

Public Outreach Summary

Proposed Fare Policy Revisions

Draft

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Section I: Introduction

As Spokane Transit Authority (STA) advances *STA Moving Forward*, the 10-year plan for more and better transit services in the region, it is implementing a modernized fare collection system, enabling it to introduce new benefits and provide greater convenience to its riders. These benefits are encompassed in proposed fare policy changes and the introduction of an account-based system with durable fare cards and a mobile ticketing application.

This report documents STA's outreach efforts with regards to the proposed fare policy revisions. The outreach was designed to engage both the general public, whether current bus riders or not, as well as identified vulnerable and marginalized populations to inform Title VI the fare equity analysis. The fare equity analysis was performed in accordance with the requirements specified in the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Circular 4702.1B *Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients* and STA's 2020 Title VI Program and the policies outlined in STA's Comprehensive Plan, *Connect Spokane, A Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation*, and can be found in the accompanying report *Preliminary Title VI Fare Policy Revisions Equity Analysis*.

STA's Communication and Public Input Policies

Connect Spokane is STA's comprehensive plan, setting forth a vision and policy framework to guide decisions made by STA's Board of Directors, its staff, and partnering agencies that will further Spokane Transit's mission and vision for at least the next 30 years. The Communications and Public Input element of *Connect Spokane* identifies the goals and policies of STA related to public engagement.

As a public agency, Spokane Transit Authority believes that proper communications and public input is of the highest importance.

Policy CI 1.0 – Public Outreach

The following policies are intended to serve as a guide describing public outreach/input requirements for each action. In cases where there are federal or state requirements for public outreach/input, STA will meet the minimum requirements. In cases where STA has requirements in addition to those defined by the state or federal government, STA will follow both.

1.8 Title VI Reporting

During major service reductions and fare increases, STA will conduct an analysis to verify that no discrimination of protected classes takes place.

Title VI provides that “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

Race, color, and national origin are protected classes under Title VI. Low-income populations are not a protected class under Title VI; however, the FTA requires transit providers to evaluate the impacts of any fare

changes on low-income populations as well. STA's Title VI policy, adopted in early 2014, identifies how STA assesses disparate impact and disproportionate burden that could potentially result from changes to fare policy. This is described more fully in the *Preliminary Title VI Fare Policy Revisions Equity Analysis* report.

While the proposed fare policy revisions do not include a fare increase, it does include the introduction of new fare media, which STA believes warranted a public outreach effort and a Title VI analysis to meet the needs of our customers and the guidance provided by the FTA. The remaining sections of this report identify the proposed fare revisions, and discuss the public outreach conducted as well as the input received.

Section II. Proposed Fare Policy

Spokane Transit is implementing a new account-based fare collection system that offers smart card and mobile ticketing capabilities to enhance rider access and experience across its network. Through the new system, customers will have increased convenience through electronic fare payment and self-service account management capabilities, while also improving transit system performance by enabling pre-payment of fares and all-door boarding to reduce dwell time.

STA periodically evaluates its fare policy and fare structure. The last major review of the fare structure was conducted in 2016. This policy revision is not proposing tariff revisions, rather is being undertaken in anticipation of the implementation of the fare collection system.

Fare Policy Update Objectives and Overview

The objectives of the update are to incorporate new fare types enabled by the new system and broaden discount programs to encourage ridership and enhance access and equity. The fare policy update has three major components:

- **Fare Media:** Introduce an account-based fare collection system with a card and mobile ticketing application as the primary, non-cash, fare media
- **Fare Capping:** Provide daily and monthly fare caps enabled through the use of smart cards or mobile ticketing application (mobile app)
- **Discount Programs:** Provide more discount options to a broader population of riders

Fare Media

Fare media smart cards and the mobile app, both of which will serve as front end devices for the account-based system, will become the primary fare media used to access the STA system beginning in Fall 2022. The account-based system and fare policies will eliminate the need for daily, 7-day rolling, and 31-day rolling passes. The account-based system will provide for daily and/or monthly fare capping. A description of each fare media type (current and proposed) is shown in Table II-1 below.

Table II-1. Current and Proposed Fare Media Types

Fare Media	Description	Current	With Fare Collection System Implementation
Cash	Exact fare required in cash or coin - no change will be given and pennies are not accepted	✓	✓
Magnetic Stripe Card	Magnetic Stripe Cards are read by making the appropriate contact between the card and the farebox card reader. Paratransit van operators may record fare use of the card for the paratransit rider as needed.	✓	
Connect Card	Connect Cards are chip-embedded cards holding data that allows a vast array of potential fare opportunities. The first Connect Card for a customer will be provided free of charge. Replacement card fees will be based on STA's cost to provide the cards. Connect Cards can also serve as an identity card (by adding a photo and other basic information). Connect Cards can be reloaded with additional value or time and reused indefinitely. The card is read by passing the card near or "within proximity" of the validator hardware.	✓	✓
Institutional Card	Combination ID/Smart Card issued to participants in current STA pass programs	✓	
Mobile App	Manage your fare account or pay with your virtual Connect Card through the STA mobile app.		✓
Limited Use Ticket	Paper RFID ticket that can be read by holding near the fare validator hardware. Available through Group sales only.		✓
Barcoded Paper Ticket	Paper barcoded ticket issued by a Ticket Vending Machine.	✓	✓
Contactless Credit Card	Discover, Mastercard and Visa contactless credit cards read by passing the card near or "within proximity" of the validator hardware.		✓
NFC-based Payments	NFC-based payments such as Apple Pay and GooglePay on a mobile phone can be read by passing the device near or "within proximity" of the validator hardware.		✓

Account-Based Fare Media

The proposed, modernized fare collection system will be account-based. Account-based systems store value in an individualized account; but the fare media only contains credentialing information that enables the fare system to draw from the appropriate account. While all fare media are linked to an account in the fare collection system, meeting STA’s data security policies, STA will categorize fare media as either “registered” or “unregistered”, with additional benefits available to registered media.

Accessing Smart Card Benefits

Customers will be able to reload funds onto their account at multiple locations, including partner retail locations. All funds added to an account will be available for use on all fare media tied to the customer’s account. Funds can be re-loaded onto customer accounts using a fare media smart card at the STA Plaza, partner retail locations, or online. The mobile app can also be used as a device to re-load customer accounts.

Fare Capping

STA is introducing fare capping. Fare capping limits the total amount of money users are charged for rides taken within a specific period; additional rides within that period are free of charge. This new fare policy is intended to promote transit ridership and enhance the customer experience.

Daily and monthly fare capping will be applied in the new system. Only trips that reduce the amount of value in an account, not free transfers, will count towards the daily and monthly fare cap; these are also known as “charged trips”. Fare capping will apply across all STA services, except Vanpool which is a monthly program only.

For the purposes of the policy, a day is defined as the first run of the day to the last run of the day based on STA’s then in effect schedules by route. The daily fare cap triggers after \$4.00 of charged trips (2 paid trips). Trips taken during the free transfer window (within two hours after the charged trip) will not count towards the cap or deduct money from the account. The month will be defined as the calendar month. Table II-2 compares existing policy versus the proposed policy.

Table II-2. Fare Capping – Existing Policy versus Proposed Policy

	Fare Cap	Regular Service	Paratransit	Reduced Fare Discount Programs
Existing Fare Capping	Daily	None	None	None
	Monthly	None	None	None
Proposed Fare Capping	Daily	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$2.00
	Monthly	\$60.00	\$60.00	\$30.00

Reduced Fare Discount Programs

STA is proposing to expand the current discount programs that are offered by the agency. Table II-3 below identifies the current and proposed reduced fare discount programs (including an eligibility description for each).

Table II-3. Expanded Reduced Fare Discount Program

Program Title	Program Description	Current	With Fare Collection System Implementation
Honored Rider	A Fixed Route reduced fare (50%) program available to customers who are: 1) 60 years of age or older; or 2) have a qualifying disability; or 3) have a valid Medicare card issued by the Social Security Administration. An STA-provided reduced fare or paratransit identification card must be shown to the bus operator each time the bus is boarded and the reduced fare paid.	✓ <i>(currently 65 years or older)</i>	✓
Stars and Stripes	A Fixed Route reduced fare (50%) program open to veterans, reserve, and active-duty military with proof of status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Active-duty military ID card o VA ID card o DD214 o Driver's license with Veteran designation 		✓
Rider's License	A Fixed Route reduced fare program (50%) available to youth customers (13-18 years of age) when presenting an STA issued pass.		✓
Rider-In-Training	A Fixed Route reduced fare program (100%) available to youth customers (6-12 years of age) when presenting an STA issued pass.		✓
Student	A Fixed Route reduced fare program available to students enrolled in post-secondary education at a technical or job/career training institution. Students who possess valid proof of enrollment in a registered institution are eligible for a discount of 20% off the standard monthly fare cap. Eligible educational and training institutions are either: qualified providers of federal financial aid and have obtained a Federal School Code; or have obtained a vocational school license issued by the Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.	✓ <i>(currently 31-day pass w/discount)</i>	✓

All other existing reduced fare discount programs (such as the Community Access Program) will continue to operate in the same form as previously.

Section III. Public Outreach

Public Outreach Objectives

The public outreach and engagement provided the public, community groups, and project stakeholders the ability to learn about the proposed policy revisions and provide input to help inform the policy and its implementation.

The outreach objectives included:

- Providing context for the proposed policy revisions
- Being inclusive. Reaching out to community-based organizations that serve our community
- Seeking feedback on the proposed policy revisions

Public Outreach Strategy

STA developed a multi-pronged strategy to solicit public input and feedback on the proposed fare policy revisions.

The strategy included:

- A Fare Policy Survey
- Meetings with community-based organizations
- Community meeting presentations
- A launch page on the STA website
- Media campaign
- Public Hearing

Details for each strategic effort can be found in the following sections.

Fare Policy Survey

The primary tool in soliciting feedback on the proposed fare policy revisions was the fare policy survey. The survey was predominantly an online instrument, with copies of the survey mailed to all riders on the reduced fare mailing list. The number of returned surveys are shown below in Table IV-I. The survey was open from November 4, 2021 to December 17, 2021. It could be accessed at <https://www.spokanetransit.com/ride-sta/fare-policy-survey>, and

was available in the following safe harbor languages:

- English
- Spanish
- Russian
- Vietnamese
- Chinese (traditional)

Table IV-I: Total Fare Survey Responses

Survey Instrument	Number of Respondents
Online – English	1227
Online – Spanish	5
Online – Russian	5
Online – Vietnamese	7
Online – Chinese	4
Paper Survey	563
TOTAL	1812

Community-Based Organizations

STA contacted a number of community-based organizations to hold brief, introductory conversations about the proposed fare policy update. The purpose of these conversations was to:

- Provide an overview of the proposed fare policy update and collect input from service providers
- Provide an opportunity to schedule a listening session for their organization
- Inform them of fare policy update schedule
- Ask for assistance in distributing online survey link

By the close of the public outreach period, STA had held introductory conversations with the following 14 organizations:

- The Arc of Spokane
- Catholic Charities
- Family Promise
- SNAP
- Volunteers of America
- Lighthouse for the Blind
- Goodwill Industries
- Lutheran Community Services
- Special Mobility Services (SMS)
- Spokane Housing Authority
- Aging & Long-Term Care of Eastern Washington (ALTCEW)
- Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Providence Adult Day Health & Health Care Foundation
- WorkSource Spokane

In addition, STA attended larger internal meetings with SNAP and WorkSource Spokane, to present to a broader internal audience for those community partners.

Community Meetings

In addition to scheduling meetings with community-based organizations, STA scheduled additional meetings with other community organizations as well that included:

- City of Spokane Community Assembly¹
- City of Spokane Public Infrastructure, Environment, & Sustainability (PIES) Committee
- Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

¹ The Community Assembly is a coalition of independent Neighborhood Councils and serves as a forum for discussion of issues of broad interest. Each Neighborhood Council selects one representative and a designated alternate to serve on the Community Assembly

Fare Policy Update Webpage

The STA Communications Department created a launch page on the STA website, <https://www.spokanetransit.com/ride-sta/fare-policy-survey>, to provide a consolidated location for those seeking information on the fare policy update. The launch page included links to:

- A video about the new fare collection system
- A video explaining fare capping
- A link to the Fare Policy survey
- A link to an ESRI StoryMap on the proposed policy
- FAQs
- A link to background on the STA fare policy

Media Campaign

Along with the creation of the Fare Policy Update webpage, the STA Communications department crafted a full media campaign, available at this [link](#). Highlights included:

- Promotion
 - Customer service recorded messages
 - Email and text messages to Mobile Storm subscribers
 - Onboard bus announcements
 - STA Moving Forward stories
- Signage
 - Posters / tri-fold flyers at STA Plaza
 - Fixed Route and Paratransit bulkheads
- Internet
 - Google display ads
 - Paid social media campaign
- Spokanetransit.com
 - Website banners
 - Survey landing page
 - FAQs
 - Videos
- Digital outreach toolkit
 - FAQs and background paper
 - Flyer
 - Posters (English, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese)
 - PowerPoint presentation
 - Videos for social media
- Videos
 - “Take the Survey!”
 - “Fare Capping Explained”
 - Subtitles in English, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese
 - 6 x short social media videos
- StoryMap

- Advertising: General
 - Spokesman-Review
 - Inlander
 - Cheney Free Press
 - Liberty Lake Splash
- Advertising: Targeted
 - Black Lens
 - Fig Tree
 - Latin News Zone
 - Russian News Spokane
 - 2 x Russian / Ukrainian grocery stores
 - 2 x Vietnamese / Asian grocery stores
 - 2 x Mexican grocery / deli

Public Outreach Results

Survey Results

The survey instrument was identical across all versions. The survey had ten (10) questions, along with six (6) demographic questions. Among the ten questions, there were four opportunities for the respondent to write-in their response.

Some notes on the survey and survey analysis:

- For every question, results are provided for: (a) minority respondents; (b) low-income respondents; and (c) all respondents. Based on the notes below, the ‘n’ value (the number of total respondents) will be different for each population. The ‘n’ values are noted in the tables.
- All questions were optional, so some respondents may have not answered every question, or answered some of them incompletely.
- In the demographics portion, respondents were asked to self-identify as to race. Not all respondents chose to do so. Responses marked as “prefer not to say” as well as “other” were excluded from the minority analysis but were included when looking at all respondents.
- In determining low-income status, a respondent had to provide answers on both “the number of people living in your household” as well as “current household income” to make a determination as to status. Not all respondents chose to do so, which impacts the number of responses analyzed for low-income status as compared to all respondents.

The survey results are shown below.

Question 1: In the past 30 days, have you ridden an STA bus route?

	Minority (n = 134)	Low-Income (n= 297)	All Respondents (n= 1641)
Yes	83.6%	87.2%	70.2%
No	16.4%	12.8%	29.8%

Question 1.1: For those who answered YES to the previous question, please consider how you currently ride the bus and pay your fare when you board. Below is a list of ways you may pay today. Please check all that apply for your bus trips taken over the past 30 days.

Note that for this question, n (the total number of respondents) is based on the total number of people who answered YES to the previous question.

	Minority (n = 112)	Low-Income (n=259)	All Respondents (n=1152)
I paid with cash and /or coin at the farebox	50.9%	57.1%	50.4%
I used a two-hour pass or day pass	42.0%	45.6%	32.8%
I swiped/validated my 7-day or 31-day rolling pass	25.9%	19.7%	26.3%
I used an STA Smart Card to deduct/validate my fare	22.3%	24.3%	18.9%
I swiped or tapped my university/employee ID card	10.7%	10.0%	13.4%
I used a reduced fare ID to pay for or use a reduced fare pass	29.5%	37.8%	31.3%
I purchased a ticket from a ticket vending machine	2.7%	0.4%	0.7%
I did not pay my fare due to lack of change, missing pass, or other reason	6.3%	1.9%	3.0%

Of those respondents who paid with cash and/or coin at the farebox for at least one trip, 80.4% of the low-income respondents also used one of the other payment methods, while 71.9% of minority respondents and 62.4% of all respondents used an additional form of payment for a trip.

Question 1.2: Why did you pay with cash/coin on trips taken in the last 30 days? Please mark all that apply.

Note that for this question, n (the total number of respondents) is based on the total number of people who answered “I paid with cash and/or coin at the farebox” to the previous question.

	Minority (n = 57)	Low-Income (n= 148)	All Respondents (n= 581)
I don't know where to purchase a pass in advance	5.3%	10.8%	9.3%
I don't ride the bus often enough to get the full value of the pass	45.6%	43.9%	54.7%
I can't afford purchasing a pass	24.6%	43.9%	26.7%
It is more convenient for me	38.6%	48.6%	43.7%
Other (please specify) ²	43.8%	11.5%	28.7%

² The “Other” responses generally focused on the access issue of getting a new pass or their current pass was lost or expired, and they were using cash until they could get a new one.

Question 2: The following statements are about STA’s proposed fare capping policy. Fare capping eliminates the upfront costs for daily and monthly trips, meaning riders who pay one trip at a time get the same benefit as passengers who pay for a daily or monthly pass. Once a rider pays the cost of a daily or monthly pass, the rest of the rides for that day or month are free. Please read each statement and rate your level of agreement with them.

		Fare capping maximizes the financial benefit to the rider	Fare capping is easy to understand	Fare capping will encourage people to ride transit more often
Strongly Disagree	Minority (n = 136)	6.6%	7.4%	7.4%
	Low-Income (n=303)	6.6%	11.9%	6.9%
	All Respondents (n= 1610)	6.3%	7.7%	7.6%
Disagree	M	7.4%	11.8%	7.4%
	LI	5.3%	14.2%	5.9%
	AR	4.3%	12.9%	6.6%
Not Sure	M	24.3%	19.1%	35.3%
	LI	25.1%	21.1%	36.0%
	AR	21.6%	20.8%	37.2%
Agree	M	26.5%	36.0%	27.2%
	LI	24.1%	30.0%	27.1%
	AR	29.6%	31.7%	25.8%
Strongly Agree	M	35.3%	25.0%	22.8%
	LI	38.6%	22.4%	24.1%
	AR	36.5%	25.0%	22.6%

Question 3: STA plans to introduce a new fare collection system that allows customers to pay with an app on a mobile device or using a Smart Card. Money can be added to the Smart Card online, or by paying with cash or a debit/credit card at a participating retail store, gas station, or the STA Plaza. The new system benefits customers by allowing fare capping, providing the same value of a day pass or monthly pass without paying for it all up front. Customers using their Smart Card or the app on their mobile device may also be eligible for new discount programs. Cash paying customers will not have the same benefits. Given these planned changes, how likely will you use the following methods for paying for your fare when boarding the bus?

		Cash	Smart Card	Mobile Application
Highly Unlikely	Minority (n =137)	26.3%	16.1%	19.0%
	Low-Income (n= 298)	17.4%	14.4%	14.1%
	All Respondents (n=1564)	28.3%	16.4%	22.4%
Probably Not	M	18.2%	8.0%	13.1%
	LI	14.1%	9.7%	10.4%
	AR	17.3%	9.4%	10.1%
Not Sure	M	10.9%	16.1%	16.1%
	LI	16.4%	16.1%	17.8%
	AR	14.5%	17.1%	14.6%
Probably	M	21.2%	18.2%	28.5%
	LI	23.5%	21.1%	16.1%
	AR	18.4%	23.5%	19.8%
Highly Likely	M	23.4%	40.1%	27.0%
	LI	27.5%	38.6%	29.2%
	AR	20.3%	33.6%	31.3%

For those respondents who were identified as low-income AND identified that they paid with cash or coin at the farebox in the last 30 days (137 total respondents), 65% noted they were highly likely or probably going to continue to use cash for some fare payments. However, of those same respondents 54% identified as highly likely or probably to use the smart card, while 51% identified a mobile application as a fare payment method they would highly likely or probably use.

Question 4: Once available, STA wants customers to manage their fares in an online account and use their Smart Card or mobile device to board the bus and pay their fare faster. This is because many customers boarding and paying with cash can cause buses to be late. At some point in the future, STA may discourage paying cash on board the bus by eliminating the option to get a free transfer pass. Customers who pay with a Smart Card or their mobile device would still have the option to transfer for free. If implemented, how would eliminating cash transfers affect you?

This was an open-ended question, and six codes were assigned to identify any major themes from the responses. The six codes were organized into two groups – personal impacts to the respondent as an individual, and potential impacts on the general population of riders:

Individual:

- No Impact (as an individual)
- Negative Impact (as an individual)
- Positive Impact (as an individual)

Population Concerns:

- General concerns about specific populations, including the homeless, low-income, those with developmental disabilities, and seniors
- General concerns about access – to the internet, to locations to load cash, to tracking card balance, etc
- Concerns regarding transfers

Nearly 75% of total survey respondents provided some text for this question (1341). All percentages below are based on the total number of responses to this question (1,341 responses), and not to the total number of survey respondents.

For the individual, 54% of the respondents who provided comments on this question characterized the proposed changes as either having No Impact (42%) or a Positive Impact (12%) on them as an individual rider. 10.8% of all respondents who provided some response to this question identified it as a negative impact.

For the general population concerns, access was mentioned fairly frequently, with about 29% of the responses touching on this theme across all groups, and 26% of those respondents who identified as low income. The following quotes are examples of those concerns. *(all quotes verbatim from the survey)*

Respondent A

"By eliminating cash, that hurts riders that have to scrounge change to get to work, homeless or at-risk people who need to access resources, people who don't have access to mobile devices, and anyone who misplaces their Smart Card. The new payment options are great OPTIONS, but they should be just that, options."

Respondent B

"However, you do it your rider has to continually keep track of money in their account in order to ride the bus. That means going to the bank or trying to remember how much money is left in their account. You seem to think these are easy tasks for low income or no income riders."

Question 5: STA is proposing to introduce a new Smart Card to make the fare payment process quicker and more convenient. In the new system, bus fare could be added to the Smart Card at multiple stores throughout the region, including the STA Plaza. Looking at the following map, select the options below that describe where you would be able to get and load cash onto a Smart Card (please pick all that apply)

	Minority (n = 146)	Low- Income (n= 324)	All Respondents (n= 1790)
Not near any of the above	18.5%	16.7%	13.8%
Near work, home, places I go	81.5%	83.3%	86.2%
Near (by location):			
my place of work	36.3%	25.0%	28.0%
my residence	60.3%	62.0%	49.6%
other places I go	46.6%	49.1%	41.4%

Question 6: STA is also considering new discounts for a variety of riders. These discounts are intended to encourage ridership and lessen the cost of riding the bus. Please rank your support on a scale of 1 (Strongly oppose) to 5 (Strongly support) for each pass program.

		Honored Rider: 50% off fares for pass holders 60 and over (previously was for ages 65+)	Stars and Stripes: 50% off fares for pass holders who are current and former service members	Rider's License: 50% off fares for pass holders ages 13-18	Rider-in-Training: Free fares for pass holders ages 6-12	Student: 20% off the standard monthly fare cap for all students enrolled in technical or job training programs, so students pay \$48 or less each month
1 - (Strongly Oppose)	Minority (n=144)	2.8%	4.9%	4.9%	4.9%	4.2%
	Low-Income (n=318)	3.5%	4.7%	6.6%	6.6%	5.3%
	All Respondents (n= 1523)	3.1%	4.4%	5.7%	5.9%	4.1%
2	M	2.1%	1.4%	2.8%	6.3%	2.1%
	LI	1.6%	3.1%	3.8%	4.7%	0.9%
	AR	1.4%	3.2%	3.2%	4.4%	1.6%
3	M	6.3%	11.1%	13.2%	8.3%	7.6%
	LI	7.9%	10.1%	13.2%	11.9%	10.4%
	AR	7.9%	12.5%	13.5%	12.9%	9.7%
4	M	9.7%	11.8%	16.7%	16.0%	16.7%
	LI	9.1%	10.7%	13.2%	11.3%	11.9%
	AR	10.7%	11.9%	17.2%	14.7%	16.7%
5 - (Strongly Support)	M	79.2%	68.1%	51.4%	61.1%	67.4%
	LI	78.0%	69.8%	60.1%	61.9%	68.2%
	AR	76.9%	66.6%	57.6%	59.2%	65.9%

Question 7: Are there any other rider groups not listed above that should receive discounts?

This was an open-ended question, and six codes were assigned to identify any major groups from the responses. The six codes were:

- Low-income
- Transit should be free
- Riders with disabilities
- Health care workers, first responders, teachers
- Rider loyalty program
- Other

40% of all survey respondents (716) provided some answer for this question. However, no group coded for received more than 11% support. Riders with disabilities were identified by 10.6% of all respondents, while low-income riders were mentioned by just under 9% of respondents. This held true across all groups. There was minimal support for any of the other groups.

Question 8: When the bus arrives at your stop, how important is it to you that you're able to board the bus quickly and efficiently?

	Minority (n = 145)	Low- Income (n= 319)	All Respondents (n= 1524)
Very important	47.6%	48.3%	44.0%
Important	26.9%	29.5%	32.8%
Somewhat important	19.3%	16.3%	17.6%
Not so important	4.1%	5.0%	4.3%
Not at all important	2.1%	0.9%	1.2%

Question 9: The new fare policy proposes to change the name of a "Two-Hour" pass to a "One Ride" pass. A One-Ride pass will still allow riders the exact same ability to ride for two hours, including transfers.

	Minority (n = 142)	Low- Income (n= 318)	All Respondents (n= 1517)
I agree with the new name	32.4%	30.8%	31.2%
I disagree with the new name	44.4%	46.2%	44.8%
I don't know	23.2%	23.0%	23.9%

Question 10: Is there anything else you wish to tell STA about the proposed fare policy update?

This was an open-ended question, and seven codes were assigned to identify any major themes from the responses. The seven codes were:

- One Ride Naming
- Operations (transfers, etc)

- An identified educational opportunity/need
- Fare Costs Thoughts (related to costs, discounts, zones, etc)
- Fare Payment Methods (other methods, retail locations, etc)
- Transit Network (routes, stop locations, etc)
- General Support

Overall, 35% of survey respondents provided some text in this space. None of the themes received more than 10% of the overall responses. Thoughts on fare payment methods rose to the top, with 9.0% of all respondents commenting on either a specific payment method (using credit cards, using Apple/Google Pay, using an Apple watch) or retail locations (noting gaps in the map, or conversely, generally good distribution).

For riders who self-identified as a minority, the most common theme noted was on fare costs thoughts and fare payment thoughts (5.5% of 145 respondents for each) generally focused on the total cost or questioning the lack of zonal payments.

Nearly half (48.9%) of the comments in this section were from respondents identified as low-income. Again though, none of the themes received more than 10% of the responses. Concerns about fare payment methods was the highest for this population group (7.2%) followed by thoughts on overall fare costs (5.4%).

Key Findings

Those who responded to the survey were generally supportive of the proposed fare policy revisions, based on the responses above. Key findings evolved around the following themes:

Rider Characteristics

- There was strong bus rider representation. A super-majority of minority (83.6%) and low-income (87.2%) respondents had ridden the bus in the last 30 days, while just over 70.2% of all respondents had ridden the bus in the last 30 days.
- The response rate by those who self-identified as a minority on the English language survey was 8.2%, less than the overall percentage in the Public Transportation Benefit Area (PBTA) (12.2%). That percentage increases to 9.2% when including the safe harbor language surveys. However, 26% of survey respondents did not answer this question.
- The response rate by those who were characterized as low-income on the English language survey was 18.1%, greater than the overall percentage in the PTBA ((15.6%)

Payment methods

- Cash (57.1%) was used slightly more by low-income riders than minority (50.9%) and all respondents (50.4%) and was the single most used fare payment method across all groups. However, the combined total for ALL pass/card options shows a preference for card/pass as payment methods.
- A majority of all respondents (51.2%) identified as probably or highly likely to use a mobile application, with 57.1% of all respondents probably or highly likely to use a smart card.
- 59.7% of low-income respondents noted they were probably or highly likely to use a smart card, as did 58.4% of minority respondents.

- “Convenience” and “not riding frequently enough” were the two most common reasons identified for using cash, indicating an audience that might benefit from the proposed fare management tools and fare capping.
- All proposed discount programs were supported by a majority of all groups, with Honored Rider (76.9% all respondents, 78% low income, 79.2% minority) and Stars and Stripes (66.6%/69.8%/68.1%) programs receiving the most support.

Educational Opportunities

- On the specific question regarding fare capping, 21% of all respondents (25% low-income, 24.3% minority) indicated “Not Sure” for whether fare capping maximizes the financial benefit to the rider. “Not Sure” was 20% of all respondents’ choice on whether it is easy to understand the concept of fare capping. This suggests a need for a strong educational and informational campaign about fare capping.
- Over 50% of low-income riders still identified as “probably or highly likely” to continue to use cash on the bus. However, nearly 60% of those same riders indicated they were “probably or highly likely” to use a Smart Card.
- 15%-17% of respondents, in all groups, were unsure how likely they were to use either a Smart Card or mobile application for their payment method. This suggests a need for a strong educational and informational campaign about the uses and benefits of the Smart Cards and mobile application.

Access

- The narrative survey responses provided indicate concerns as to whether the cash payment option would be eliminated and/or a perception that minority and low-income households may experience information access barriers (due to income and/or disability). How riders without internet access can easily add cash to their cards and can easily track their balances will be critical to ensuring a strong adoption among the tech adverse, unbanked, and other populations.
- Access to proposed vendor locations was generally good, but there are some identified gaps in parts of the service area that will need to be addressed in the implementation phase.

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

As part of the anticipated launch of its modernized fare collection system in October 2022, STA plans to make it easy for customers to manage their fares online, as well as use contactless fare payment options like smart phones and other mobile devices to pay fares. This customer experience improvement will make the fare payment process more convenient and accessible. Also, contactless payment tools, like Smart Cards and mobile devices, make the boarding process much faster and helps keep the buses and its passengers on time.

STA is also considering a new approach to collecting fares called, “fare capping.” Fare capping ensures that riders are always paying the lowest fare available. It eliminates burdensome upfront costs for daily and monthly passes and means that riders who pay for single trips get exactly the same benefit as passengers who pay for a daily or monthly pass.

1. In the past 30 days, have you ridden an STA bus route? YES/NO

1.1 [THIS QUESTION FOR THOSE ANSWERING YES ABOVE]

For this question, please consider how you currently ride the bus and pay your fare when you board. Below is a list of ways you may pay today. Please check all that apply for your bus trips taken over the past 30 days.

- I paid with cash and/or coin at the farebox
- I used a two-hour pass or day pass
- I swiped/validated my 7-day or 31-day rolling pass
- I used an STA Smart Card to deduct/validate my fare
- I swiped or tapped my university/employee ID card
- I used a reduced fare ID to pay for or use a reduced fare pass
- I purchased a ticket from a ticket vending machine
- I did not pay my fare due to lack of change, missing pass, or other reason

1.2 [THIS QUESTION FOR THOSE USING CASH]

Why did you pay with cash/coin on trips taken in the last 30 days? Please mark all that apply.

- I don't know where to purchase a pass in advance
- I don't ride the bus often enough to get the full value of the pass
- I can't afford purchasing a pass
- It is more convenient for me
- Other - please explain: _____

2. The following statements are about STA’s proposed fare capping policy. Fare capping eliminates the upfront costs for daily and monthly trips, meaning riders who pay one trip at a time get the same benefit as passengers who pay for a daily or monthly pass. Once a rider pays the cost of a daily or monthly pass, the rest of the rides for that day or month are free. Please read each statement and rate your level of agreement with them.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Fare capping maximizes the financial benefit to the rider					
Fare capping is easy to understand					
Fare capping will encourage people to ride transit more often					

3. STA plans to introduce a new fare collection system that allows customers to pay with an app on a mobile device or using a Smart Card. Money can be added to the Smart Card online, or by paying with cash or a debit/credit card at a participating retail store, gas station, or the STA Plaza. The new system benefits customers by allowing fare capping, providing the same value of a day pass or monthly pass without paying for it all up front. Customers using their Smart Card or the app on their mobile device may also be eligible for new discount programs. Cash paying customers will not have the same benefits. Given these planned changes, how likely will use the following methods for paying for your fare when boarding the bus?

	Highly Unlikely	Probably Not	Not Sure	Probably	Highly likely
Cash					
Connect Card					
Mobile Application					

4. Once available, STA wants customers to manage their fares in an online account and use their Smart Card or mobile device to board the bus and pay their fare faster. This is because many customers boarding and paying with cash can cause buses to be late. At some point in the future, STA may discourage paying cash on board the bus by eliminating the option to get a free transfer pass. Customers who pay with a Smart Card or their mobile device would still have the option to transfer for free. If implemented, how would eliminating cash transfers effect you?

5. STA is proposing to introduce a new Smart Card to make the fare payment process quicker and more convenient. In the new system, bus fare could be added to the Smart Card at multiple stores throughout the region, including the STA Plaza. Looking at the following map, select the options below that describe

where you would be able to get and load cash onto a Smart Card (please pick all that apply):
 (Accompanied by map of outlet/retail partners)

Along a bus route I use

- Near my place of work
- Near my residence
- Near other places I go
- Not near any of the above

6. STA is also considering new discounts for a variety of riders. These discounts are intended to encourage ridership and lessen the cost of riding the bus. Please rank your support on a scale of 1 (Strongly oppose) to 5 (Strongly support) for each pass program.

	1 (strongly oppose)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly support)
Honored Rider: 50% off fares for pass holders 60 and over (previously was for 65+)					
Stars and Stripes: 50% off fares for pass holders who are current and former service members					
Rider's License: 50% off fares for pass holders ages 13-18					
Rider-in-Training: Free fares for pass holders ages 6-12					
Student: 20% off the standard monthly fare cap for all students enrolled in at technical or job training programs, so students pay \$48 or less each month					

7. Are there any other rider groups not listed above that should receive discounts?

8. When the bus arrives at your stop, how important is it to you that you're able to board the bus quickly and efficiently?

- 5: Very Important
- 4: Important
- 3: Moderately Important
- 2: Slightly Important
- 1: Unimportant

9. The new fare policy proposes to change the name of a “Two-Hour” pass to a “One Ride” pass. A One-Ride pass will still allow riders the exact same ability to ride for two hours, including transfers.

- I agree with the new name
- I disagree with the new name
- I don't know

10. Is there anything else you wish to tell STA about the proposed fare policy update?

And now, about you...

What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18 to 21
- 22 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 59
- 60 or over

Gender (select all that apply):

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Prefer to self-describe: _____
- Prefer not to say

How do you self-identify by race?

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or more races
- Other (please specify): _____
- Prefer not to say

Are you Hispanic or Latino/Latina?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Including yourself, how many people are there in your household? _____

What is your current (annual) household income?

- Less than \$12,880
- \$12,881 to \$17,420
- \$17,421 to \$21,960
- \$21,961 to \$26,500
- \$26,501 to \$31,040
- \$31,041 to \$35,580
- \$35,581 to \$40,120
- \$40,121 to \$44,660
- \$44,660 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$74,999
- \$75,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$149,999
- \$150,000 and greater
- Prefer not to say

Appendix B: Public Comment & Survey Responses

Appendix B is 119 pages in length and is thus included as a link its location on the STA website. Appendix B may be accessed at the following link:

https://www.spokanetransit.com/files/content/Appendix_B_Public_Comment_and_Survey_Response.pdf