan-2022_0.pdf.

15 JTC. "Washington State Air Cargo Movement Study." Washington State Legislature, December 21, 2018. https://leg.wa.gov/media/y2bbioan/jtc-wa-air-cargo-movement-study-final-report.pdf.

16 STA. "Connect 2035: Spokane Transit Authority Strategic Plan." Spokane Transit Authority, December 19, 2024. https://staconnect2035.com/.

STA's support infrastructure to include elements of a clean energy campus, Route 33 Wellesley High Performance Transit improvements, High Performance Transit improvements to City of Airway Heights and FAFB, and I-90/Valley High Performance Transit improvements. Moreover, investments in service improvements to existing routes and improved shelter and lighting at bus stops are called for. To expand transit coverage and connections, STA plans to pilot a Mobility-on-Demand service for targeted geographic locations and trip types that are not well-served by the fixed-route bus network.

For the longer-term, the region is protecting right-of-way to facilitate potential east-west high-capacity transit service through the valley. While no plans are in place, making sure right-of-way and vertical clearances are preserved is key to long-range implementation should a future need be identified. STA plans to conduct a High-Capacity Transit Study to look at multiple corridors and options for the future of transit service in our region.

The outcomes of STA planning activities are supported by SRTC through the Guiding Principles and Policies (see Chapter 1) and incorporated in Horizon 2050 through the Transit Priority Network, financial forecast, and investment categories for Regionally Significant projects and the transit program area as described in Chapter 4. Transit is also tracked in the System Performance Report (Appendix D) in terms of transit asset management and safety performance, where SRTC monitors progress toward established targets in coordination with STA.

Active Transportation

While active transportation predominately refers to walking and biking modes, it has expanded to include micromobility devices that are often motorized yet are part of the community using facilities like bike lanes, paths, and sidewalks. It also includes those using mobility devices such as wheelchairs. Looking ahead, increased adoption of e-bikes, e-scooters, and many other rolling devices can be expected for short-distance trips in urban areas. This may impact design considerations to mitigate conflicts between higher-speed e-devices and slower-speed pedestrians. Users of active transportation, regardless of specific type, are the most vulnerable road users and are an outsized indicator of the overall safety of our roadways. New development in the region, outside of the urban core and older neighborhoods, has typically introduced lower density, less-walkable and less-accessible environments, and future land use will have a clear relationship with the viability of active transportation across SRTC's planning area.

The outreach program for Horizon 2050 provided public comments about the active transportation needs of the region. Topics that have resonated through this and previous public outreach efforts include:

- A desire for more protected and separated bike facilities
- Snow removal and snow storage needs to be improved along sidewalks, crossings, and bike lanes
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle signage
- Driver education and enforcement is needed to curb speeding and reckless driving
- The region lacks a complete bicycle network
- Trail gaps need to be filled on regional trails, namely Centennial Trail and Fish Lake Trail
- Sidewalks need improvements—fix damaged sidewalks and fill in gaps where none exist
- Stronger enforcement of micromobility devices, both parking and speeding conflicts noted
- Roadways, specifically the bike lane where present, need more routine sweeping to improve safety and function for cyclists
- Implement land use decisions that support active transportation

The SRTC travel demand model is a tool used to predict the demand for biking and walking in our region. Successfully increasing biking and walking trips will require improved access to comfortable and safe biking and walking infrastructure that connect neighborhoods to activity centers. The SRTC 2050 Baseline model forecasts a 26% increase in walk/bike trips.

SRTC's primary planning tools for active transportation are its Safe and Complete Streets Policy and Checklist, bicycle level of traffic stress analysis (described in Chapter 2), and the Bicycle Priority Network. Complete streets policies at SRTC and its member agencies require consideration of all users when building or reconstructing a roadway. Bicycle level of traffic stress rates a facility for its comfort and safety from the perspective of the user so appropriate actions can be identified to lower the stress. With limited funding available, targeted investment in the Bicycle Priority Network will move the region to a more complete multimodal system.

Developed in close coordination with member jurisdictions, the Bicycle Priority Network contains over 900 miles of existing and proposed routes. Gaps have been identified in areas where connections are limited. Routes on this network are focused on connecting key community infrastructure while maintaining adequate spacing between routes. The bicycle network, when broken down by classification, is mostly made up of unmarked shared-use roadways. In many cases, these shared routes provide lower stress connectivity across and between neighborhoods. Where bike route connections are higher stress due to traffic volumes and/or speeds, bike facilities are recommended to separate cyclists from general purpose lanes. SRTC and the state increasingly rely on bicycle level of traffic stress ratings to determine the appropriate design treatment to accommodate users of all ages and abilities.

Traditional design within the street right-of-way may have to be reconsidered to accommodate micromobility devices. The sidewalk is typically not a functional space for operation or parking of such devices. Consideration should be given for urban streets to feature more dedicated and protected infrastructure such as "third lanes" for modes of travel that move faster than pedestrians but slower than cars. Mobility hubs may be a solution to help organize shared fleets, manage sidewalk clutter, and make multimodal trips more seamless.

Passenger Rail

The Spokane area is served by Amtrak with one scheduled trip eastbound and two westbound each day. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the inconvenience of the late night/early morning passenger train schedules is frequently expressed at public meetings and counter to Amtrak efforts to improve customer experience in the Spokane market. At the national level, Amtrak aims to double ridership by 2040, but it is likely that investment priorities will rather focus on other, more densely developed regions of the country to make this vision happen. Rail service is most viable in trip ranges between 150 and 500 miles; this distance becomes too long to drive comfortably but too short to fly. Spokane to Seattle sits in the sweet spot at 278 miles.

WSDOT's 2019 State Rail Plan calls for the state-owned Cascades service to be extended to connect Spokane with Seattle via the Tri-Cities and Stampede Pass. This service would run more than once a day and provide Spokane with more convenient hours than the what the Empire Builder currently offers. An initial study commissioned by Washington Legislature's Joint Transportation Committee found that introducing a Spokane to Seattle service via Stampede Pass was technically feasible and, despite long journey times, could generate ridership above or comparable to some other Amtrak state supported services. According to the final study report, travel time from Spokane to Seattle could take 8 hours and 35 minutes with ridership near 200,000 passengers annually.[17] Coordination regarding improved passenger rail service to the Spokane region is expected to continue. Viable passenger rail service between Spokane and Seattle offers an alternative to driving, taking a bus, or taking a plane. However, more planning will be necessary to consider feasible options.

As described in Chapter 2, there is potential for the Spokane region to revitalize some aspects of rail service as part of the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority's Big Sky North Coast Corridor initiative. In 2023, the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority, comprised of eighteen counties across the state of Montana, was awarded a $500,000 planning grant through FRA's Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID)

17 Washington State Joint Transportation Committee. "Feasibility of an East-West Intercity Passenger Rail System for Washington State." Washington State Legislature, July 2020. https://leg.wa.gov/media/40rlstfv/eastwestrail_finalreportjune2020.pdf.

program to scope the restoration of a passenger rail corridor between the Pacific Northwest and Chicago, generally following the now-defunct Amtrak North Coast Hiawatha route.[18] The Corridor ID program is an intercity passenger rail planning and development program intended to help guide intercity passenger rail development throughout the country. Although the specific alignment through Washington state—and potentially Oregon—remains to be selected, each of the proposed alternatives include service through Spokane. The next phase of development, drafting a service development plan, is currently slated to begin in late 2025. Once initiated, service development planning is expected to take about two years and would be followed by environmental analyses and pre-construction design. SRTC will be tracking these developments.

The WSDOT State Rail Plan is currently in an update cycle and expected to be completed at the end of 2025.

Transportation System Management

Several regional programs have demonstrated potential for improving travel conditions and offer preferred strategies for system and safety enhancements.

TSMO

Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) is an approach that uses regional strategies to improve mobility, safety, reliability, and reduce congestion. It involves managing and operating the existing transportation network to its fullest potential, rather than solely focusing on building new infrastructure. The CMP targets TSMO strategies as a first line of action in the region's most congested corridors. The benefits from traditional TSMO programs, such as incident management, signal coordination, and access management, are in mitigating congestion and saving time for the traveling public.

TSMO initiatives increasingly leverage advanced technologies, such as data analytics, AI, integrated corridor management, and supportive infrastructure for connected and automated vehicle technologies. A connected world will offer more opportunities to understand and improve the movement of people and goods, and smartly using this information will provide unprecedented data and insights to understand traffic patterns, predict congestion, and optimize arterial traffic flow.[19]

Planned TSMO investments for I-90 include additional ramp metering and variable message and speed signs. Ramp metering has proven effective in improving traffic flow and enhancing safety at conflict points, and this stems from study recommendations to improve operations throughout the I-90 corridor.[20] At the core of the region's TSMO efforts is the Spokane Regional Traffic Management Center (SRTMC). The SRTMC is a multi-jurisdictional enterprise made up of six partners that include City of Spokane, City of Spokane Valley, STA, Spokane County, WSDOT, and SRTC. The SRTMC is where information about the transportation network is collected, processed, and fused with other operational and control data. This information is used by system operators to monitor operations, implement control strategies, coordinate and initiate response to incidents, and relay information to the public.

The SRTMC is guided by the ITS Architecture Plan, last updated in 2019.[21] The plan establishes objectives to expand monitoring and reporting capabilities to ensure efficient operations for all modes. The backbone for the SRTMC, and technology-based TSMO strategies, is a robust fiber network to support real-time communications as well as current and emerging technology tools. An update to the ITS Architecture plan is part of SRTC's 2026–2027 Unified Planning Work Program.

18 Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority. "Connecting Communities, Strengthening Economies, Driving the Future of Passenger Rail." Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority, 2024. https://www.bigskyrail.org/

19 2021 Urban Mobility Report. The Texas A&M Transportation Institute.

20 DKS. "Final Report – I-90 Operations Study." May 2018.

21 SRTMC Operating Board. "Spokane Region ITS Architecture 2019 Update." Spokane Regional Transportation Council, November 14, 2019. https://www.srtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SpokaneRegionITSArchitecture2019_Final.pdf.

TSMO is part of the essential program areas that are implemented through this plan, which are addressed in Chapter 4.

TDM

Within the broader TSMO framework, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is a key strategy aimed at improving the efficiency of the existing transportation system. TDM strategies influence how people choose to travel by encouraging alternatives to driving alone, such as public transit, walking, biking, and carpooling. Alternative work-hour programs such as compressed work weeks, flextime, and telecommuting are also TDM approaches. Other strategies include parking management tactics—preferential parking for carpools and variable parking pricing, basing the price on demand.[22] State and regional commute trip reduction (CTR) programs implement these types of services and provide information and educational resources to the traveling public. Such efforts are an integral part of the region's toolkit for managing the transportation system, and its importance is likely to increase with expected growth in demand and limited resources to build new infrastructure. It is possible that as drivers experience less free-flow conditions in the Spokane region, there will be more incentive to try other travel modes.

Central to regional TDM implementation is the Spokane County CTR program, known as Commute Smart Northwest and described in Chapter 2. Every five years SRTC and affected jurisdictions are required to create a CTR plan in accordance with RCW 70A.15.4040. The regional and local CTR plans were last updated in 2024.

The CTR plan outlines how the respective agencies will prepare for and execute CTR activities and make progress toward local and regional Drive Alone Rate (DAR) targets. The regional target for Spokane County is a cumulative DAR of 60%; the current drive alone rate sits at roughly 64%. To reach the target, progress must be made in the attractiveness of other options to driving alone. Current and future trends in High Performance Transit and rider amenity investments, better connected and lower stress bicycle networks, flexible schedules and remote work, and the growth in micromobility devices have the potential to encourage modal shifts. Traveler convenience may be optimized through Mobility as a Service, where various transportation options (public transit, ridesharing, bike-sharing, et cetera) are integrated into a single platform, making it easier for users to plan and pay for their journeys. Ultimately, effective TDM is a collective effort from SRTC and its member agencies to provide and maintain the desired infrastructure and technology tools to enhance choices for the traveling public. To measure progress, SRTC will monitor changes to the DAR.

TDM is one of the essential program areas that are implemented through this plan and described in Chapter 4.

Smart Mobility

Technology is rapidly reshaping how people and goods move through our region. This is tied to TSMO approaches described in the previous section. From connected and autonomous vehicles (C/AVs) to electric buses and micromobility devices, innovations once considered futuristic are increasingly becoming part of everyday transportation systems. With the trend of more delivery vehicles, ride-hailing services, and shared micromobility devices on our roadways, use of curb space is also an emerging issue. Curb access for drop-offs, pick-ups, and charging could become more congested in the future. Street design will need to respond to this with dedicated zones to manage allowable uses and prevent blockage. The positive potential of smart mobility is the ability to improve safety, expand mobility choices, reduce emissions, and strengthen economic competitiveness. At the same time, they present challenges for planning, infrastructure, and policy.

Connected and Autonomous Transportation

SRTC monitors trends, research, and planning efforts related to connected and autonomous vehicles at the state and national level. Potential benefits to safety are described earlier in this chapter. In terms of integration on the road network, the question is not if, but when we might see larger use of C/AVs in the nation. It is very reasonable to think this will become more commonplace during the 2050 planning

22 Winters, Paul L., Center for Urban Transportation Research, Transportation Demand Management.

horizon. Predictive scenarios suggest partially autonomous cars will be common among new car models in the 2030s with ongoing progress in Advanced Driver Assistance Systems. Fully autonomous vehicles for personal use may not be on the market until the mid-2030s, though it will likely be much longer before drivers are completely disengaged from the act of driving.[23] The public is more likely to first experience AVs through robotaxis and shuttles, with deployments already underway in some US and Chinese cities. In the freight industry, autonomous truck deployment may be accelerated by market forces—24/7 operations, overcoming driver shortages, and lower total cost of ownership. On the infrastructure side, highway corridors that facilitate automated driving are key to autonomous truck viability.

In the meantime, preparedness for eventual wider spread adoption across vehicle types includes proper maintenance of our roads and bridges (good pavement condition and clear striping for optical navigation) and investment in fiber, broadband, and wireless to support the ITS network and Vehicle to Infrastructure (V2I) and Vehicle to Vehicle (V2V) communication. V2V communication is yet another advancing technology that enables vehicles to share information about their status, allowing them to build a more comprehensive picture of the surrounding traffic situation and alerting drivers of potential hazards.

Electrification of Transportation Systems

Through the Spokane Regional Transportation Electrification project, SRTC coordinated with Avista and regional partners and received a $2.5 million Washington State Department of Commerce grant in 2021. The grant supported implementation of EV charging infrastructure at locations throughout Spokane County. By the conclusion of the project at the end of 2025, over 30 unique sites were completed, adding over 100 DCFC and Level 2 charging ports. As a result of this and other public and private efforts, public access to EV charging has increased over the last four years. Looking ahead, coordination and collaboration will be necessary to ensure a complete and accessible charging network. Planning for the electrification of the transportation system is one of the ways SRTC can support air quality improvements and address state goals for greenhouse gas emission reductions.

For light-duty passenger vehicles, Washington ranked third in the nation in EV market share according to data from the Alliance for Automotive Innovation. There were 223,995 registered EVs in the state as of 2024, a 34% increase from 166,800 in 2023. During the past five years, total EV registrations in Washington have increased more than 254%. The total EV count in Washington for 2024 included 177,151 battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and 46,844 plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs).[24]

STA has invested in electrifying its bus fleet, with over 40 battery electric coaches in operation. Bus charging capacity has been enhanced at the Boone garage and other strategic transit stop locations. The City Line BRT opened in 2023, and its unique vehicle fleet is fully battery electric. STA intends to deploy zero-emission buses on its future Division Street BRT line as well. To support expansion of its zero-emission fleet, STA is exploring upgrades to and expansion of its support infrastructure, including elements of a clean energy campus, to enable additional capacity for bus maintenance, charging, and alternative fuel storage, as the STA fleet grows and these technologies evolve.

23 World Economic Forum. “Which Countries Are Ahead in the Global Autonomous Vehicle Race?” May 30, 2025.

24 WSDOT. “Electric Vehicles - Electric Vehicle Registrations.” Washington State Department of Transportation. https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/data/gray-notebook/gnbhome/environment/electricvehicles/electricvehicles.htm.

On the Horizon

This chapter discussed forecasted conditions and plans for the Spokane region along with trends in the transportation industry. As the Horizon 2050 timeline stretches into the 2030s and 2040s, many scenarios will influence our economy and the way we get around—the prevalence of C/AVs and alternative fuels, changes to freight supply chains, system resiliency, micromobility use, levels of delay and congestion, to name a few. SRTC can do its best by being nimble and advancing its data analytics and planning capabilities to transition the transportation system of today into the system of tomorrow.

The region's challenges and path forward are concluded in Chapter 4: How We'll Get There.

4 HOW WE'LL GET THERE

Introduction

Strategies to maintain and enhance the regional transportation system in support of economic vitality and quality of life

Building on the current conditions and future needs detailed throughout this document, Chapter 4 focuses on how we'll put our plan into action. While not all our transportation needs can be met with projected revenues, this chapter was developed under the leadership of the SRTC Board using the 3C Planning Process. It outlines the region's challenges and opportunities, planning activities, and fiscal realities, as well as the projects, programs, and strategies that will guide us into the future.

Challenges and Opportunities

Several common transportation issues or themes have been described throughout Horizon 2050. There are demographic shifts occurring in the region. Improved economic conditions and technological advances have influenced personal travel and supply chains. Funding for operations, maintenance and preservation of the regional transportation system has not been sufficient to keep up with needed repairs and improvements. The future of transportation in Spokane County will be significantly impacted by travel behavior, population growth and land use decisions, freight movement, and new technologies. Maintaining the system in a state of good repair will be a monumental challenge for the state and local jurisdictions.

System Funding Shortfall

The region faces an increasing backlog of preservation and maintenance costs, and funding levels have not been sufficient to maintain regional roads and bridges in a state of good repair. Although Washington state increased its gas tax by six cents in July 2025, it was the first increase since 2015 and will not be enough to satisfy the shortfall. The federal gas tax has not been raised since 1993, and the purchasing power of these dollars has declined in real terms due to inflation. Compounding this is improved fuel efficiency along with an increasing share of electric and alternative fuel vehicles operating on our roadways. Additional revenue options will be required to avoid future deferred maintenance and significant decline in the condition and function of our infrastructure.

State of Bridges

Bridges are another element of regional maintenance needs and a critical piece for keeping the system in a state of good repair. It is anticipated that the number of deficient bridges will grow as the region's infrastructure ages, with the possibility of bridges in fair condition today tran-

sitioning to poor condition during the Horizon 2050 timeline. Many bridges are approaching or have exceeded their design life, and several are located on vital freight routes and provide critical system redundancy.

Safety

Safety trends have been noted in the previous chapters, and this is an area of critical concern. Newer vehicles are safer than they have ever been, yet the issues of distracted and impaired driving and speeding, combined with the vulnerability of non-drivers in the right-of-way, have led to consistent increases in serious injuries and fatalities in recent years. It will take a variety of strategies, including driver education and enforcement along with engineering solutions such as traffic calming measures, to begin to see progress. Within the timeframe of Horizon 2050, the goal is to continually move fatal and serious incidents to zero through proactive planning and investment.

Technology

The region's current estimates for future travel demand reflect travel behavior based on technology and travel choices that exist today. Emerging trends such as automated, connected, electric, and shared vehicles will likely have a stark influence on travel behavior. Going forward, vehicles will sense and adjust to their surroundings, increasing safety and efficient movement of goods and people. Other technologies such as the Internet of Things (connected devices) and AI will affect transportation systems of the future.[1] System impacts, both positive and negative, are difficult to predict in the long term. A key consideration is understanding how mobility improvements from these technologies could result in induced trips or other unforeseen mobility consequences.

On the transportation management side, information technology can help optimize the regional system, from advanced signal systems to asset management. On the energy side, trends in transportation electrification are a benefit to air quality and carbon reduction but will impact gas tax revenues at the state and national level and factor in how our power grid is managed and expanded. In addition, emerging alternative fuel technologies offer the potential to diversify transportation energy demands.

Growth

Concentrated population growth and the location and density of housing significantly impact travel demand on the regional network. The same can be said for the location and expansion of jobs. The number of residents in turn affects the level of freight movement and deliveries to our region. Forecasting growth can be especially challenging, given the various factors that influence location choice. The long-term population forecast developed by SRTC is based on OFM's medium series projections.[2] While Horizon 2050 projections are focused on the SRTC planning area, growth in adjacent areas, namely north Idaho, affects the system as many trips are generated externally to Spokane County. SRTC will closely monitor growth data to ensure subsequent forecasts and travel demand modeling accurately reflect regional growth patterns.

With growth comes challenges related to housing availability and affordability. In response to these challenges, the state legislature passed HB1220 in 2021, amending the GMA and requiring jurisdictions to revise the housing element of their comprehensive plans to accommodate housing that is affordable to all economic segments. Affordable housing continues to be a high priority for policy makers, and local jurisdictions are responding by updating their comprehensive plans to address this and other state requirements. Local comprehensive plan updates are expected to conclude in 2026.

Additional study may be needed to assess future growth scenarios as comprehensive plan updates are implemented. Strategic land use decisions have the potential to enhance transportation system performance and connectivity. When transportation and land use are not well-aligned, it can degrade the system and reduce its efficiency. Ongoing collaboration with local jurisdictions and stakeholders is essential to identify mutually supportive decisions that optimize both land development and transportation choices.

1 2021 Urban Mobility Report. The Texas A&M Transportation Institute.

2 OFM. "Population & Demographics." Office of Financial Management, 2017. https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics.

Diversifying Travel Options

The most effective transportation networks are ones that offer a variety of options that respond to the needs of a community. Biking, walking, car-share, micromobility, and mass transit are all modes that contribute to the safe and efficient completion of trips. Horizon 2050 public feedback supports this. Transit investments help optimize the throughput of our roadways, while improvements targeting bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and accessibility are complementary to transit use. Such investments often directly improve safety for roadway vehicle users as well. A system that offers viable transportation choices can decrease roadway demand, ease growth strains on the network, and facilitate better access for all. With the integration of micromobility and speeds of small motorized devices, design changes may be necessary to mitigate conflicts in high use areas.

Aging Population

The number of seniors (age 65+) has been trending upward in the nation, and this holds true in Spokane County. The forecasted increase to a greater number of seniors could have a major effect on transportation services. We can surmise that an increasing number of seniors could age out of driving and yet still need transportation to shopping, medical appointments, social activities, cultural events, and recreational opportunities.

Resiliency

The region's ability to withstand disruptions may increasingly be brought to bear with extreme weather events, large wildfires, system failures or major crashes. Average annual temperature in Spokane has risen by two degrees since 1950. Peak summer temperatures have risen by a greater amount.[3] With warming temperatures, lower snowpack, and faster melt-offs, wildfire risk is exacerbated, and wildfire smoke can impact the region more frequently. The ecosystem shift impacts the management of our transportation system, and transportation investments must consider resiliency in the face of both climate and human-caused disruptions. This includes maintaining a state of good repair and adequate redundancy if a major event were to render some of the network unusable. As part of our work as the RTPO, tracking carbon emissions from our transportation sector (a key contributor to heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere) will help decision makers gauge how investments are influencing VMT per capita, VHT per capita, and emission trendlines.

Regional Planning Activities

As we consider the needs of a long-range transportation plan, we look to a series of planning activities that have been undertaken in recent years that help inform our work. There is a large body of transportation planning that is carried out at the local, regional, and state level that influences Horizon 2050. The totality of local and regional planning processes was reviewed in the Needs Assessment, described in Chapter 3. The prominent studies and other planning work that focus on modes and sub-areas within the SRTC planning area feed into Horizon 2050 through their technical analyses and project prioritization. Numerous state and regional plans listed in Chapter 1 are consulted to establish consistency with our MTP. Collectively, these contribute to how we strategically move ahead to 2050. A sample of key recent planning work is listed below.

Recent and In-Progress Studies

Several studies identifying transportation priorities are either currently in progress or have recently been completed. The work shown here provides general context but is not a complete list of all planning activities at the regional or state level.

- **Washington Highway-Rail Grade Crossing State Action Plan:** The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) developed this action plan to focus safety improvement efforts on the higher-risk highway-railroad crossings to reduce accidents and incidents. The plan identified 58 priority crossings statewide; two of these higher-risk locations are in Spokane County—on East Mission Avenue in Spokane and on Pines Road in Spokane Valley. The plan was completed in 2022 (see Figure 4.01).

3 Spokane Climate Project. 2025. https://www.spokaneclimateproject.org/.

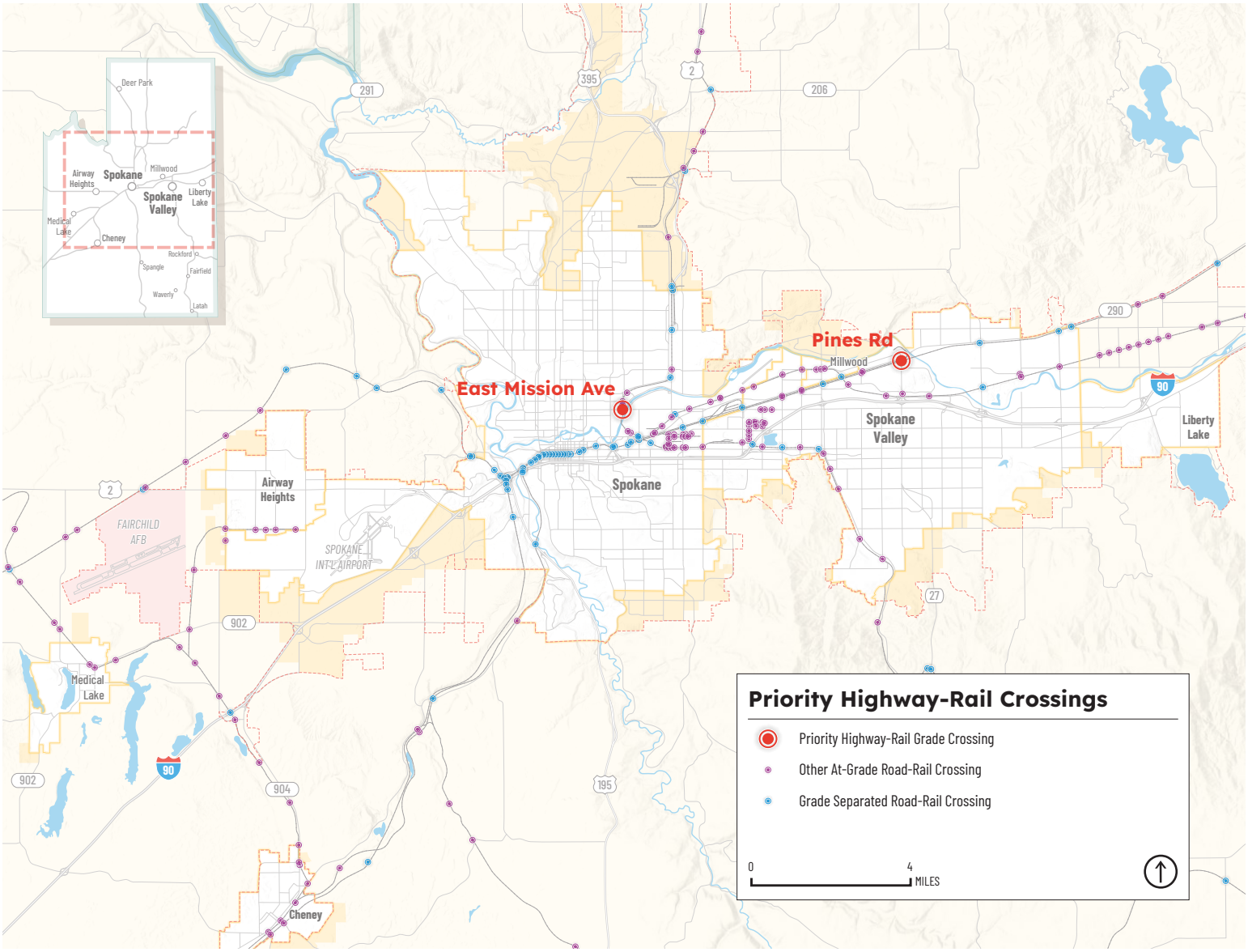


Figure 4.01 **Priority Highway-Rail Grade Crossings**

- **Smart Mobility Plan:** The Smart Mobility Plan is a result of an SRTC-led process to evaluate current and emerging transportation technologies and potential technology solutions to enhance the efficiency, safety, and sustainability of the region's transportation system. The plan explored technologies in use today and how they can be expanded as well as how to prepare for and adopt new and future innovations. It was approved by the SRTC Board in December 2024.

- **Resiliency Plan:** Led by SRTC and approved by the SRTC Board in December 2024, the Resiliency Plan assessed the impact of natural and human-caused disruptions to the Spokane region's transportation system. This includes the system's ability to anticipate, prepare for, recover, and adapt to changing conditions after a major disruptive event. It contains recommended planning steps, strategies, and actions to improve system resiliency and redundancy and strengthen key transportation facilities. These findings and recommendations will assist SRTC and local jurisdictions to advance future projects, programs, and plans.

- **Regional Safety Action Plan:** The Regional Safety Action Plan (RSAP) was led by SRTC and supported by a $400,000 USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant. The RSAP analyzed fatal and serious injury (FSI) crash data from 2018 to 2022 to identify safety issues and possible solutions. The analysis produced a High Injury Network

(HIN) of facilities with persistent crash patterns. Public feedback was also considered and found to align with what the data indicated. The plan includes strategies to achieve zero FSI crashes on the region's roadways. Local jurisdictions are now enabled to start implementing safety projects, initiatives, and policies in a regional effort to make our streets safe for everyone. SRTC is actively pursuing recommendations from the RSAP including a safety education campaign supported by federal grant opportunities. The final plan was approved by the SRTC Board in September 2024.

- **South Barker Corridor Study:** The City of Spokane Valley studied investment strategies for the South Barker Road corridor due to increasing traffic congestion and rapid growth in the city, county, and neighboring City of Liberty Lake. The purpose of the South Barker Corridor Study was to analyze traffic demands through the year 2040 and identify potential traffic improvement projects on the segment of Barker Road between Mission Avenue and the southern city limits in Spokane Valley. This 2020 study included planning-level cost estimates of improvements and an estimate of the proportion of traffic along segments of the corridor from adjacent jurisdictions (City of Liberty Lake and Spokane County) to assist in developing potential mitigation fee payments for the new development that is occurring in this part of the region.

- **Argonne Road/Upriver Drive Intersection Improvement Study:** Argonne Road is a north-south arterial that cuts through multiple jurisdictions in the middle of the urban area. Led by Spokane County, the purpose of the study is to determine the best improvements at the signalized Argonne Road and Upriver Drive intersection to improve its operational efficiency. The Centennial Trail in this area is also being studied for improved safety and routing in consideration of the trail gap on Upriver Drive and the crossing of Argonne Road. The study is expected to be completed by the end of 2025.

- **US 195/I-90 Transportation Study:** The US 195/I-90 Study was a regional effort to develop solutions for safety, mobility, access, and infrastructure challenges in the study area. The work, led by SRTC, was a collaborative effort with WSDOT, City of Spokane, Spokane County, and STA. The study identified 26 transportation projects that, when implemented, will improve safety and mobility in the Latah Valley area and accommodate some of the needs of planned development. The study projects have been integrated into local jurisdiction plans for future implementation. The final report was approved by the SRTC Board in December 2021.

- **West Plains Subarea Transportation Management Plan:** The West Plains Subarea Transportation Management Plan, Phase 1 US 2 Vicinity Study is a transportation and market land use study of US 2 in and around the West Plains. The study was conducted over a two-year period beginning in 2019, and it developed a prioritized list of strategies as identified by its technical advisory team and subject matter experts. This includes strategies for safety, freight, the natural environment, equity, active transportation, public transportation, TSMO, traffic operations, and land use. A key study outcome was the US 2 Circulation Plan, which incorporated the City of Airway Heights revitalization planning efforts and identified the parallel alternative routes of 6th/10th/12th and 18th/21st avenues as important projects to improve traffic circulation and build capacity and redundancy through the US 2 corridor.

- **Mead-Mt. Spokane Transportation Area Plan:** The Mead-Mt. Spokane Transportation Area Plan provides a long-range vision for the future transportation network in this area of unincorporated Spokane County. Completed in 2019, the plan was led by Spokane County in a collaborative effort with WSDOT. Its purpose is to guide investment in transportation infrastructure, planning, and policies to improve traffic safety, traffic operations, street design, street connectivity, driveway access, bike and pedestrian facilities, and transit service in anticipation of future growth. The plan includes a list of capital improvement projects that increase street connectivity and multimodal mobility and safety through the year 2040. It serves

as a resource for Spokane County, local agencies and jurisdictions, the public, and the development community on how the transportation network will improve and change over time.

- **Connect 2035:** Completed in December 2024, Connect 2035 articulates STA's strategic roadmap for bus, paratransit, and rideshare services through 2035, with a clear vision supported by goals and strategies. It builds on the successes of the previous strategic plan, STA Moving Forward, to address emerging needs and continued investment in equity, sustainability, and community growth as supported through the transit system. It identifies STA priorities for the next 10 years and beyond. Core initiatives within Connect 2035 are the implementation of Division Street BRT, the transition to zero-emission vehicles, and upgrades and expansion of STA's support infrastructure to include elements of a clean energy campus. Other key initiatives include upgrading Route 33 Wellesley to a HPT line, piloting mobility-on-demand services, piloting a reduced fare program for low-income individuals, and investing in STA staff and operators.

- **DivisionConnects:** DivisionConnects is a multi-jurisdictional transportation and land use study led by STA and SRTC, concluding in 2022. The study process involved corridor analysis and public outreach to identify the preferred alternative for Division Street BRT and complementary active transportation improvements. The study is foundational to Division Street transportation enhancements and land use opportunities, involving STA, WSDOT, City of Spokane, and Spokane County.

- **Craig Road I-90 Non-Access Feasibility Study and ARR:** The work performed by this project will study an interchange access revision to create a new northerly transportation connection from the interchange to Craig Road and provide for a proposed transportation connection to SR 902, Spokane International Airport, Airway Heights, Fairchild Air Force Base, US 2 and other important employment/economic generators. The study is in process and is expected to conclude at the end of 2025.

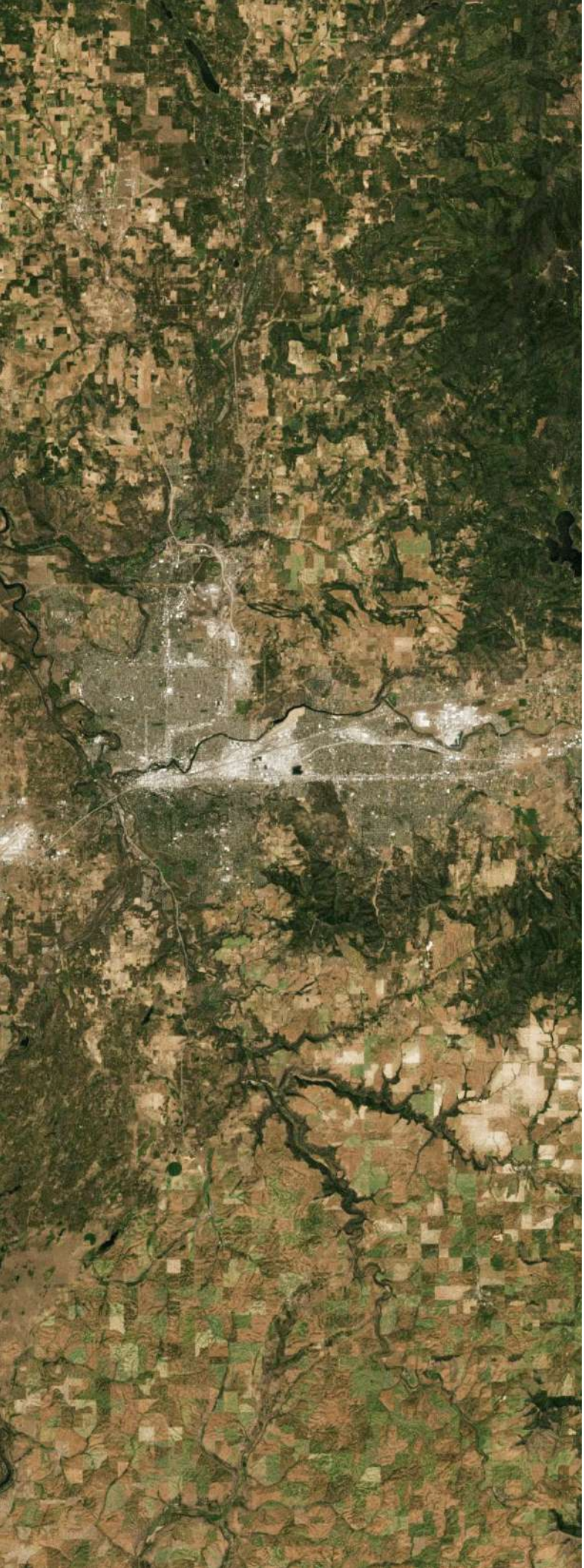
- **I-90 Operations Study:** This WSDOT-led project evaluated and prioritized transportation system management and operations (TSMO) solutions to improve safety along the I-90 corridor between Four Lakes and the Idaho Stateline. TSMO strategies were targeted to improve existing infrastructure and tend to be lower cost than larger infrastructure projects that add capacity. The study was completed in 2018, and a series of recommendations have been implemented and will continue to be implemented along I-90, including ramp metering and variable message and speed signs.

- **Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CTP-HSTP):** The CPT-HSTP is a required element for federal and state funding programs to demonstrate that a coordinated planning process has occurred to identify unmet needs, bolster existing services, and prescribe strategies to maintain and enhance human services public transportation. Updated every four years, the planning process is led by SRTC in partnership with STA. The Spokane County CPT-HSTP was last updated in 2022; a new update will occur in 2026.

Through these various studies and plans, multiple projects have been identified that are inter-related and cross jurisdictional boundaries. The SRTC Needs Assessment, conducted for Horizon 2050 and described in Chapter 3, documented such related projects along major corridors and incorporated them into corridor cut sheets. This is a tool for viewing planned projects at the corridor scale, agency sponsors, associated costs, and how the projects relate to one another. The corridor cut sheets are provided in the Needs Assessment (Appendix E).

Regional Priority Networks

To focus transportation planning and project programming by mode, SRTC maintains an inventory of regional priority networks for vehicular, freight, transit, and bicycle facilities. The priority networks are used to ensure maintenance, preservation, and capital improvement actions are prioritized on these critical facilities. Each of the networks are described below.



- **Vehicular Priority Network:** The Vehicular Priority Network includes the National Highway System (NHS) in Spokane County as well as select corridors identified through the CMP that connect to the NHS. All major road facilities—principal arterials, highways, and the interstate within Spokane County—are part of the priority network (see Figure 4.02).

- **Freight Priority Network:** The Freight Priority Network includes all T-1/T-2 truck routes in the region—these routes carry the highest truck freight tonnages on the WSDOT FGTS network. Also included on the network are truck routes identified as high priority by the Inland Pacific Hub study and the region's Truck Freight Economic Corridors. Major rail lines and air facilities round out the Freight Priority Network (see Figure. 4.03).

- **Transit Priority Network:** The Transit Priority Network reflects STA's Connect Spokane long-range planning effort. It identifies existing and future corridors for HPT network investments. The network envisions a connected system of frequent routes that efficiently serve the region's population and employment centers (see Figure 4.04).

- **Bicycle Priority Network:** The Bicycle Priority Network identifies existing and future bicycle facilities to realize a connected network of functional routes, including separated multi-use paths like the Centennial Trail as well as bike lanes, shared lanes, and other bike facilities (see Figure 4.05).

- **Pedestrian Network:** While not included as a separate priority network map, the region's pedestrian network is extensive, especially in the urbanized area. Identified priorities at the regional scale include filling sidewalk gaps, sidewalk maintenance and repair, installation of safe crossing infrastructure, compliance with ADA and using best practices, as well as adhering to the SRTC Safe and Complete Streets Policy and Checklist.

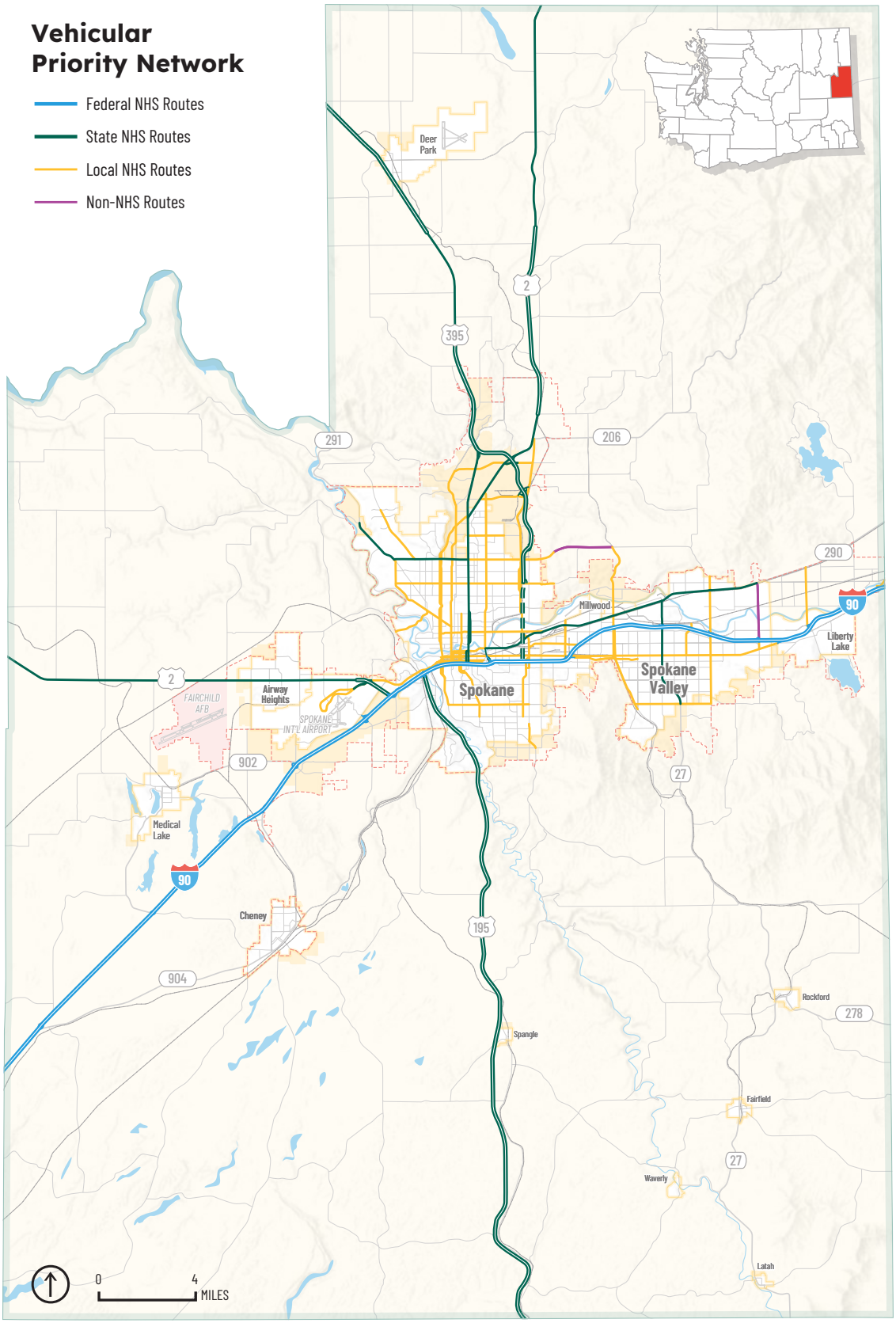


Figure 4.02 **SRTC Vehicular Priority Network**

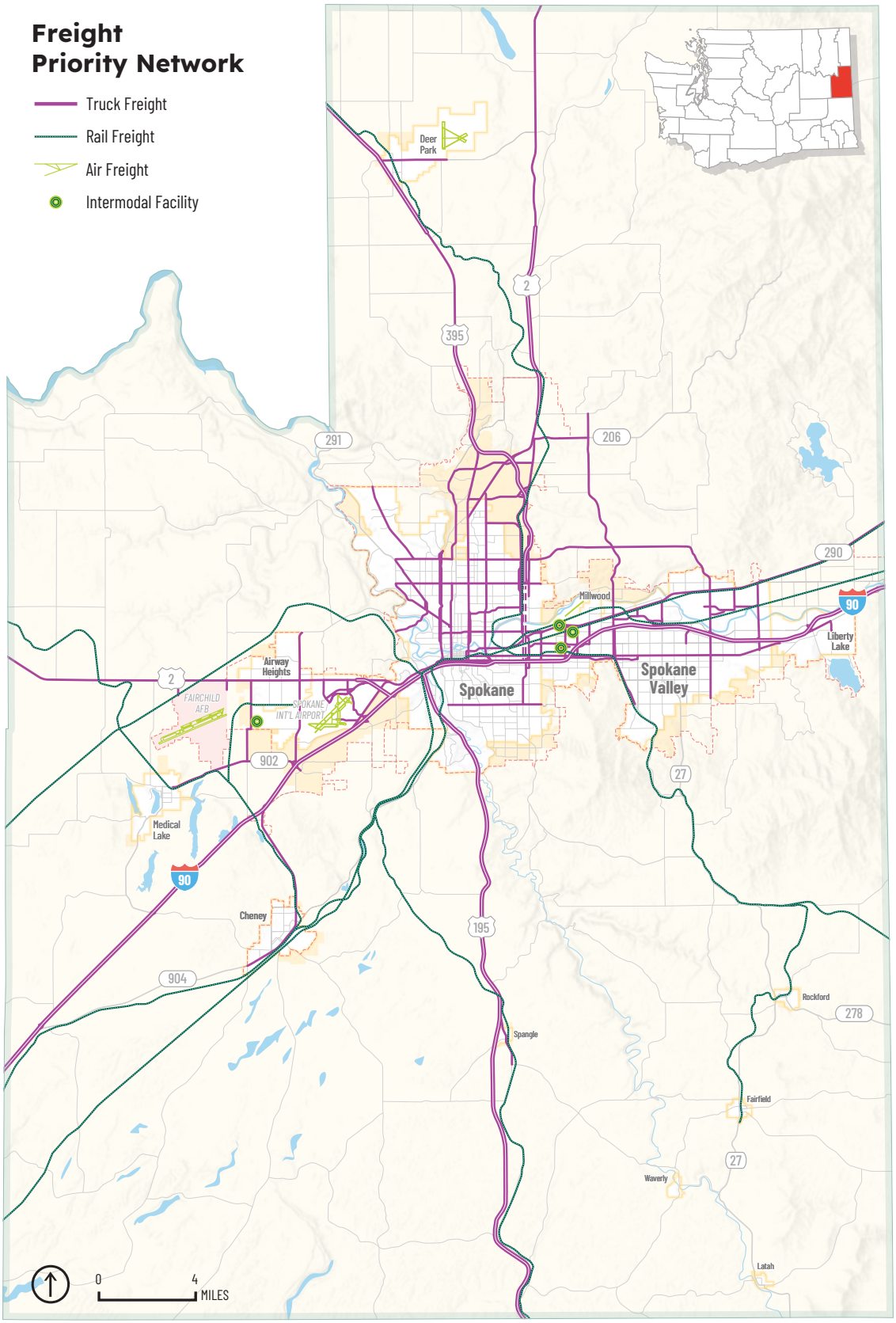


Figure 4.03 **SRTC Freight Priority Network**

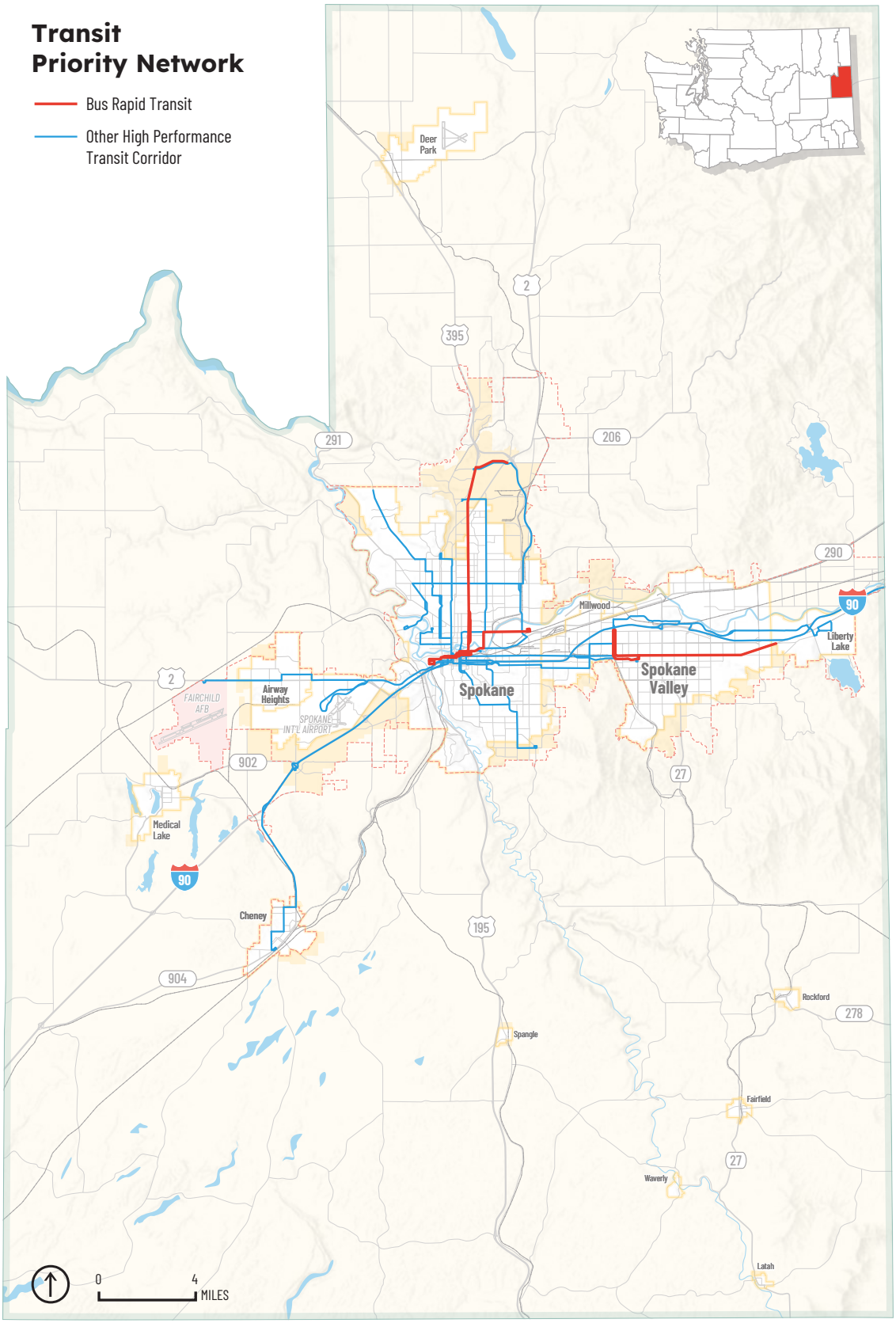


Figure 4.04 **SRTC Transit Priority Network**

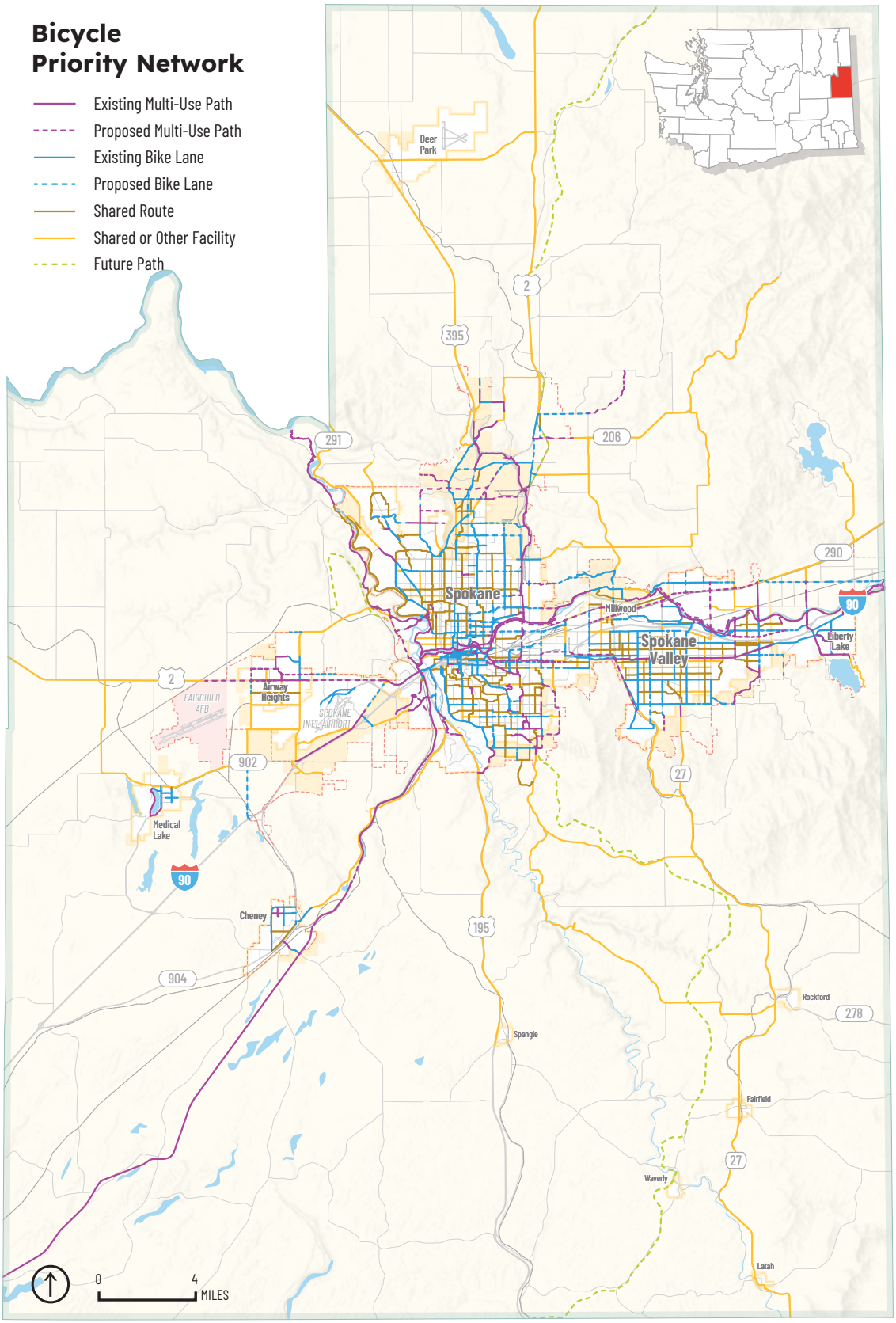


Figure 4.05 **SRTC Bicycle Priority Network**

Financial Plan

The region's ability to make planned investments is limited by the expected sources of revenue. This section identifies funding mechanisms and types of revenue available for the transportation improvements listed in this plan. These mechanisms include sources provided through local, state and federal funding programs. The financial analysis forecasts what funding may be reasonably available during the planning period, extending from 2026 to 2050. It demonstrates that the projects and programs in Horizon 2050 can be implemented within this financial constraint.

The Horizon 2050 Financial Plan includes both a revenue and expenditure forecast, which are described in this section. These analyses should in no way be construed to be actual forecasts of individual programs or projects but rather order of magnitude estimates of funds that could be reasonably available for transportation investments during the planning period. Local jurisdictions, WSDOT, and OFM prepare and release forecasts of revenues and expenditures and should be consulted during the actual development of projects and programs unique to their area of expertise or for a specific funding program. See Appendix C for a complete description of the sources, assumptions, and methodologies used for the development of the Horizon 2050 Financial Plan.

Future Revenues

Horizon 2050's future revenue forecast estimates the amount of revenue the region can reasonably anticipate to fund transportation operations, maintenance, preservation, and capital investments within its planning period. This was done by identifying potential funding sources, analyzing historical revenue trends, and developing future revenue assumptions. These assumptions are based on historical data and were developed in coordination with WSDOT and STA. It is important to note that, as with any long-term forecast, a level of uncertainty is inherent in the Horizon 2050 revenue forecast. It is intended to capture trends over the 25-year planning period and is not intended to be precise on a year-to-year basis.

SRTC's historical revenue analysis utilized data from the most recent 15-year period for which data was available, 2007 to 2021. This information was obtained from a variety of sources, including the Washington State Auditor's Office (SAO) Local Government Finance Reporting System, SAO Audit Reports, and the WSDOT Transportation Revenue and Expenditures by County.[4] The latest reports from the Washington State Transportation Economic and Revenue Forecast Council (TERFC) were also reviewed and used in support of these financial forecasts.[5] Additional detail on the region's historical revenue trends is provided in Appendix C.

The financial capacity analysis for future years assumes that existing revenue streams will remain in the future, even though they may be named or categorized differently by future legislative actions. In addition, it is assumed that local options available to the region are reasonably available for future use, unless they have been rejected by voters on three separate occasions, after which they would be considered unlikely to be available in the foreseeable future. There are a few local options that may be considered for use during the next twenty years including local vehicle registration fees and local option sales tax.

Revenue sources were organized based on the point of expenditure: local jurisdictions (i.e., Spokane County and the cities and towns within SRTC's planning area), SRTC regional funds, WSDOT, and STA. Revenues were projected in both Year of Expenditure (YOE) and infla-

4 WSDOT, "City Streets and County Roads Merged Dataset, 2007–2021," WSDOT Funding, accessed April 9, 2025, https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/funding/revenue-forecasting.

5 The latest reports from the Washington State Transportation Economic and Revenue Forecast Council (TERFC) were also reviewed and used in support of these financial forecasts

Figure 4.06 **Projected Transportation Revenues 2026–2050**

All amounts are shown in millions of dollars, adjusted to their expected year of expenditure (YOE dollars)

Point of Expenditure	Revenue Source	Projected Revenue	Percent of All Revenue
Local	Local	$ 3,240	20.1%
	State	$ 770	4.8%
	Federal	$ 810	5.0%
Local Subtotal		**$ 4,820**	**29.9%**
Regional (SRTC)	STBG	$ 280	1.8%
	STBG Set-Aside	$ 20	0.1%
	CMAQ	$ 130	0.8%
	CRP	$ 30	0.2%
Regional Subtotal		**$ 460**	**2.9%**
WSDOT	WSDOT Internal Revenues	$ 2,560	15.9%
	Transportation Funding Packages	$ 1,400	8.7%
WSDOT Subtotal		**$ 3,960**	**24.6%**
STA	Operating Revenue	$ 6,420	39.8%
	Federal Capital Revenue	$ 290	1.8%
	State Capital Revenue	$ 170	1.1%
STA Subtotal		**$ 6,880**	**42.7%**
Total		**$ 16,120**	**100.0%**

Totals may not sum due to rounding

tion-adjusted 2020 dollars. The Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all Urban Consumers, U.S. West Cities—Size Class B/C was used. It assumes an annual 1.74% inflation rate.[6]

In total, the forecast anticipates approximately $16.1 billion in reasonably available transportation revenues over the planning period. This figure represents YOE dollars and is summarized by point of expenditure and source in Figure 4.06. It is based on the aforementioned historic trends and growth rates and was developed in coordination with WSDOT and STA. Broken down by point of expenditure, this equates to $5.3 billion in local and regional revenues, $3.96 billion in WSDOT revenues, and $6.9 billion in STA revenues. The assumptions used to develop these projections are detailed in the following sections.

Local Revenues

Local jurisdictions fund transportation through a mix of locally generated revenues—such as property taxes, special assessments, local road user taxes, general fund appropriations, bond proceeds, et cetera—along with state and federal funds distributed through various pass-through programs. Since 2007, local sources have accounted for roughly 70% of transportation revenues in the Spokane region, with about 20% coming from state sources such as fuel tax

6 BLS. "Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U. S. City Average, by Expenditure Category." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 2025. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.t01.htm.

distributions and state grants, and the remaining 10% from federal sources.

Figure 4.07 illustrates that annual revenues fluctuated significantly, ranging from a low of $88 million in 2008 to a peak of $252 million in 2018 (in YOE dollars). This resulted in an inflation-adjusted average annual revenue of $168 million (in 2025 dollars) for local jurisdictions from 2007–2021. The following assumptions, based on these historical trends, were used to project these revenues over the planning period:

- **State and federal revenues** to local jurisdictions tend to fluctuate year by year, but over time they have remained relatively constant in real terms. Except for motor vehicle fuel tax distributions, federal and state revenues were projected using a constant average historical value in 2025 dollars.

- **Motor vehicle fuel tax distributions** are allocated per capita by the state to the county and cities. Fuel tax distributions were projected forward from the latest actual value in YOE dollars, using growth rates derived from WSDOT's projected motor vehicle fuel tax collections to local jurisdictions through the 2033–2035 biennium from TERFC. The growth rate projections were extended through 2050 to match the Horizon 2050 planning period. Growth rates from TERFC are adjusted based on population growth estimates for the SRTC region and Washington state. Population growth estimates for the SRTC region align with SRTC's 2022–2050 land use forecast.

- **Property tax** growth is limited by state law to 1% plus new construction. They were assigned an assumed growth rate of 1% per year in YOE dollars as a conservative estimate of property tax growth. Because assessed value typically grows at a higher rate than inflation, this means that revenues decrease in real terms.

- **General Fund appropriations** and **other local receipts** are growing in real terms, so they are projected to grow at a rate of 3% per year in YOE dollars.

- **Special assessments** and **local road user taxes** fluctuate year by year, but over time they have remained relatively constant in real terms. They were projected through the planning period using a constant historical average value in 2025 dollars.

- **Bond proceeds** also fluctuate year to year and are dependent on local jurisdictions issuing debt and needing to finance large capital projects. Given the wide variation in revenue levels year to year, they were projected using a constant historical average value in 2025 dollars.

No attempt has been made to break down the forecast to the individual jurisdiction level as a part of Horizon 2050. See Appendix C for more detail about local jurisdiction revenue sources.

Regional Revenues

Federal funds allocated to the region through SRTC include Surface Transportation Block Grants (STBG), STBG Set-Aside allocations, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funds. Over the past decade, these funds have remained relatively constant. As shown in Figure 4.08, this trend is expected to continue over the planning period. They were projected based on their 2009 to 2024 average value, which was held constant, relative to inflation, through 2050.

WSDOT Revenues

Since WSDOT budgets are based on priority programming and legislative actions rather than direct allocations through distribution formulas by geographic area, historical investment trends are used to establish a baseline forecast. Assumptions regarding future WSDOT revenues rely on TERFC's June 2025 projections, which estimate statewide revenues through the 2033–2035 biennium. WSDOT staff allocated these revenues to the Spokane region using a variety of factors, including population, vehicle registrations, and rental car tax revenue. These estimates were then extended through 2050 to align with the Horizon 2050 planning period.

In addition to WSDOT funds, the Spokane region may receive dedicated funding for projects through legislative funding packages, such as the Connecting Washington Act and Move Ahead Washington. Future funding was estimated based on historical funding. From 2003 through 2031, the region has received and is

Figure 4.07 **Historical and Projected Local Revenues**

All amounts are shown in millions of dollars, adjusted to their expected year of expenditure (YOE dollars)
Source: WSDOT, City Streets and County Roads Merged Dataset, 2007–2021

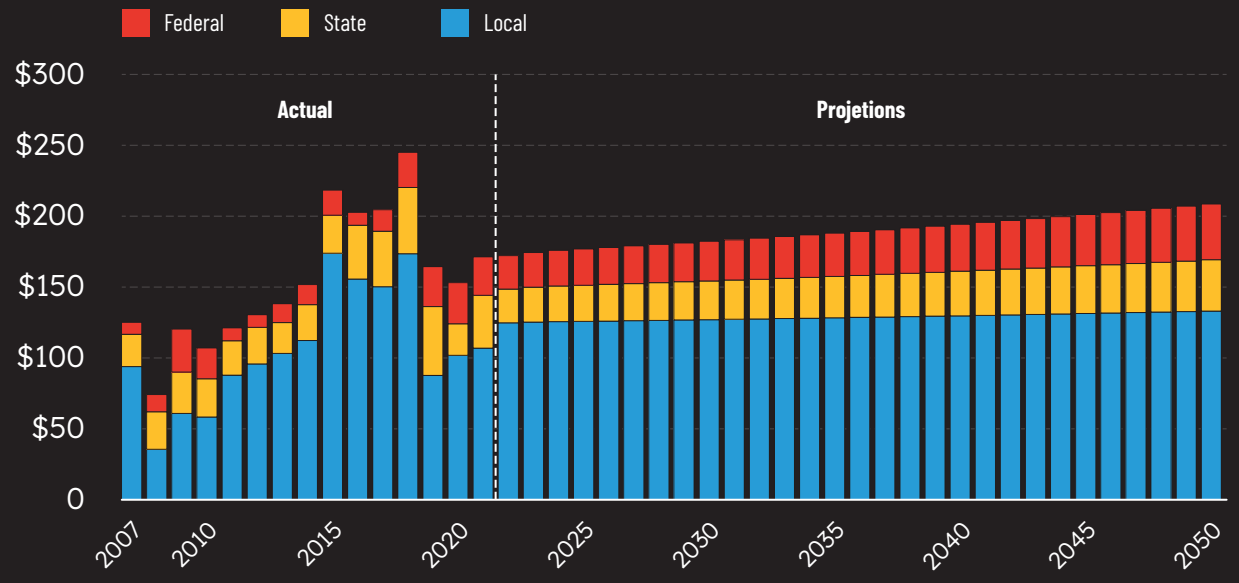


Figure 4.08 **Historical and Projected Regional Revenues**

All amounts are shown in millions of dollars, adjusted to their expected year of expenditure (YOE dollars)
Source: SRTC

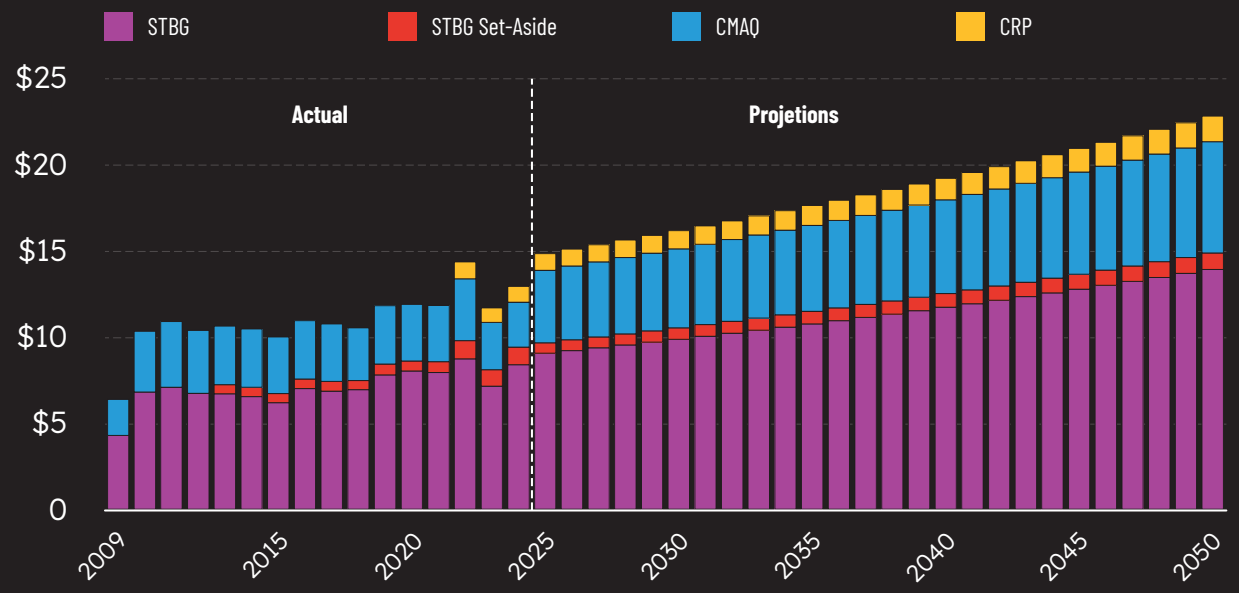


Figure 4.09 **Historical and Projected WSDOT Revenues**

All amounts are shown in millions of dollars, adjusted to their expected year of expenditure (YOE dollars)
Source: WSDOT, Washington State Transportation Economic and Revenue Forecast Council (TERFC), June 2025 Transportation Forecast

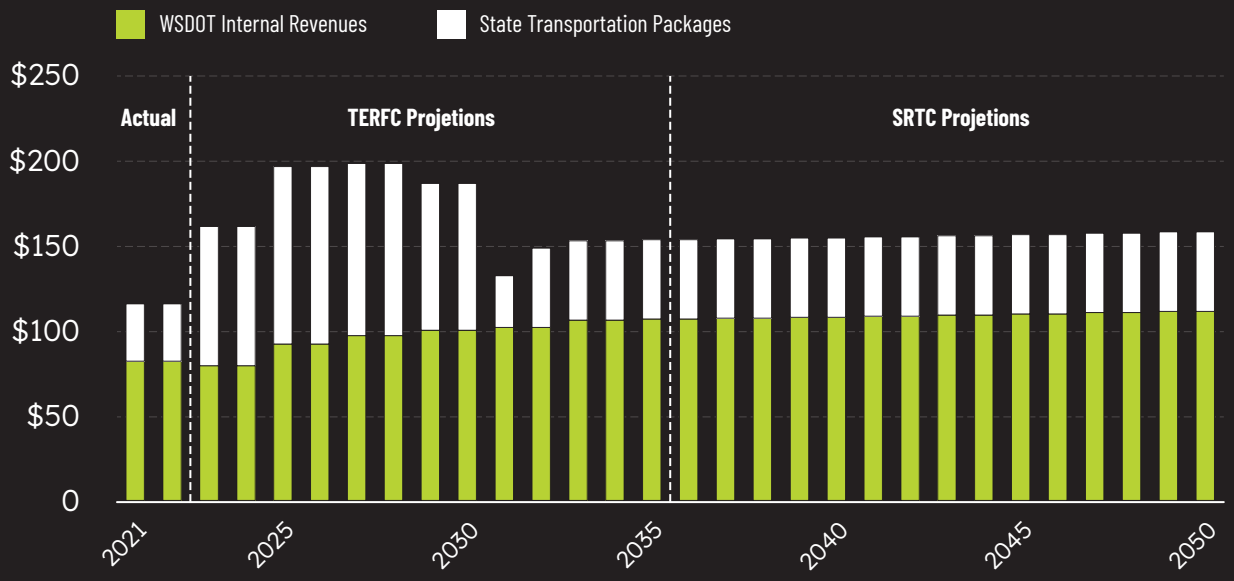


Figure 4.10 **Historical and Projected STA Revenues**

All amounts are shown in millions of dollars, adjusted to their expected year of expenditure (YOE dollars)
Source: STA

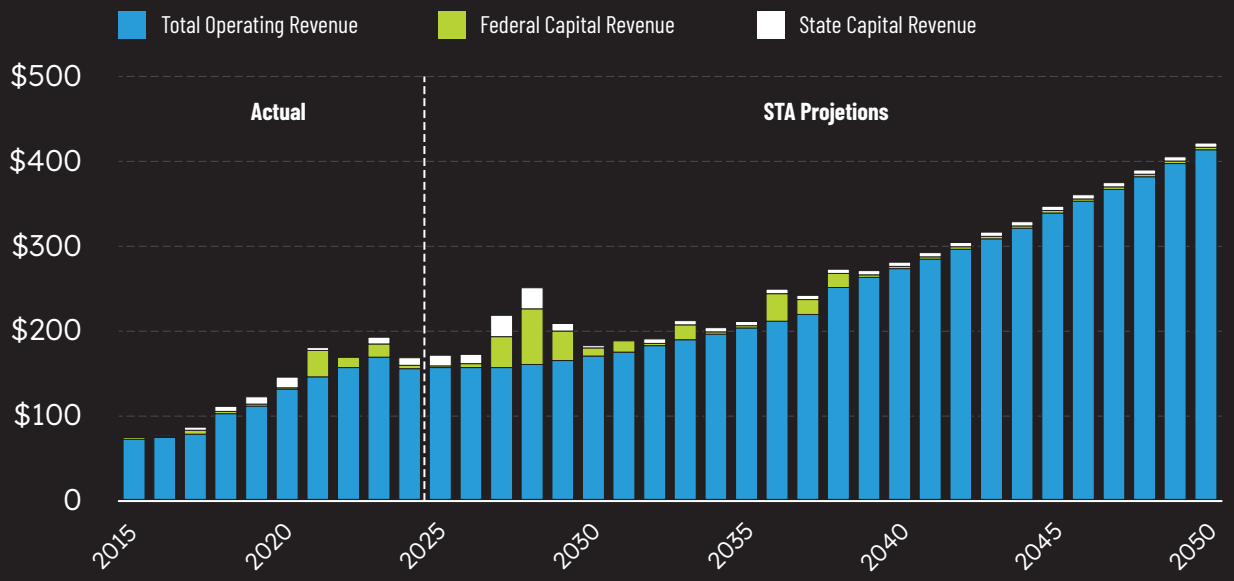


Figure 4.11 **Projected Transportation Expenditures 2026–2050**

All amounts are shown in millions of dollars, adjusted to their expected year of expenditure (YOE dollars)

	Expenditures by Category				
Point of Expenditure	Maintenance & Operations	Preservation	Programs	Regionally Significant Capital	Total
Local/Regional	$ 770	$ 2,700	$ 1,380	$ 430	$ 5,280
WSDOT	$ 540	$ 1,870	$ 340	$ 1,210	$ 3,960
STA	$ 6,090	$ 0	$ 380	$ 410	$ 6,880
Total	**$ 7,400**	**$ 4,570**	**$ 2,100**	**$ 2,050**	**$ 16,120**

Totals may not sum due to rounding

expected to receive a total of $1.4 billion from these packages. This is an average of $47 million per year (YOE dollars), which was extended from 2032 through 2050. Projected WSDOT revenues are shown in Figure 4.09. See Appendix C for more detail on WSDOT's revenue sources.

STA Revenues

From 2015 to 2024, STA revenues increased from approximately $71 million to $155 million in YOE dollars. Over 90% of that revenue was operating revenue, which includes fares, sales tax revenue, CARES Act and FEMA funds, state special needs grants, as well as other miscellaneous investments and earnings. The additional 10% of STA revenue comes from state and federal capital revenue. STA provided SRTC with annual revenue projections through 2050, which are shown in Figure 4.10.

Future Expenditures

For the purpose of this plan, expenditures are divided into four categories of need: Regionally Significant projects, Transportation Programs, Maintenance and Operations, and Preservation. The past 15 years of expenditures have been analyzed and the average increase or decrease for multi-year bands during this period have been examined to determine appropriate rates of growth for the forecasted amounts. As described in Chapters 2 and 3, funding for operations, maintenance, and preservation activities has not kept up with demand and there is a reported backlog of deferred maintenance. To forecast expenditures, costs are presented in YOE dollars using WSDOT's Construction Cost Index (CCI). Many of the same sources listed in the Revenue Forecast section were also consulted for projecting transportation expenditures.

Horizon 2050 includes road, bridge, transit, bike, and pedestrian capital investments and programs, while recognizing the need for sustaining a level of operations, maintenance, and preservation of the regional transportation system. Figure 4.11 summarizes the forecasted expenditures by category type. Maintenance and operations activities are funded at $7.4 billion for the planning period, while road preservation is funded at approximately $4.6 billion through 2050. Horizon 2050 establishes the regional system—essentially the designated NHS in Spokane County—as a priority for funding. Therefore, the funding facilitated by SRTC is targeted for the regional system, which includes principal arterials, highways, and I-90. This is far short of the estimated $9.9 billion need for maintenance and operations and $12.4 billion need for preservation to keep the system in a state of good repair through 2050. To reiterate, the projected revenues do not fund maintenance and preservation at a state of good repair, with an estimated $7.8 billion shortfall in preservation and $2.5 billion shortfall in maintenance and operations.

Funding for public transportation operations and maintenance is projected to be approximately $6.1 billion with capital investments and programs totaling close to $800 million over the

Figure 4.12 **Model Scenario Volume and Trips Comparison**

		Increase Over 2022 Base		Build vs. Baseline	
	2022 Base	2050 Baseline	2050 Build	% Change	
Daily VMT	10,287,110	+39.8%	+41.2%	▲	+1.0%
Daily VHT	260,477	+50.3%	+46.8%	▼	-2.3%
Person Trips	2,208,782	+27.1%	+27.1%	◀▶	0.0%
Vehicle Trips	1,750,921	+36.4%	+36.5%	▲	+0.1%
Transit Trips	21,979	+17.0%	+58.1%	▲	+35.0%
Walk/Bike Trips	160,465	+26.4%	+20.4%	▼	-4.8%

planning period. In the case of STA, projected revenue is balanced with projected operations and capital expenditure needs.

The capital projects and program areas described next are financially constrained, meaning the estimated costs shown match with reasonably expected revenues through 2050.

Regionally Significant Projects

Horizon 2050 must include transportation projects of regional significance (see Chapter 2 for a detailed definition). A 2050 Build model scenario was used to compare forecasted regional transportation conditions to the 2022 Base and the 2050 Baseline models. Regionally Significant projects were included in the 2050 Build model to evaluate system performance. The projects included in the 2050 Build model result in a slight increase in VMT (driving distance), a slight decrease in VHT (time spent driving), and more transit trips as compared to the 2050 Baseline model. The travel demand model analysis results for the projects in the Build model are summarized in Figure 4.12 and all model outputs are detailed in Appendix B.

Figure 4.15 and Figure 4.16 show the PM peak delay and travel time on CMP Corridors for the 2050 Build scenario. The graphics indicate that PM peak travel times on some congested corridors are improved by the Regionally Significant projects found in this plan. It is important to note that the travel demand model results indicate the impact of predicted growth in the region and the addition of larger regionally significant projects. These results do not include the impact of numerous other smaller projects and transportation programs included in Figure 4.17 that cannot be properly analyzed in a regional travel demand model.

Figure 4.13 illustrates the Horizon 2050 financially constrained list of Regionally Significant capital projects prioritized for the short-term (2026 to 2032) and long-term (2033 to 2050). A map is provided in Figure 4.14. The project numbers in the tables and the map are for reference only and do not indicate priority.

Projects that are consistent with Horizon 2050 and are defined as Regionally Significant are listed in the project tables by years when construction is expected to begin. Projects that do not address the Horizon 2050 strategies or align with planning processes are not necessarily precluded for funding. However, those projects will not be as competitive in SRTC's future calls for projects or other state and federal funding programs.

It is important to note that all projects in the regional TIP must be consistent with Horizon 2050, and Regionally Significant projects must be listed in the MTP for the project to be included in the TIP under federal and state funding requirements.

Figure 4.13 **Regionally Significant Projects**

All amounts are shown in millions of dollars, adjusted to their expected year of expenditure (YOE dollars)

Short-Term Regionally Significant Projects: 2026–2032

ID	Project Name	Agency	Description	Year	Cost
1	**Harvard Rd Reconstruction Phase 2**	Spokane County	Reconstruct to add shoulders, pathway to east side, new signal at Wellesley, and roundabout at Euclid.	2026	**$ 7.5**
2	**I-90/Valley High Performance Transit**	STA	Revise to a HPT corridor, from West Plains/SIA to Spokane Valley/Liberty Lake, adding two new park & rides and modifying Mirabeau Point Park & Ride.	2026	**$ 39.3**
3	**US 395/North Spokane Corridor: Spokane River to I-90**	WSDOT	Construct final phase of new freeway and interchanges at Trent Ave and I-90.	2026	**$ 632.5**
4	**Sullivan Rd/BNSF Grade Separation**	Spokane Valley	Reconstruct and widen the Sullivan Rd bridge over the BNSF railroad at Trent Ave.	2027	**$ 53.4**
5	**Argonne Rd/I-90 Interchange Bridge Widening**	Spokane Valley	Bridge replacement project that adds a third southbound lane, wider shoulder, and new sidewalk.	2028	**$ 28.2**
6	**Division Street Bus Rapid Transit**	STA	Implement BRT line improvements on North Division.	2028	**$ 166.0**
7	**Barker Rd Reconstruction: Appleway to I-90**	Spokane Valley	Widen Barker Rd from an existing 3-lane rural section to a 5-lane urban section.	2032	**$ 12.5**
	Short-Term Subtotal				**$ 939.4**

Long-Term Regionally Significant Projects: 2033–2050

ID	Project Name	Agency	Description	Year	Cost
8	**18th/21st Ave Corridor**	Various	Construct new minor arterial south of US 2 from Airport Dr to west of Craig Rd.	2033	**$ 50.0**
9	**Latah Bridge Rehabilitation**	Spokane	Rehabilitation of the Latah Bridge on Sunset Blvd.	2033	**$ 65.1**
10	**Harvard Rd/BNSF Grade Separation**	Spokane County	Highway-Rail grade crossing improvement project at connection to Trent Ave.	2033	**$ 32.8**
11	**I-90/Barker Rd Interchange**	Spokane Valley	Widen Barker Rd and replace bridge over I-90, reconfigure intersections at freeway ramps.	2033	**$ 40.0**
12	**Craig Rd/I-90 Four Lakes Connection**	Spokane County	Improve access from I-90 to Craig Rd by modifying existing interchange, completing a link to Craig Rd, and reconstructing the corridor.	2034	**$ 66.9**
13	**US 395/North Spokane Corridor Transit**	STA	Implement new transit service on the US 395/North Spokane Corridor.	2035	**$ 7.0**
14	**I-90/US 195 Interchange Latah Creek Bridges**	WSDOT	Replace I-90 Latah Creek Bridges, widen I-90 and bridges for US 195 ramp auxiliary lanes, reconstruct BNSF bridge.	2035	**$ 509.0**
15	**Valley-Appleway Bus Rapid Transit**	STA	Implement BRT line improvements on Appleway.	2037	**$ 200.0**
16	**SR 290 Passing Lanes**	WSDOT	Construct passing lanes.	2040	**$ 6.9**
17	**SR 904 Passing Lanes**	WSDOT	Construct passing lanes, corridor access control, and channelized intersections.	2040	**$ 34.5**
18	**US 195/I-90 Study Projects**	WSDOT/ Spokane	Various corridor/network improvements recommended in the US 195/I-90 Study.	2040	**$ 105.0**
	Long-Term Subtotal				**$ 1,117.2**
	Overall Total: 2026–2050				**$ 2,056.6**

Totals may not sum due to rounding

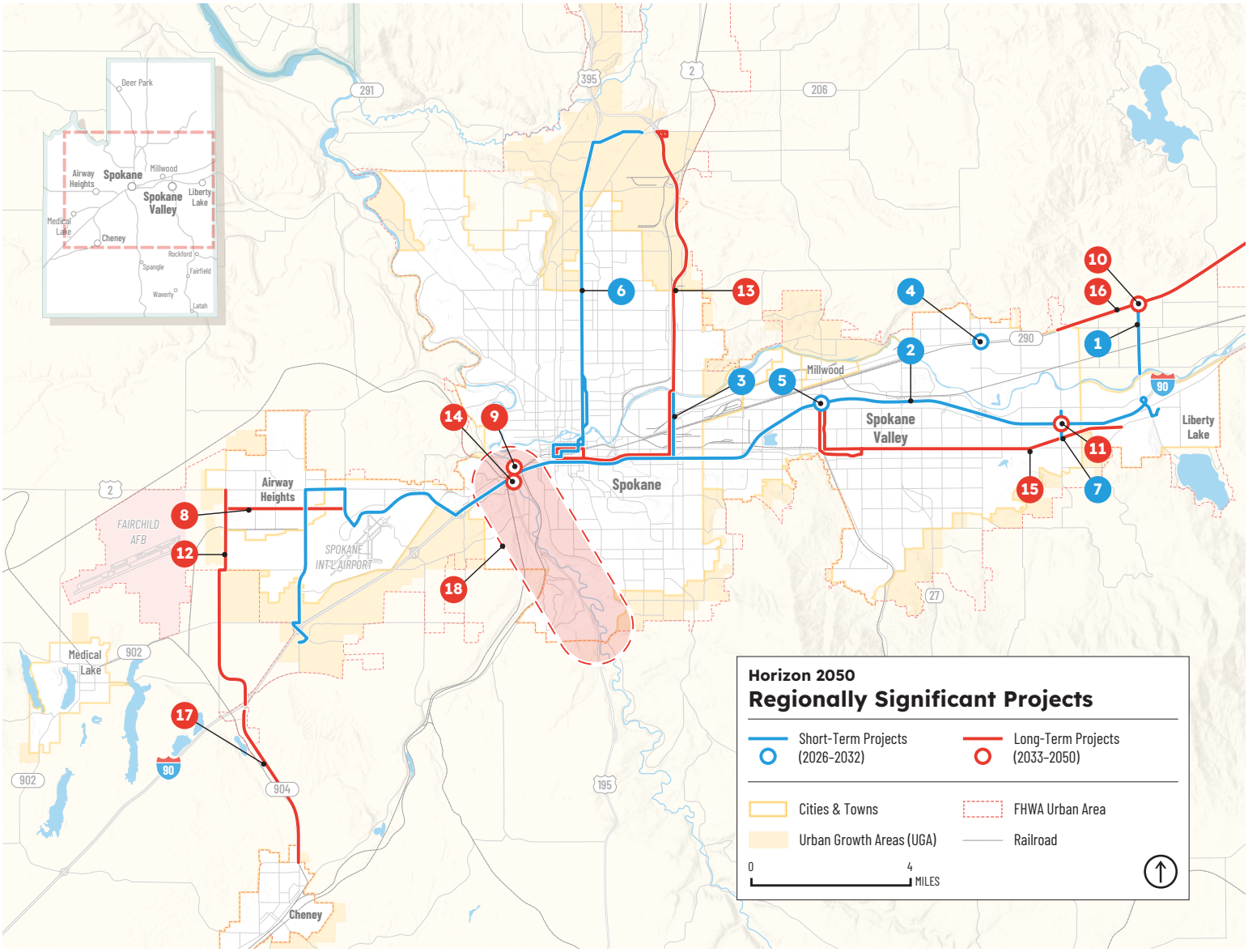


Figure 4.14 **Regionally Significant Projects Map**

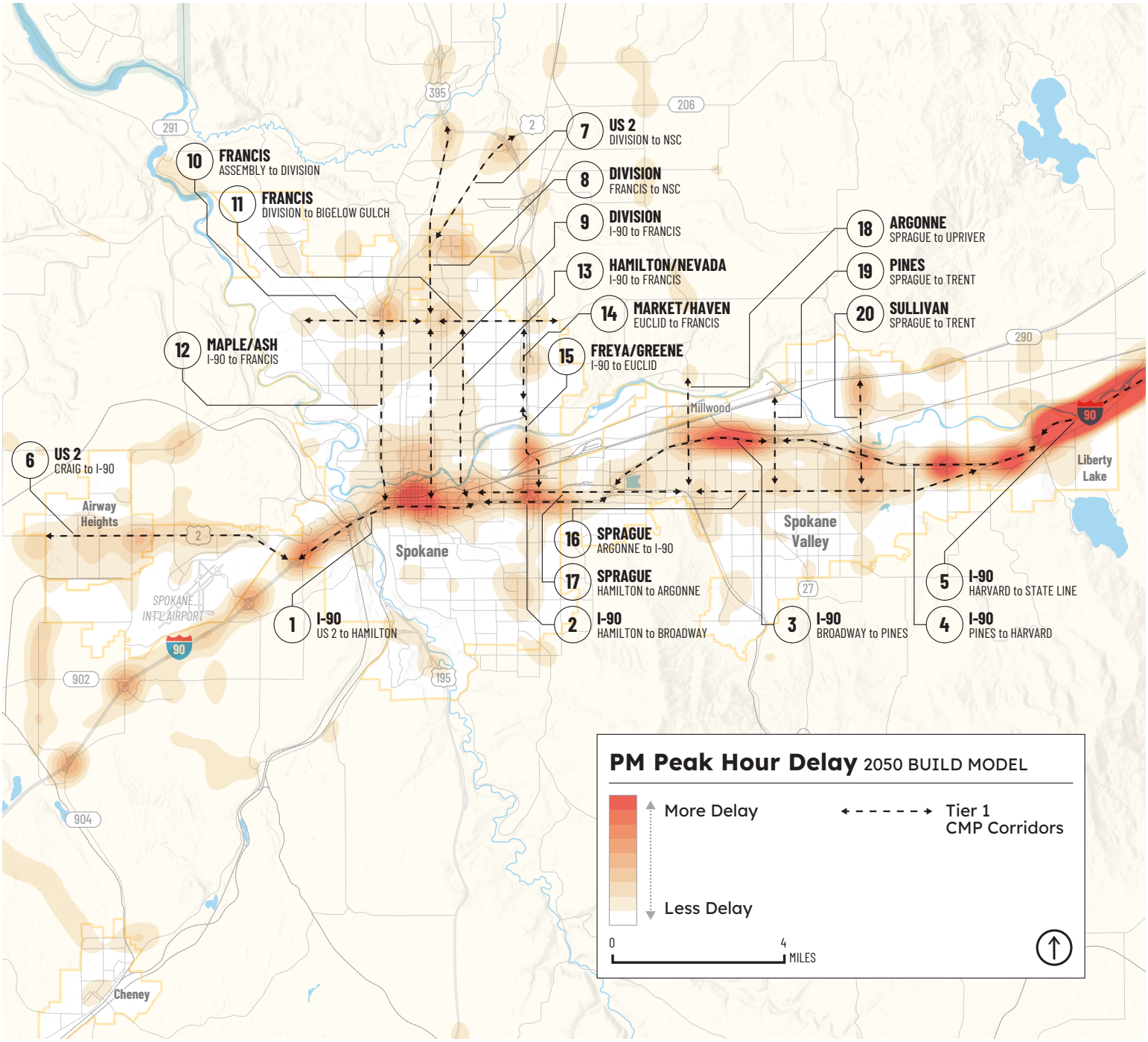


Figure 4.15 **PM Peak Hour Delay in 2050 Build Model**

PM Peak Hour Travel Time Index

ON TIER 1 CMP CORRIDORS | 2050 BUILD MODEL

The Travel Time Index (TTI) compares travel times during congested conditions to those under free-flow conditions. A value of 1.0 indicates free-flow travel, while higher values reflect increased congestion. For example, a TTI of 1.5 means a trip that takes 20 minutes in free-flow conditions takes 30 minutes during the PM peak.

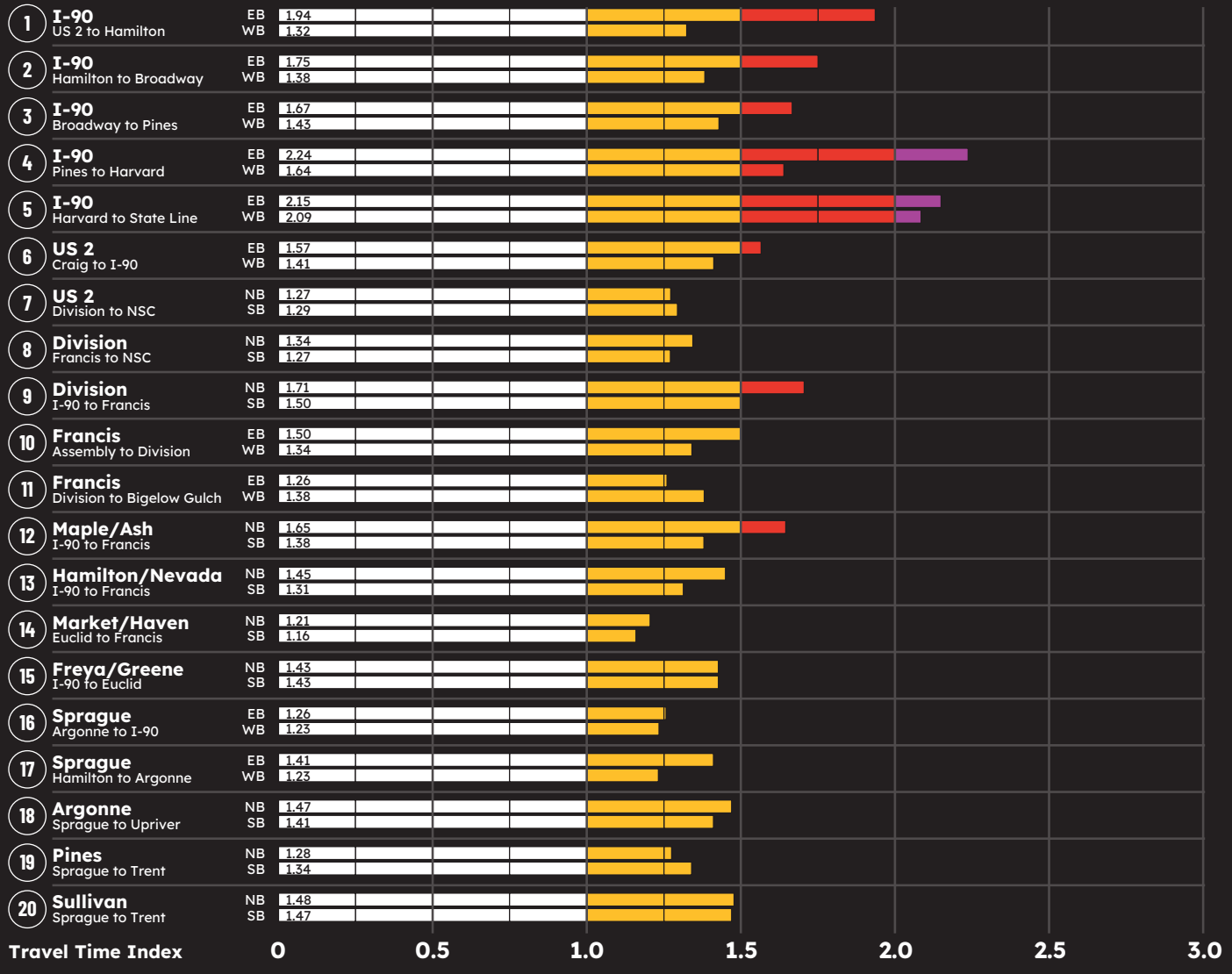


Figure 4.16 **Travel Time Index on Tier 1 CMP Corridor in 2050 Build Model**

Figure 4.17 **Horizon 2050 Transportation Programs 2026–2050**

All amounts are shown in millions of dollars, adjusted to their expected year of expenditure (YOE dollars)

Program	Funding Target	% of All Programs
Active Transportation	$ 286	14%
Bridges	$ 719	34%
Planning	$ 21	1%
Road Capital	$ 284	14%
Safety	$ 151	7%
Transportation Demand Management (TDM)	$ 11	1%
Transit	$ 380	18%
Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO)	$ 249	12%
Total	**$ 2,101**	**100%**

Totals may not sum due to rounding

Transportation Programs

Horizon 2050 identifies financially constrained transportation programs addressing additional needs, outside of maintenance and preservation, that are not included in the Regionally Significant project list but are also deemed essential to the region. Examples include bicycle and pedestrian facilities, regional transportation planning efforts, public transit, transportation system management projects, and transportation demand management programs. Like the Regionally Significant project list, these programs are aimed at implementing the strategies detailed in this plan.

Transportation program spending is represented in funding targets and summarized in Figure 4.17. The funding targets were developed based on expected investment needs and SRTC Board and public input on transportation priorities. The total targeted funding for all programs from 2026 to 2050 is approximately $2.1 billion. Funding at these levels is subject to availability through the various state and federal grant programs as well as local revenue mechanisms. SRTC will strive, in close coordination with its member agencies, to meet these targets through calls for projects and by working with our partners to establish new options for local revenues. Not all regional projects are listed in the individual program areas. However, each program described below includes an illustrative sample of priority projects.

Active Transportation Program

The active transportation program includes additional bike lanes, shared use paths, and signage, as well as projects that enhance regional trails. It also proposes to infill pedestrian sidewalk gaps in the region. Generally, capital improvements that are on the Bicycle Priority Network fall under this program. Examples of priority active transportation projects include, but are not limited to:

- Centennial Trail Argonne Gap—Multi-use path improvements in the vicinity of Upriver Drive and Argonne Road (Spokane County)
- Millwood Trail Extension (City of Spokane, City of Spokane Valley)
- Children of the Sun Trail completion (WSDOT)
- Fish Lake Trail Connection to Centennial Trail (City of Spokane)
- Sunset Trail Gaps to West Plains (City of Spokane, City of Airway Heights)
- Wandermere Path (Spokane County)

Bridge Program

The bridge program sets funding targets for non-regionally significant bridge improvements. As described in Chapter 2 of this plan, a significant number of bridges in the SRTC planning area are in fair to poor condition. As funding becomes available, these bridges will require rehabilitation and, in some cases, reconstruction. Examples of priority bridge projects include, but are not limited to:

- I-90/3rd Avenue Crossing Bridge Deck Rehab (WSDOT)
- I-90/Spokane Viaduct Bridge Rehab (WSDOT)

Planning Program

The planning program includes studies necessary to implement Horizon 2050's strategies such as Strategy 4: Identify and Support Cost-Effective Transportation Solutions. Planning studies combine technical processes with agency and public coordination to find the most viable and fiscally sound solutions to address regional needs. These include:

- I-90 Study (SRTC, WSDOT, and partners)
- Regional High-Capacity Transit Study (STA)
- Transportation Funding Study (SRTC)
- Developing a system for evaluating regional maintenance, operations, and preservation needs

Road Capital Program

The road capital program sets funding targets for regionally important roadway capital investments. There are several planned road improvements throughout the region that address critical transportation needs outlined in Horizon 2050 and are expected to be completed as part of this program. Examples of these priority investments include, but are not limited to:

- 6th/10th/12th Avenue Road Improvements (City of Airway Heights, City of Spokane)
- South Barker Road Corridor Improvements (City of Spokane Valley, Spokane County)
- Whistalks Way Reconstruction (City of Spokane)
- Sprague Avenue Reconstruction: Post to Division (City of Spokane)
- Spokane Falls Boulevard (City of Spokane)
- Glenrose Corridor Improvements (Spokane County)

Safety Program

The safety program includes projects to eliminate deficiencies and address high collision concerns as well as education programs and enforcement efforts for the secure and safe travel of all users. Examples of these priority investments include, but are not limited to:

- Airport Drive and Spotted Road Realignment and Interchange (Spokane International Airport)
- US 2 Multimodal Improvements (City of Airway Heights)
- Wall Street Improvements (Spokane County)
- Safety and Education Campaign for Spokane County (SRTC)
- Other safety-related infrastructure such as controlled crosswalks and traffic calming

TDM Program

TDM programs promote transportation options to driving alone during peak times, with the intent of optimizing system capacity at a lower cost. TDM projects have strong crossover with the active transportation and transit programs. Specific to this program area, a variety of strategies are employed, including:

- Continued operation of the CTR program Commute Smart Northwest (Spokane County)
- Promotion and outreach to encourage voluntary changes in commuter behavior
- Ride matching services and information to help riders organize carpools, vanpools, or find one-time rides

- Employer programs and incentives, such as flexible work schedules, work from home options, employee bicycle parking and showers, and subsidized transit passes

Transit Program

The transit program includes regular vehicle replacements, new park and rides, transit centers, maintenance facilities, passenger amenities, and service enhancements. Upgrades to the Transit Priority Network (outside of projects defined as Regionally Significant) fall under this program. It also targets funding for tribal, rural, and human services transportation. Examples of priority transit program projects include, but are not limited to:

- Airway Heights High-Performance Transit (STA)
- Wellesley High-Performance Transit (STA)
- Indian Trail High-Performance Transit (STA)
- US 195 Land Acquisition/Park and Ride (STA)
- 7-Mile Land Acquisition/Park and Ride (STA)
- Expansion of facility campus with clean energy elements (STA)

TSMO Program

Largely focused on investments in technology, communications infrastructure, and operational improvements, the TSMO program uses proven strategies to enhance mobility, safety, accessibility, and travel options while maximizing the capacity of the existing transportation network. Also bundled in SRTC's TSMO program are investments in transportation electrification and clean fuel infrastructure. Regional priority projects identified in the ITS Architecture Plan are found in this program, which include new and upgraded system infrastructure, better communications technology, and improved data collection and management capabilities. TSMO projects include, but are not limited to:

- I-90 TSMO Projects (WSDOT)
- Argonne Road/Upriver Drive intersection improvements (Spokane County)
- Strategies such as advanced traffic signal operations, ramp metering, variable message signs, and incident response coordination
- Investments identified in the ITS Architecture Plan

Unfunded Projects and Programs

One challenge with creating a financially constrained MTP is that only projects backed by reasonably anticipated revenues within the planning period are included. As a result, unfunded investments that could enhance the transportation system are not included in the Horizon 2050 project list. However, for illustrative purposes, the plan may include additional projects that would be added to the adopted plan provided additional resources become available.[7]

Figure 4.18 provides a brief list of additional projects that address identified needs yet are not currently considered funded in Horizon 2050's financially constrained project list. While not exhaustive, the list represents known unfunded

Figure 4.18 **List of Unfunded Projects**

Project Name*	Agency	Project Type
Fish Lake Trail: Southern Gap at Fish Lake	Spokane County	Active Transportation
Park Rd/BNSF Grade Separation	Spokane Valley	Road Capital

* In addition to the projects listed above, unfunded needs include estimated shortfalls of $7.8 billion for preservation and $2.5 billion for maintenance and operations required to maintain the region's transportation system in a state of good repair through 2050.

7 23 CFR § 450.324(f)(11).

Figure 4.19 **Regionally Significant Projects Completed Since Horizon 2045**

Project Name	Agency	Description	Year Complete
Bigelow Gulch/Forker Rd Urban Connector	Spokane County	Construct a 4-lane road connecting Spokane Valley and North Spokane.	2024
US 395/North Spokane Corridor: Francis Ave to Spokane River	WSDOT	Construct new lanes and Wellesley interchange.	2024
City Line	STA	BRT line from Browne's Addition to Spokane Community College, connecting through downtown Spokane and the University District.	2023
Pines Rd (SR 27)/BNSF Grade Separation	Spokane Valley	Realign Pines Rd to go under BNSF mainline railroad tracks and reconstruct the Pines Rd/Trent Ave intersection.	Construction Initiated

transportation projects for consideration should additional funding become available or priorities change.

Completed Projects

A list of Regionally Significant projects from the previous 2022 to 2045 MTP (Horizon 2045) that have been completed, or are under construction, is provided in Figure 4.19.

Financial Constraint

The financial analysis developed for Horizon 2050 indicates that the current and future funding resources are sufficient to support the estimated expenditures in the plan. Therefore, Horizon 2050 demonstrates financial constraint. For the planning period of 2026 to 2050, the regional revenue estimate is $16.1 billion. Horizon 2050 expenditures for transportation maintenance and operations, preservation, and capital investments and programs in Spokane County are constrained to this revenue forecast. Both revenues and expenditures represent YOE dollars.

While forecasted revenues are generally balanced with planned expenditures, it is anticipated that local jurisdictions will need to identify additional local options for street and road improvements. Projected revenues are not sufficient to fund road and bridge maintenance and preservation at a state of good repair. One option to increase revenue above the forecasted level could be a regional transportation benefit district (TBD). As previously mentioned in this plan, the City of Spokane formed a TBD in 2010. Discussions about the formation of a regional TBD have been raised, but no steps have been taken. SRTC will lead a Transportation Funding Study in 2026 to evaluate options that help address funding shortfalls.

Other options have been explored or implemented in the past to provide funding for improvements. In November 2014, voters in the City of Spokane passed a street levy to go toward paying off $84 million of old debt left on the 2004 street bond while levying more money for arterial street work through 2034. The levy is paid for by a hold on a property tax estimated at 57 cents per $1,000 assessed property value. Starting in 2015, the levy generates $4 to $8 million per year until the levy is retired in 2034.

Based on available revenue, total forecasted expenditures for transportation maintenance and operations are estimated at $7.4 billion and preservation at roughly $4.6 billion. This leaves approximately $2 billion in available regionally significant capital construction funding and $2.1 billion targeted for transportation programs during the planning period.

Based on this financial analysis, Horizon 2050 is financially constrained to ensure the projects and programs identified may be implemented

Figure 4.20 **Projected Short-Term and Long-Term Revenues and Expenditures**

All amounts are shown in millions of dollars, adjusted to their expected year of expenditure (YOE dollars)

	Short-Term 2026–2032	Long-Term 2033–2050	Total 2026–2050
Transportation Revenues	$ 3,948	$ 12,172	$ 16,120
Transportation Expenditures	$ 3,948	$ 12,172	$ 16,120
Balance	**$ 0**	**$ 0**	**$ 0**

Totals may not sum due to rounding

during the planning horizon. The projected revenues and expenditures are listed in Figure 4.20. To be proactive and limit the decline in transportation system performance, it is important that jurisdictions collectively work to maintain the system and construct projects that meet the regional transportation needs identified in this plan. The key to the success of Horizon 2050 is to strategically invest in projects and programs that meet the Guiding Principles and Policies and help achieve the strategies listed in the following section.

Implementation Strategies

Per federal regulations the MTP must include strategies and actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system. The system must facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in consideration of current and future transportation demand.[8] The strategies were initially developed in previous MTPs and have been affirmed through analysis and coordination associated with the development of Horizon 2050

Strategy 1: Prioritize Preservation, Maintenance, and Operations

To maintain a high-functioning road and bridge network in a state of good repair, the highest priority is addressing the backlog of deferred maintenance and preservation activities. Preserving pavement at adequate intervals can maintain pavement condition at minimal life-cycle cost versus delaying preservation until major repairs or reconstruction is needed. Many bridges are in fair condition and action is needed to ensure conditions do not deteriorate further. Maintenance and preservation of roads and bridges is a key recommendation in the Resiliency Plan to protect the integrity of the existing transportation network. This strategy is also identified in the Smart Mobility Plan as a foundational element for new and emerging vehicle technologies—clear striping and consistent surface condition optimizes optical driver-assist systems and, in the long run, autonomous technologies. Moreover, maintaining the existing system is the highest rated priority indicated through SRTC public outreach activities. SRTC will implement Strategy 1 by:

- Monitoring and progressing toward pavement condition performance management targets
- Monitoring and progressing toward bridge condition performance management targets
- Setting aside funds and conducting ongoing preservation-focused calls for projects

8 23 CFR § 450.324(b).

- Prioritizing maintenance and operations activities that result in a year-round transportation system for all users (e.g., bike lane sweeping)
- Coordinating with WSDOT in developing the Transportation Asset Management Plan
- Maintaining a resilient street network: allocate $4.6 billion for preservation, $1.3 billion for maintenance and operations of the regional street network, and over $700 million investment target for the Bridge program
- Programming more than $6 billion for the operations and maintenance of the regional public transportation system
- Conducting a transportation funding study to identify additional revenues to close the system needs backlog

Strategy 2: Improve Safety and Security

The transportation investments in Horizon 2050 will support and enhance the safety and security of the regional network and traveling public. Safety is a common concern expressed in SRTC's public outreach, and safety improvements should be targeted in transportation corridors where identified deficiencies exist, including higher rates of vehicular collisions as well as bicycle and pedestrian involved collisions. Security is a regional priority, especially in relation to the vital transportation facilities involved in the high-volume movement of people and freight: the NHS, bridges, transit facilities, Spokane International Airport, Fairchild Air Force Base, and intermodal hubs. SRTC will implement Strategy 2 by:

- Prioritizing projects and programs that address safety deficiencies identified in the RSAP
- Enhancing the security of the regional transportation network through scoring criteria in funding applications
- Supporting education and enforcement programs to address speeding, impairment, and driver behavior
- Implementing strategies from the Resiliency Plan that harden infrastructure to key destinations and enhance system redundancy
- Monitoring data and reporting progress toward safety performance management targets
- Allocating $150 million in the Safety and Security program

Strategy 3: Support TSMO

Horizon 2050 emphasizes least-cost planning strategies, and TSMO places a priority on achieving the greatest efficiencies within the transportation system. Through technology, data analytics, traveler information, and lower-level capital improvement projects, TSMO optimizes the capacity of existing infrastructure and helps accommodate growing demand. This includes investments in ITS, signal coordination, intersection upgrades, communication networks, and incident response. The Smart Mobility Plan highlights the importance of building ITS capacity through actions prescribed in the ITS Architecture Plan. TSMO projects can provide support for new vehicle technologies and needed infrastructure for cleaner alternative fuels. As described in this document, TDM is another component of TSMO and is a program of projects, programs, and services aimed at reducing demand on the street network. SRTC will implement Strategy 3 by:

- Encouraging and funding programs that develop and deploy TDM approaches within Spokane County
- Implementing the ITS Architecture Plan and updating the plan during SRTC's 2025–2027 UPWP
- Monitoring progress in system performance related to congestion and travel time reliability

- Coordinating with member agencies and utility providers to provide electric charging infrastructure that meets demand
- Allocating $11 million to the TDM program
- Allocating nearly $250 million to the TSMO program

Strategy 4: Identify and Support Cost-Effective Transportation Solutions

This plan supports stewardship of public resources through prioritization, obligation, and implementation of funds. Horizon 2050 also encourages the use of innovative techniques for cost-efficient engineering and construction of transportation projects using high-quality, long-lasting materials to make sure the most value is gained from finite transportation revenues. SRTC's CMP includes lower-cost solutions to manage peak hour congestion along our busiest corridors. SRTC will implement Strategy 4 by:

- Facilitating regional study and planning processes and allocating $21 million to the Planning program
- Investing in operational efficiencies on our roadways prior to the need for more costly lane expansion
- Including scoring criteria for innovative approaches to cost-effective design and construction in calls for projects
- Implementing strategies identified in the CMP
- Scoping, developing, and funding programs and projects that are scalable and maximize benefits at the regional level
- Providing technical assistance in the regional TIP so projects are delivered on time and in compliance with federal obligation targets
- Coordinating land use planning processes with efficient development of transportation infrastructure

Strategy 5: Invest in Public Transportation

Public transportation plays an important role in the economic vitality and quality of life of our region. It helps preserve capacity on the regional road network and has delivered a strong record of safety. Efforts to expand ridership are reflected in Transit-Oriented Development planning along High-Performance Transit corridors. An aging population is also indicative of the need for a seamless public transportation system. It serves a needed role in rural areas as well, including surrounding small towns and tribal reservations and trust lands. SRTC will implement Strategy 5 by:

- Supporting implementation of the Transit Priority Network and complementary transit infrastructure
- Coordinating with STA on cost-effective first- and last-mile connections such as bicycle facilities or other mobility services
- Maintaining the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) to ensure transit gaps are highlighted
- Pursuing additional funding for tribal, small town, and rural connector service needs as identified through the CPT-HSTP
- Allocating more than $6 billion for the operations and maintenance of the regional public transportation system
- Funding over $400 million in regionally significant capital investments for transit
- Targeting $380 million for additional public transportation services, transit vehicles, transit centers, and other capital investments
- Participating in TOD planning activities in support of efficient coordination of land use and transportation

Strategy 6: Provide Multimodal Options

Everyone, regardless of age or ability, ought to have safe, comfortable, and convenient access to activity centers and community destinations—whether walking, bicycling, driving, or taking public transportation. Horizon 2050 promotes policies and practices that ensure streets are safe for all people while providing healthy options that benefit our air and water quality. SRTC will implement Strategy 6 by:

- Prioritizing roadway projects that include multimodal elements
- Maintaining and filling gaps in the regional multi-use trail network
- Requiring completion of complete streets checklists in accordance with the SRTC Safe and Complete Streets Policy
- Prioritizing investments in regional priority networks, particularly the Transit and Bicycle Priority Networks
- Monitoring bicycle and pedestrian usage data and trends
- Pursuing collaboration opportunities with public health partners for projects with complementary benefits such as Safe Routes to School
- Targeting funding at over $280 million in the Active Transportation program

Strategy 7: Promote Regional Leadership

Horizon 2050 is the basis for SRTC to fulfill its regional coordination and leadership role. Regional coordination is useful for early identification of transportation issues that require cross-jurisdictional cooperation and solutions. SRTC will provide a forum for regional discussions and take the lead in bringing educational opportunities and best practices information to its stakeholders. SRTC will implement Strategy 7 by:

- Conducting an annual Transportation Summit, bringing in transportation experts to speak on important trends
- Completing the Unified List of Regional Transportation Priorities on an annual basis
- Bringing critical transportation planning processes through the SRTC Board and committees for discussion, guidance, and action
- Coordinating policy priorities with our state and federal delegations
- Leading land use and/or transportation studies in partnership with state and local stakeholders, focusing on economic, transportation, technology, and urban planning issues and solutions

Plan Implementation

The Horizon 2050 implementation strategies require a cooperative effort between SRTC and the jurisdictions in Spokane County. SRTC is required under federal and state regulations to ensure consistency of local and regional plans with Horizon 2050. As stated in Chapter 1, one of the primary roles and responsibilities of an RTPO is to certify the consistency of county-wide planning policies and the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans with the RTP.[9] Therefore, close coordination between SRTC and local jurisdictions, WSDOT, and STA is required to ensure that projects and plans are consistent with Horizon 2050's Guiding Principles and Policies as well as its strategies. Several programming tools are available for implementing Horizon 2050.

UPWP

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) details and guides the metropolitan area transportation planning activities. The purpose of the UPWP is to define and coordinate all federally funded transportation planning activities that will be conducted in the MPA during a one- or two-year period. The SRTC UPWP defines activities that will be undertaken in the Spokane MPA and the financial resources associated with them. Examples include core MPO and RTPO functions such as collecting, analyzing, maintaining, and reporting transportation-related data to provide accessible and pertinent information for the regional decision-making process.

SRTC provides planning consultation and coordination for specific transportation planning or related projects as appropriate. SRTC support may include providing data, conducting inventories, or participation on study teams. In addition, SRTC may participate as the lead agency to develop studies and plans (e.g., subarea transportation studies, modal studies, corridor studies). Other UPWP activities include public outreach and education, stakeholder coordination, and various administrative tasks.

TIP

The TIP is a four-year program of planned regional transportation projects. The purpose of the TIP is to demonstrate that available resources are being used to implement the short-range projects in the program, consistent with the region's long-range transportation plan, Horizon 2050. The TIP reflects some of the needs of the MPA and complies with pertinent federal, state, and regional requirements. These efforts include implementing a criteria-based project selection process, improving project tracking mechanisms, compliance with SRTC Safe and Complete Streets Policy, and continued coordination between local jurisdictions, WSDOT, STA, FHWA, and FTA.

SRTC is responsible, in coordination with WSDOT, for selecting projects for the federal STBG, STBG Set-Aside (formerly TAP), and CMAQ programs. Projects are selected by the SRTC Board using a competitive process involving evaluation criteria designed to ensure projects are prioritized consistent with the Guiding Principles and Horizon 2050. In addition, STA coordinates the selection of projects for FTA funds with SRTC. These project selections are incorporated into the TIP along with other federally funded or regionally significant projects.

Comprehensive Plan Review Process

As the RTPO for Spokane County, SRTC is required to ensure that local and regional transportation plans coordinate with and are consistent with each other. The SRTC Board approved the SRTC Plan Review and Certification Process Instruction Manual on September 10, 2015 to

9 CFR § 450.316 (4), WAC 468-86-150, RCW 47.80.026 and RCW 47.80.030 (3).

accomplish this task.[10] An update to the manual is currently underway.

Certification requires that Countywide Planning Policies (CWPP) and the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans are consistent with the RTP (Horizon 2050), GMA planning requirements, and RCW guidelines and principles related to regional transportation planning.[11] In this context, consistent means that no feature of a plan or regulation is incompatible with any other feature of a plan or regulation. As part of its review and certification process, SRTC evaluates regional LOS for the following modes: vehicular, transit, and non-motorized (combined bike/walk). The regional LOS standards are detailed in the Comprehensive Plan Certification Manual available in the Growth Management section of the SRTC website.

Periodically, jurisdictions must review their comprehensive plan and regulations to comply with any changes in the GMA and to accommodate updated growth targets. GMA requires comprehensive plan updates every eight years. Many local jurisdictions are in the process of comprehensive plan updates with expected approvals occurring in 2026.

Performance Reporting

SRTC will report annually on the performance of this plan. An annual report will satisfy the requirement for a System Performance Report, which evaluates the condition and performance of the regional transportation system in relation to performance targets. This is also a tool to determine progress in implementing the Horizon 2050 strategies.

Air Quality

Historically, a transportation conformity determination was required for this region because it had failed to attain two National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS): the 1971 carbon monoxide (CO) and 1987 particulate matter of 10 microns or less (PM10). In 2005, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) re-designated the region from nonattainment to attainment for CO and PM10. Upon redesignation to attainment, EPA approved Limited Maintenance Plans (LMPs) for CO and PM10 for the area. These plans included air quality and transportation control measures.

During the first 20 years after the redesignation, the maintenance areas and plans were subject to additional assessments to verify that the air quality control measures were effective. This included the requirement to demonstrate transportation conformity with the maintenance plans and SIP. All projects in previous MTPs, RTPs, and TIPs demonstrated that CO and PM10 levels did not exceed thresholds established for conformity and for attaining and maintaining health-based air quality standards.

Upon successful completion of the 20-year maintenance planning period, the ongoing transportation conformity determinations are no longer required for 1971 CO NAAQS and for 1987 PM10 NAAQS (as of August 30, 2025). The air quality control measures and contingency measures that were approved in the LMPs remain effective. The region will continue to qualify for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program funds to ensure ongoing mitigation of transportation impacts on air quality. SRTC will continue its collaborative work with local and state air quality agencies within its transportation planning processes.

10 SRTC. "Plan Review and Certification Process Instruction Manual." Spokane Regional Transportation Council, September 10, 2015. https://www.srtc.org/comprehensive-plan-review-process/.

11 RCW 36.70A

Conclusion

Horizon 2050 identifies critical issues facing the region and strategies to address them. Ideally, progress will be made before its time for the next iteration of the MTP. In this time, some concerns could become less pressing, while new ones may emerge. The long-range plan is the blueprint for how we'll get there, and to make sure it continues to accurately capture regional priorities and changing trends, this document will be revisited and updated in a few years. Additional studies and project work will be completed during this time, which will provide new layers of regional needs and recommended actions. Planning projects that will be undertaken to address issues identified in this plan include a transportation funding study, a truck parking study, an I-90 corridor study, and an update to the ITS Architecture Plan. SRTC, for its part, will provide leadership and prepare the region for future success through a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing planning process.

GLOSSARY

Acronyms

Below are the most commonly used acronyms in Horizon 2050. For a more complete list including definitions, please see the following glossary.

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BNSF	Burlington Northern/Santa Fe
CBD	Central Business District
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality
CMP	Congestion Management Process
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CTR	Commute Trip Reduction
DOT	Department of Transportation
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FFC	Federal Functional Classification
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIS	Geographic Information System
GMA	Growth Management Act
HOV	High Occupancy Vehicle
ITS	Intelligent Transportation Systems

LOS	Level of Service
LRTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
MPA	Metropolitan Planning Area
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHS	National Highway System
PM10	Particulate Matter of 10 Microns or Less
RTPO	Regional Transportation Planning Organization
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SOV	Single Occupancy Vehicle
SRTC	Spokane Regional Transportation Council
SRTMC	Spokane Regional Transportation Management Center
STA	Spokane Transit Authority
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
STBG	Surface Transportation Block Grant
TAZ	Transportation Analysis Zone
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TMA	Transportation Management Area
TPM	Transportation Performance Management
TSMO	Transportation Systems Management and Operations
UP	Union Pacific
VHT	Vehicle Hours of Travel
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation

Terms & Definitions

A

Access Control
The regulation of access to specific highways by acquiring access rights from adjacent property owners and selectively limiting entry points to preserve the highway's safety and efficiency.

Access Management
The coordinated control of access along arterial roadways to improve travel speeds, roadway capacity, and vehicular mobility. Common strategies include installing raised medians, limiting curb cuts, removing on-street parking, spacing intersections appropriately, and constructing frontage roads.

Activity Center
An area with a concentration of population, employment, services, and amenities that generates significant travel demand and economic activity. Horizon 2050 identifies several types of activity centers in the Spokane region, including the metropolitan center; regional industrial, retail, and employment centers; multisector centers; neighborhood centers; rural centers; and special use areas.

American Association of State & Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO)
A nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
Federal legislation enacted in 1990 prohibiting discrimination based on disability. The ADA requires public and private transportation facilities to provide accessible services and infrastructure for people with disabilities.

Arterial
A high-capacity roadway that channels traffic from collector streets to highways or interstates.

At-Grade Intersection
An intersection where all roads meet at the same level, typically controlled by traffic signs or signals.

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)
The total volume of vehicle traffic on a roadway for one year divided by 365 days.

Average Daily Traffic (ADT)
The average number of vehicles traveling in both directions on a roadway segment over a 24-hour period.

B

Benefit/Cost (B/C) Ratio
A metric used to prioritize transportation projects by comparing total measurable benefits to total measurable costs over a defined period, typically 20 years.

Bike Lane
A designated portion of a roadway reserved for bicycle use, marked by striping, signage, and pavement markings.

Bike Path
A bikeway physically separated from motorized traffic by open space or a barrier, either within a street right-of-way or an independent corridor.

Bikeway
Any road, path, or route specifically designated for bicycle travel, whether exclusively for bicycles or shared with other vehicles

Bridging the Valley (BTV)
A series of proposed projects designed to separate vehicle and train traffic along a 42-mile corridor between Spokane, WA, and Athol, ID.

Bus Lane
A traffic lane reserved for buses, identified by special markings or regulations.

Busway
A roadway or ramp designated exclusively for buses, located in its own right-of-way or within a street or freeway corridor.

C

Capacity
The maximum number of vehicles or persons that can reasonably be expected to pass a point or roadway segment during a specified time period under prevailing conditions, typically expressed in vehicles or persons per hour.

Capital
The physical assets of a transportation system, including property, facilities, vehicles, and equipment.

Capital Facilities Plan (CFP)
A six- to twenty-year plan identifying capital projects, their estimated costs, and proposed financing methods. Capital facilities include infrastructure and assets necessary to support growth, such as roads, bridges, utilities, and public buildings.

Carbon Monoxide (CO)
A colorless, odorless, and toxic gas produced by incomplete combustion of carbon-based fuels.

Census Block
The smallest geographic unit used by the US Census Bureau to tabulate 100-percent data. In urban areas, census blocks often correspond to city blocks, while in rural areas they may cover many square miles.

Census Tract
A small, relatively permanent statistical subdivision of a county designed to be homogeneous with respect to population characteristics, economic status, and living conditions.

Central Business District (CBD)
A commercial and employment core of a city, commonly referred to as downtown.

Channelization
The design and marking of roadway elements to separate or regulate conflicting traffic movements into defined lanes, improving safety and efficiency for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

Clean Air Act (CAA)
Comprehensive federal legislation regulating air emissions from stationary, mobile, and area sources.

Collector Street
A roadway providing access between local streets and arterial roads, facilitating circulation within residential, commercial, and industrial areas.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
A federal program funding local projects that address affordable housing, infrastructure, economic development, and public service needs for low-income communities.

Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Law
Washington State legislation enacted in 1991 requiring employers with 100 or more employees to reduce single-occupancy vehicle commutes by promoting alternatives such as transit, carpooling, and telecommuting.

Comprehensive Plan
A coordinated land use policy document adopted under the Growth Management Act (GMA). Comprehensive plans guide development and must include elements such as land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, and transportation.

Concurrency
A GMA requirement that public infrastructure needed to support development must be available or financially committed within six years of development approval.

Congestion Management Process (CMP)
A systematic approach to monitoring and managing traffic congestion, tracking performance, identifying issues, and evaluating strategies to improve mobility to meet state and local needs.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program
A federal program administered by FHWA that funds transportation projects designed to reduce vehicle emissions and improve air quality.

Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA)
An area composed of two or more adjacent metropolitan regions with strong economic and social linkages and a combined population of at least one million.

County Road Administration Board (CRAB)
A Board composed of six county commissioners and three county engineers from counties throughout the state. CRAB meets quarterly to facilitate research, produce reports, administer funding, and provide assistance to the 39 county road departments in Washington state.

Critical Areas
Under the GMA, counties and cities must classify and protect critical areas, including wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat, frequently flooded areas, geologically hazardous areas, and rare or endangered plant habitats

D

Design Analysis
A process using capacity analysis procedures to determine the required size of a roadway segment—such as the number of lanes—needed to achieve a specified level of service

Determination of Non-Significance (DNS)
A written decision by the Environmental Review Committee indicating that a project is expected to have minimal environmental impacts and specifying any measures necessary to mitigate those impacts.

E

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
A detailed report describing the potential environmental and social impacts of various alternatives for a proposed transportation project.

Environmental Justice (EJ)
The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people—regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or sex—in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
A federal agency responsible for protecting human health and the environment through the enforcement of environmental laws and regulations.

Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC)
A representative within an organization who promotes and coordinates Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) strategies and programs.

Expressway
A divided arterial highway designed for through traffic, typically with full or partial control of access and grade separations at major intersections.

F

FAST Act (Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act)
A federal law providing long-term funding and policy guidance for surface transportation planning and investment, authorizing $305 billion over fiscal years 2016–2020.

Federal Fiscal Year (FFY)
The annual accounting period used by the federal government, running from October 1 through September 30 of the following year.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
An arm of USDOT that is responsible for administering all federal-aid highway funds and programs.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
Arm of the US Department of Transportation that regulates and helps fund public transportation services within local communities and in rural areas.

FHWA-Adjusted Urban Area Boundary (AUAB)
An area defined for transportation planning purposes in which state and local officials, in coordination with FHWA and with approval from the US Secretary of Transportation, may adjust the Census-designated urban boundary outward to better reflect the actual extent of urban development. The adjusted boundary must, at a minimum, include the entire Census urban area

and is used to support roadway functional classification, federal funding eligibility, and other transportation planning activities.

Freeway
A divided arterial highway designed for the safe and uninterrupted movement of high volumes of traffic, featuring full access control and grade separations at all intersections.

G

Geographic Information System (GIS)
A computer-based system for storing, analyzing, and displaying geographic data through multiple spatial data layers.

Grade Separation
The vertical separation of intersecting roadways or rail lines—such as by an overpass or underpass—to eliminate conflicts between traffic movements and improve safety.

Growth Management Act (GMA)
A Washington state law (RCW 36.70A) enacted in 1990 to establish a framework for comprehensive land use planning. The GMA involves citizens, communities, counties, cities, and the private sector in coordinating growth to prevent unplanned or uncontrolled development, which the Legislature recognized as a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and residents' health, safety, and quality of life. The law requires counties meeting certain size and growth criteria, along with the cities within them, to adopt comprehensive plans and development regulations guided by 14 statewide planning goals, addressing areas such as transportation, housing, economic development, natural resource industries, property rights, and environmental protection.

H

High Capacity Transit (HCT)
A public transportation system—such as light rail or commuter rail—designed to accommodate large numbers of passengers efficiently and reliably.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)
A vehicle carrying the minimum number of occupants (typically two or more) required to use designated HOV lanes for carpools, vanpools, or buses.

High Performance Transit (HPT) Network
Spokane Transit's system of local and regional corridors that provide frequent, reliable, all-day transit service.

Highway Trust Fund (HTF)
A federal fund that provides dedicated revenues, primarily from fuel taxes, for the maintenance and improvement of highways and related transportation facilities.

Highway/Transit Assignment
The final step in the travel demand modeling process that simulates how traffic and transit trips are distributed across the transportation network.

I

I/C
Interchange.

Infrastructure
The fundamental physical systems and facilities—such as roads, bridges, utilities, and communication networks—necessary for the operation of a community or economy.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)
A federal law enacted in 2021, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, providing funding for roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports, airports, broadband, and climate resilience. For MPOs, it continues the metropolitan planning program and requires equitable representation in planning processes.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
The application of advanced technologies, including sensors, communication systems, and data analytics, to improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of transportation networks.

Interlocal Agreement
An agreement among jurisdictions within a Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) that establishes the organization's structure, duties, and member relationships. The agreement governs RTPO operations and is submitted as part of the RTPO's designation package.

Intermodal
Referring to facilities or systems that enable the transfer of freight or passengers between different modes of transportation, such as between trucks and trains or between vehicles and airplanes.

J, K, L

Just-In-Time (JIT) Delivery Systems
A production and inventory strategy that reduces storage and carrying costs by receiving goods or components only as they are needed in the manufacturing process.

Land Use Assumptions
Existing and proposed land use patterns—such as residential, commercial, or industrial—that inform the development of travel demand forecasts.

Level of Service (LOS)
A qualitative measure describing the operational conditions of a transportation facility, typically based on factors such as speed, travel time, freedom to maneuver, comfort, and safety.

Local Improvement District (LID)
A financing mechanism through which property owners share the cost of local public improvements such as street paving, lighting, and utility upgrade.

Long Range Plan (LRP)
A transportation plan with a minimum 20-year horizon that identifies long-term transportation needs, priorities, and funding strategies.

Light Rail Transit (LRT)
An electrically powered urban rail system providing high-capacity service along exclusive or semi-exclusive rights-of-way.

M

Maintenance Costs
Expenses associated with keeping transportation facilities in their original or improved condition to ensure safe and efficient operation. Maintenance does not include preservation, improvement, or new construction projects.

Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)
A national manual establishing standards for installing and maintaining traffic control devices on public streets, highways, bikeways, and private roads open to public traffic.

MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act)
A 2012 federal transportation law that emphasized performance-based planning and funding for highways, transit, and safety programs.

Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB)
The boundary established by agreement between the governor and a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) as defined in federal law (23 USC 134).

Mile Post (MP)
A numbered marker placed at regular intervals along a roadway indicating distance from a reference point.

Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA)
The geographic area within which the metropolitan transportation planning process is carried out, encompassing the urbanized area and the territory expected to become urbanized within 20 years. The boundary may encompass the entire metropolitan statistical area or consolidated metropolitan statistical area, as defined by the US Census Bureau.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
A federally designated regional planning agency responsible for coordinating transportation planning and programming in all urbanized areas with populations over 50,000.

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)
A region defined by the US Census Bureau that includes a core urban area and surrounding communities with strong economic and social ties.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
The long-range transportation plan that identifies regional transportation needs, priorities, and strategies developed through the metropolitan planning process.

Model
A mathematical representation of a system used to analyze and predict outcomes under various land use, economic, and travel conditions.

Multimodal
Referring to the integration or consideration of multiple transportation modes, such as transit, walking, biking, and driving, in planning and programming.

N

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)
Standards established by the US Environmental Protection Agency, under the authority of the Clean Air Act (42 USC 7401), for six principal "criteria" pollutants—carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide—to protect public health and the environment.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
A federal law establishing a national policy for protecting the environment and requiring federal agencies to consider environmental impacts when making decisions.

National Transit Institute (NTI)
An educational program providing training and professional development for public transportation professionals.

Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2)
A gas and strong oxidizing agent that contributes to acid rain and smog.

Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) Pollutants
A group of gases, including nitrogen dioxide and nitric oxide, formed during high-temperature combustion of fuels such as oil, gas, and coal; they contribute to smog and acid rain.

Non-attainment Area (NAA)
An area designated by EPA in which National Ambient Air Quality Standards are exceeded.

O

Office of Financial Management (OFM)
Washington state agency providing fiscal services, policy guidance, and data support to the governor, legislature, and state agencies.

Operations and Maintenance (O&M)
Activities undertaken to retain or restore transportation facilities to a state in which they can perform their intended functions.

Operation Costs
Expenditures necessary to operate a transportation facility in compliance with legal or safety requirements, excluding maintenance, preservation, or construction projects.

Ozone (O3)
A gas occurring both in the upper atmosphere and at ground level; ground-level ozone can be harmful to human health and the environment.

P

Particulate Matter (PM)
Airborne particles, including dust, soot, and smoke, that can be inhaled and may harm the respiratory system

PM2.5
Fine particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less, roughly 100 times thinner than a human hair.

PM10
Particulate matter with a diameter between 2.5 and 10 micrometers, small enough to be inhaled and potentially impact health.

Peak-Hour Factor
The ratio of the total hourly traffic volume to the maximum 15-minute traffic volume within the same hour.

Planned Unit Development (PUD)
A development approach in which residential buildings are clustered and designed with reduced setbacks, amenities, and open spaces to maximize land use efficiency.

Planning Analysis
A capacity analysis performed during early stages of a project's development to estimate the number of lanes or facility size needed to achieve a desired level of service.

Preliminary Engineering (PE)
Engineering work, including design plans, specifications, and cost estimates, required to prepare a transportation project for construction.

Preservation Costs
Expenditures associated with extending the service life of existing transportation facilities without increasing capacity or efficiency. Preservation does not include maintenance activities or new or improvement construction projects

Programmed Project
A project included in a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) with planned funding allocations.

Public Participation Plan (PPP)
A document that guides public involvement in transportation planning, establishing policies and procedures to inform and engage stakeholders. These policies set standards for SRTC and affect the eligibility of local projects to receive federal transportation funding.

Public Private Partnership (PPP)
A cooperative arrangement in which a government entity and one or more private companies jointly fund, develop, and operate a project or service.

Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA)
A special taxing district established by Washington state for the purpose of providing public transportation. Spokane Transit's PTBA includes the cities of Airway Heights, Cheney, Medical Lake, Millwood, Liberty Lake, Spokane, and Spokane Valley, as well as portions of the unincorporated county.

Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF)
A state-managed fund providing low-interest loans and technical assistance for local public works projects and infrastructure improvements.

Q, R

Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO)
A voluntary association of local governments authorized under the Growth Management Act to coordinate regional transportation planning and develop regional transportation plans. The RTPO coordinates transportation planning efforts of all government units within the region.

Revised Code of Washington (RCW)
A codification of all permanent laws currently in force in the state of Washington.

Route Development Plan (RDP)
A long-range plan for a specific highway corridor that describes existing highway conditions, local land use plans, and recommends improvements and goals for future improvements and transportation services.

Right-of-Way (ROW)
A legally established strip of land reserved for transportation facilities, including roads, railways, and trails, and associated maintenance or expansion.

S

SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users)
A federal surface transportation funding law that governed US transportation programs prior to MAP-21. It expired on September 30, 2009, and was extended multiple times before MAP-21 was enacted.

Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV)
A privately operated vehicle occupied only by the driver.

Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency (Spokane Clean Air)
The regional agency responsible for enforcing federal, state, and local air quality regulations in Spokane County.

State Implementation Plan (SIP)
A plan developed to ensure compliance with federal air quality standards under the Clean Air Act.

Spokane International Airport (SIA)
The largest commercial airport in the Spokane region, jointly owned by the City and County of Spokane and managed by the Spokane Airport Board.

Spokane Regional Transportation Management Center (SRTMC)
A multi-jurisdictional facility providing advanced transportation management services, including traffic monitoring and regional coordination. The SRTMC is controlled and funded by the cities of Spokane and Spokane Valley, Spokane Transit Authority, Spokane County, WSDOT, and SRTC.

Spokane Transit Authority (STA)
The primary public transportation provider in Spokane County, serving the region through fixed-route buses, paratransit, and other transit services. STA is a municipal corporation that was formed in 1980 to administer mass transit services throughout the newly established PTBA.

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)
A Washington state law requiring agencies to consider environmental impacts and mitigation measures before approving or denying proposed projects.

State Route (SR)
A roadway maintained and operated by WSDOT.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
A four-year planning document listing federally and non-federally funded transportation projects throughout the state.

Sulfur Dioxide (SO2)
A gas or liquid resulting from the burning of sulfur containing fuel.

Surface Transportation Program (STP)
A federal funding program providing flexible resources for highway, bridge, transit, and other surface transportation projects.

T

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
An advisory committee to the SRTC Board responsible for recommendations regarding the policy aspects of plans, programs, and activities conducted by SRTC. The TAC was formed to promote transparency and provide an opportunity for the public to be more involved in SRTC's programs and activities.

Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ)
A geographic area used in travel demand modeling to analyze trip generation, distribution, and travel behavior.

Transportation Benefit District (TBD)
A quasi-municipal corporation with independent taxing authority to fund and operate transportation improvements and management programs.

Transportation Control Measure (TCM)
Measures included in the State Implementation Plan (SIP) that are designed to reduce vehicle-related air pollution.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)
Strategies aimed at changing travel behavior to reduce congestion, typically by promoting alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle use and avoiding more costly expansion of transportation systems.

Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA)
A study assessing the effects of a proposed development on the transportation system, including capacity and safety.

Transportation Improvement Board (TIB)
A Washington state agency that distributes grants for street construction and maintenance to cities and urban counties.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
A multi-year funding program document listing federally and non-federally funded transportation improvements proposed by various jurisdictions.

Transportation Management Area (TMA)
An urbanized area with a population over 200,000 designated for metropolitan transportation planning by the US Secretary of Transportation.

Transportation Network Company (TNC)
A private company providing pre-arranged transportation services through online platforms, such as Uber or Lyft.

Transportation Performance Management (TPM)
A strategic approach used by transportation agencies to monitor, measure, and improve the performance of the transportation system. TPM involves setting clear performance goals, tracking progress using data-driven measures, and using results to guide planning, investment, and decision-making to achieve safer, more efficient, and reliable transportation outcomes.

Transportation Technical Committee (TTC)
An advisory committee to the SRTC Board providing technical guidance and recommendations on the technical aspects of plans, programs, and activities conducted by SRTC. The TTC is composed of professionals from local and state agencies who work to ensure a coordinated and well-planned regional transportation system.

Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO)
Multimodal strategies to improve the efficiency, safety, and reliability of existing and planned transportation infrastructure.

Trip Distribution
The process of forecasting the origins and destinations of trips within a travel demand model.

U

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
The federally required annual work plan for local and regional transportation planning projects.

United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)
The federal Cabinet department responsible for transportation policy, funding, and oversight nationwide.

Unsignalized Intersection
An intersection without traffic signals, typically controlled by stop or yield signs.

Urban Area (UA)
A general term encompassing urbanized areas (UZA) and urban clusters (UC) as defined by the US Census Bureau. See also FHWA-Adjusted Urban Area Boundary (AUAB).

Urban Area Boundary (UAB)
The boundary of a census-defined area with a population of 5,000 or more and sufficient population density to qualify as urban.

Urban Cluster (UC)
A census-designated area with a population of 2,500–49,999 people and sufficient density to be considered urban, generally at least 1,000 persons per square mile.

Urban Growth Area (UGA)
Areas designated for concentrated urban development, with restrictions on urban development outside these areas.

Urbanized Area (UZA)
A census-designated area with a population of 5,000 or more and sufficient density to be considered urban, generally at least 1,000 persons per square mile.

V

Vehicle Hours of Travel (VHT)
The total time for a vehicle to complete a trip, analyzed cumulatively or averaged. In travel demand modeling applications, VHT is computed as the product of the link volume and the link travel time, summed over all links. Also referred to as Vehicle Hours Traveled.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
The total number of miles driven by all vehicles within a given time period and geographic area. For travel demand modeling applications, VMT is computed as a combination of the number

of vehicles in the system and the distance they traveled.

Volume to Capacity Ratio (V/C)
The ratio of traffic volume to the designed capacity of a roadway segment, indicating congestion levels.

W, X, Y, Z

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
The state agency responsible for planning, building, and maintaining Washington's transportation infrastructure.

Washington State Transportation Research Center (TRAC)
A cooperative research agency comprised of WSDOT, University of Washington and Washington State University.

Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC)
The board overseeing WSDOT, providing guidance and oversight to ensure transportation facilities and services are delivered efficiently and effectively.

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HORIZON 2050

Spokane Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Spokane Regional Transportation Council

Horizon 2050 | Spokane Metropolitan Transportation Plan
Adopted December 11, 2025

Spokane Regional Transportation Council
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