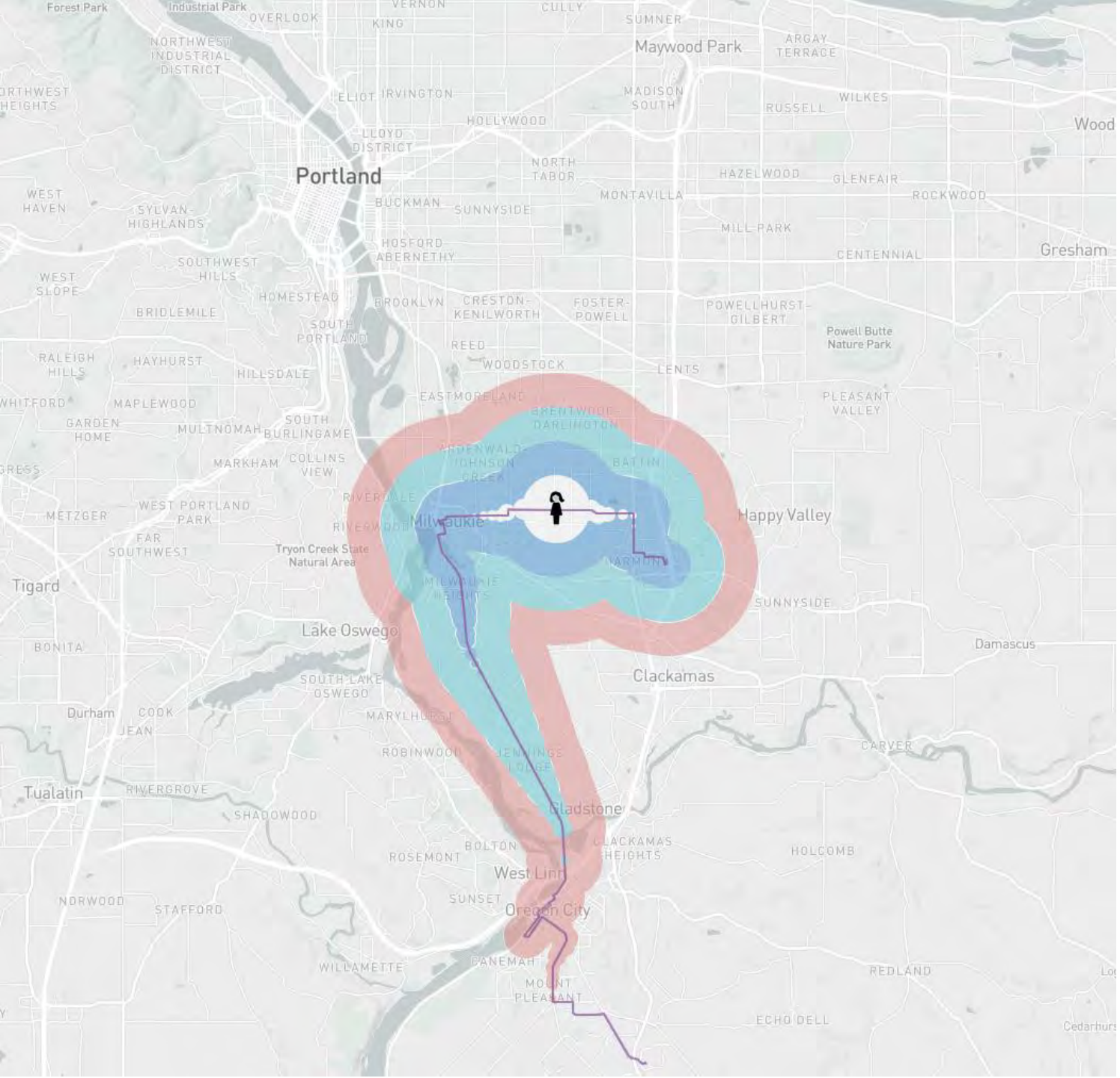
Michelle Poyourow

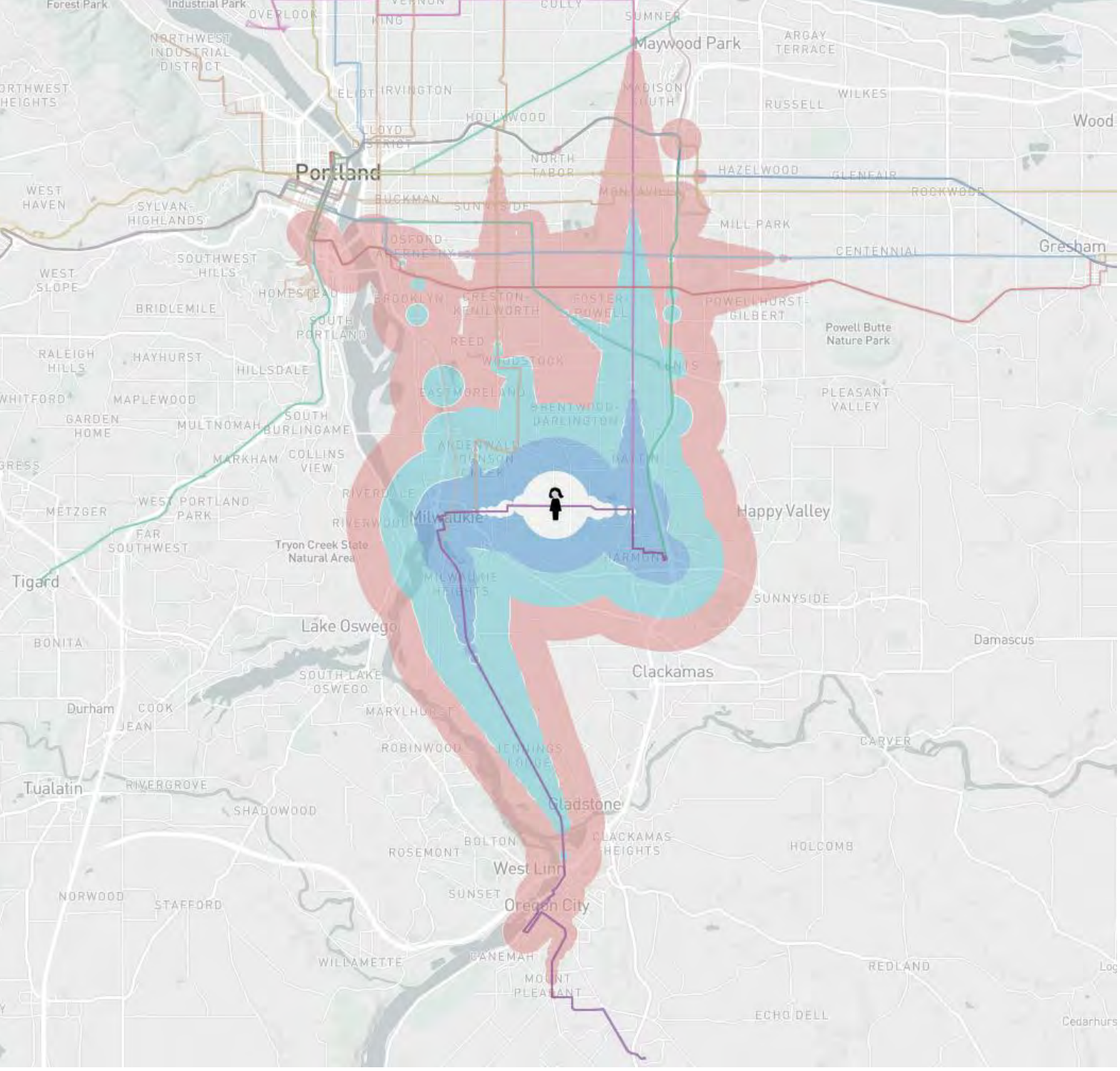
What causes transit ridership?

First and Foremost: Access

“Where can I go, in a reasonable amount of time?”

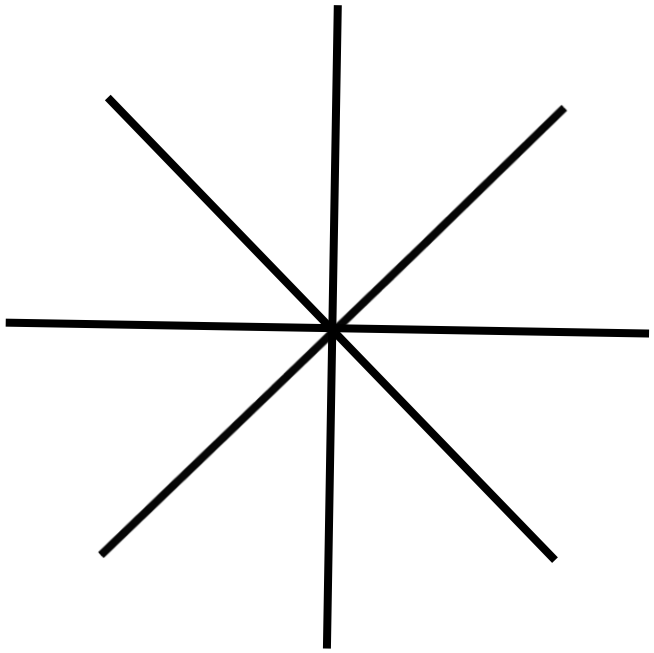


Credit: Remix

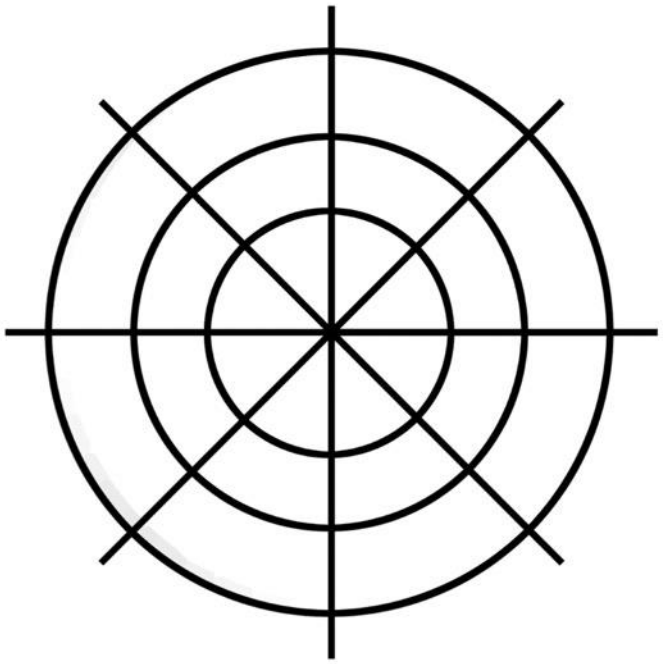


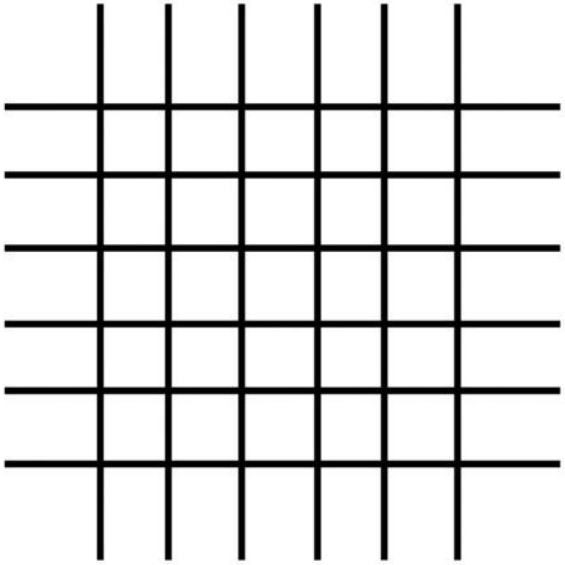
Credit: Remix

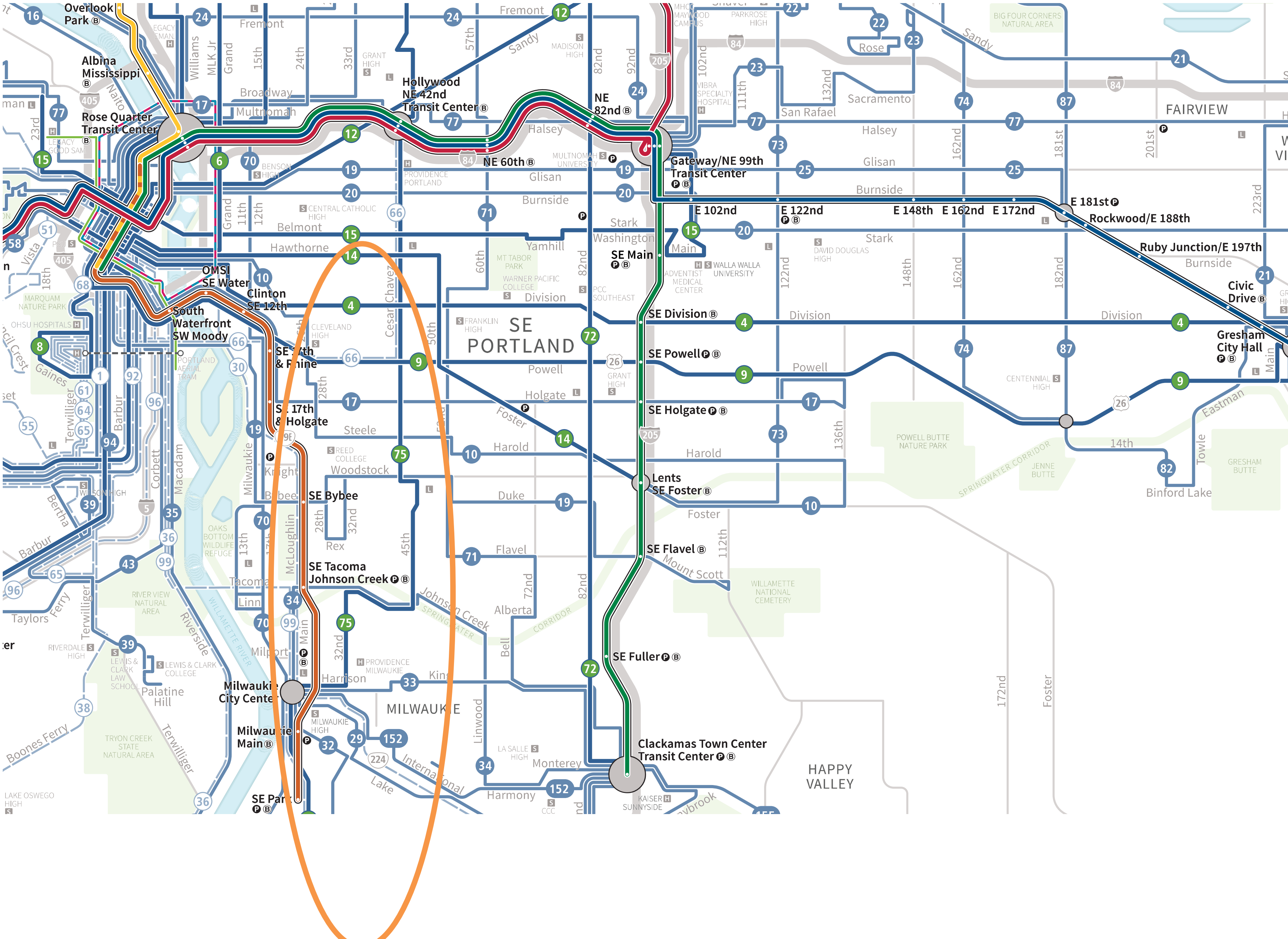
Access arises from a *connected* network



Other shapes become possible once you have *frequent* lines.

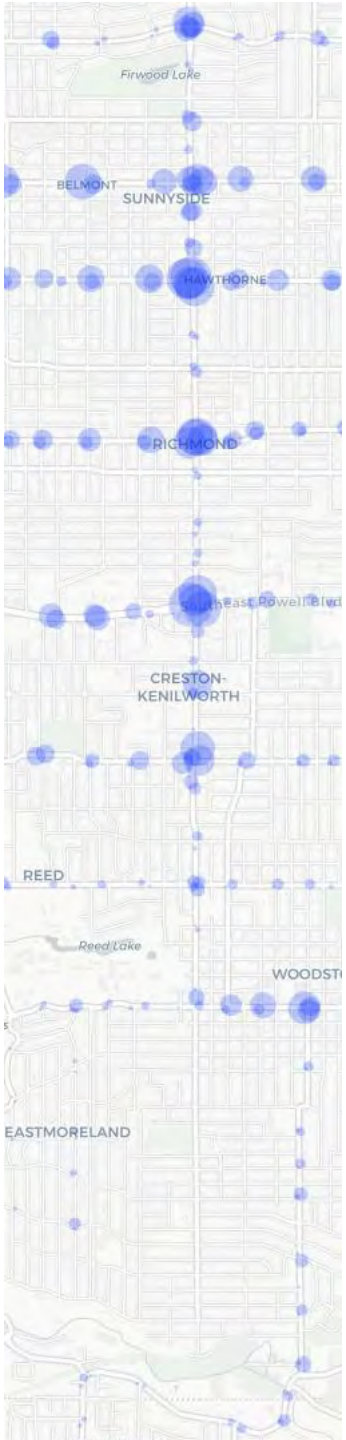






Overlook Park
Albina Mississippi
Rose Quarter Transit Center
Hollywood NE 42nd Transit Center
NE 82nd
NE 60th
Gateway/NE 99th Transit Center
E 102nd
E 122nd
E 148th
E 162nd
E 172nd
E 181st
Rockwood/E 188th
Ruby Junction/E 197th
Civic Drive
Gresham City Hall
OMSI SE Water
Clinton SE 12th
South Waterfront SW Moody
SE 17th & Rhine
SE 17th & Holgate
SE Bybee
SE Tacoma Johnson Creek
Milwaukie City Center
Milwaukie Main
SE Park
SE Main
SE Division
SE Powell
SE Holgate
Lents SE Foster
SE Flavel
SE Fuller
Clackamas Town Center Transit Center
SE PORTLAND
MILWAUKIE
HAPPY VALLEY
FAIRVIEW
Fremont
Broadway
Multnomah
Halsey
Glisan
Burnside
Belmont
Hawthorne
Stark
Washington
Yamhill
Division
Powell
Holgate
Steele
Foster
Harold
Woodstock
Duke
Flavel
Alberta
Knight
Bybee
Rex
Tacoma
Linn
Milport
Harrison
King
Monterey
Harmony
International
Lake
Johnson Creek
Mount Scott
Sandy
Rose
Sacramento
San Rafael
Main
14th
Eastman
Towle
Binford Lake
Taylors Ferry
Boones Ferry
Barbur
Terwilliger
Macadam
Corbett
Bertha
Gaines
Palatine Hill
Riverside
Williams
MLK Jr
Grand
15th
24th
33rd
57th
82nd
92nd
102nd
111th
132nd
162nd
181st
201st
223rd
11th
12th
28th
32nd
45th
50th
60th
72nd
112th
122nd
136th
148th
182nd
172nd
Cesar Chavez
McLoughlin
Milwaukie
Linwood
Bell
Marquam Nature Park
OHSU Hospitals
Portland Aerial Tram
Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge
River View Natural Area
Tryon Creek State Natural Area
Mt Tabor Park
Powell Butte Nature Park
Jenne Butte
Gresham Butte
Willamette National Cemetery
Big Four Corners Natural Area
Springwater Corridor
Willamette River
Reed College
Warner Pacific College
Multnomah University
Lewis & Clark College
Lewis & Clark Law School
Providence Portland
Providence Milwaukie
Adventist Medical Center
Walla Walla University
PCC Southeast
Kaiser Sunnyside

To Columbia Blvd.



Hawthorne/Foster (Line 14)

Division (Line 4)

Powell (Line 9)

To Milwaukie

The Ridership-Coverage Tradeoff

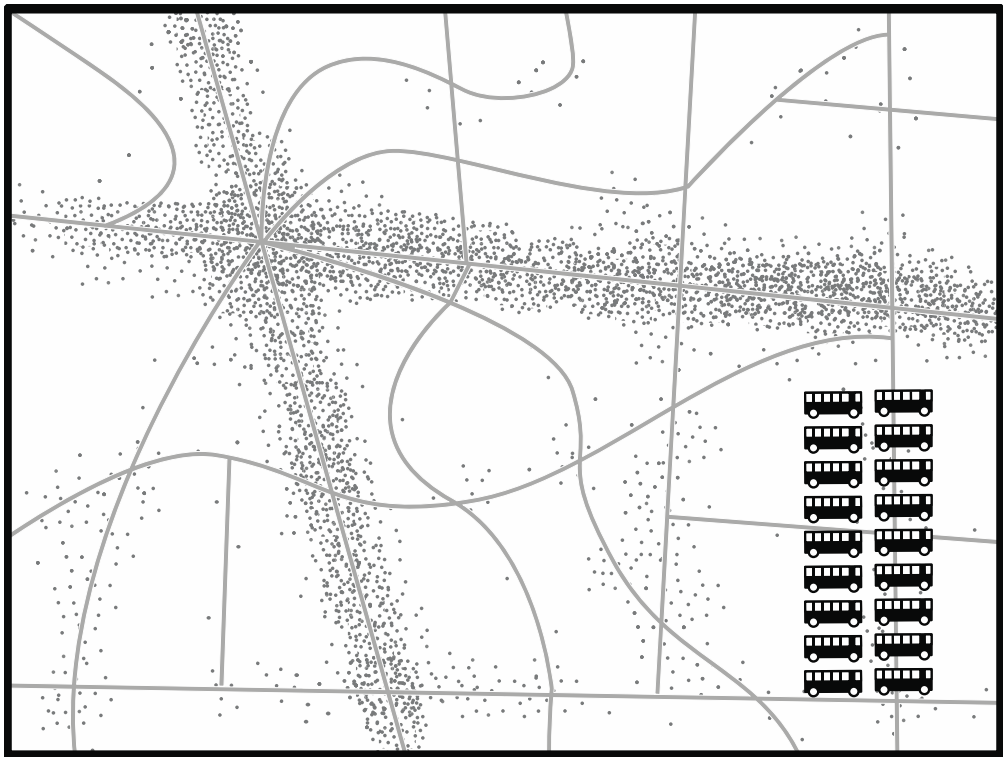
But is ridership what you want?

How should a transit agency allocate its resources?

Fictional Urban Area

Dots = residents and jobs

You have 18 buses

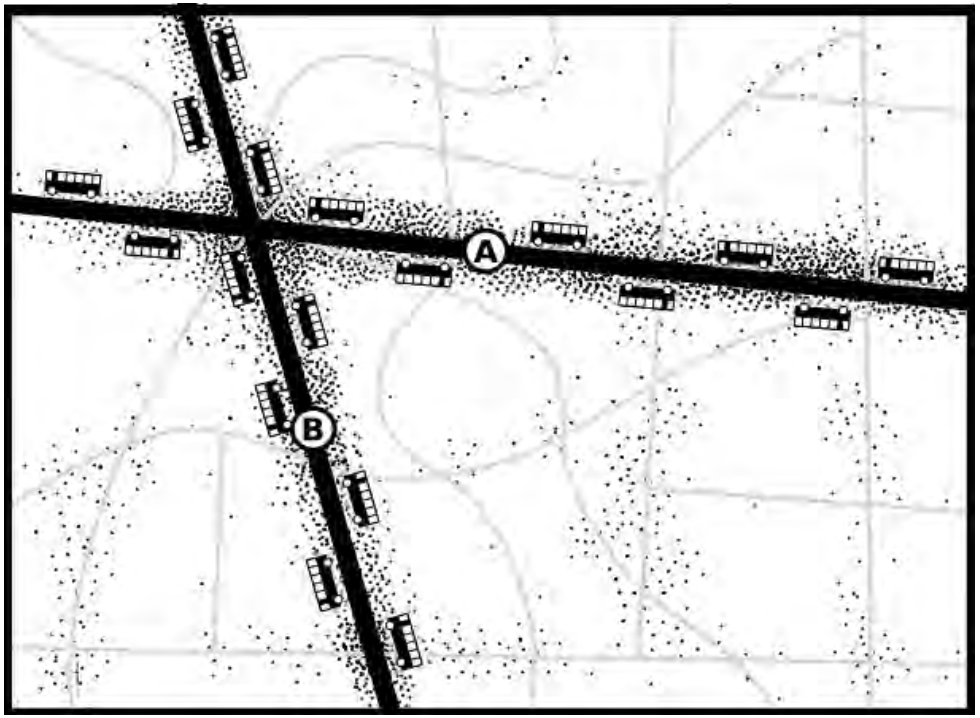


Ridership Goal "Maximum Ridership"

Think like a business, *choosing which markets you will enter*.

The straight lines offer density, walkability, and an efficient transit path, so you focus service there.

Because all 18 buses are focused on few lines, they are frequent.



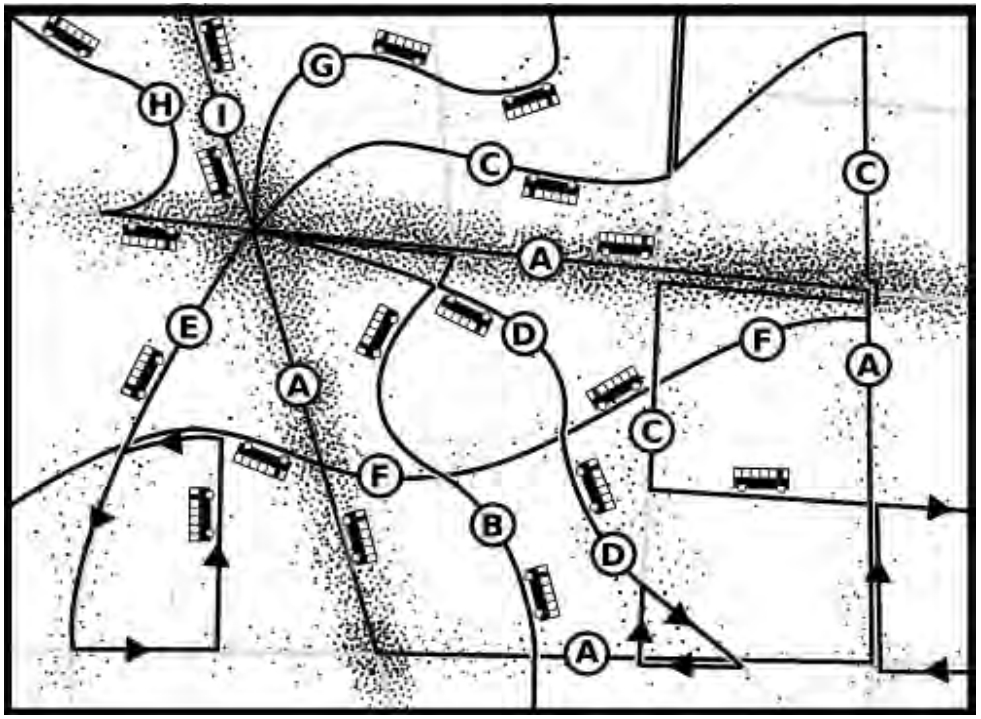
Performance Measure: *Productivity*

Ridership relative to cost

Coverage Goal "Some service for everyone"

Think like a government service. Try to serve everyone, *even those in expensive-to-serve places*.

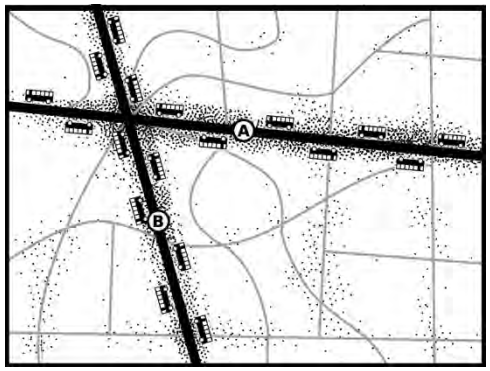
The result is more routes covering everyone, but less frequency, more complexity, and lower ridership.



Performance Measure: *Coverage*

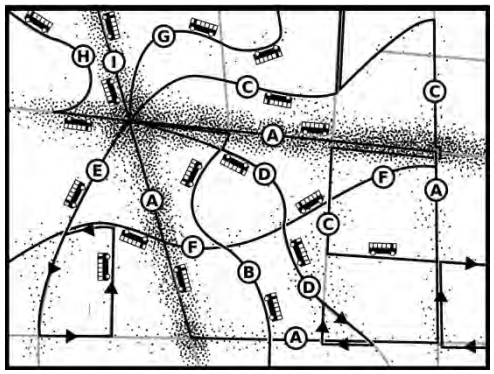
% of population and jobs near some service

Both goals are important,
… but they lead opposite directions!



Ridership Goal

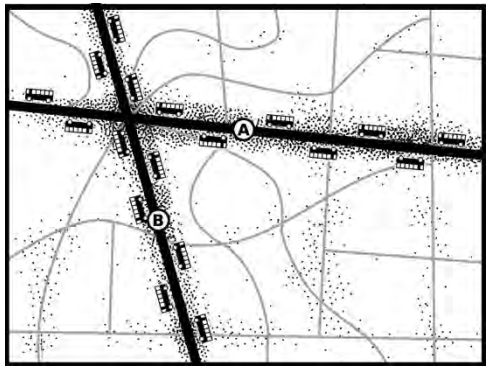
- *"Think like a business."*
- Low subsidy, high farebox return.
- Support dense and walkable development.
- Maximum VMT reduction.
- Protect economy from congestion.



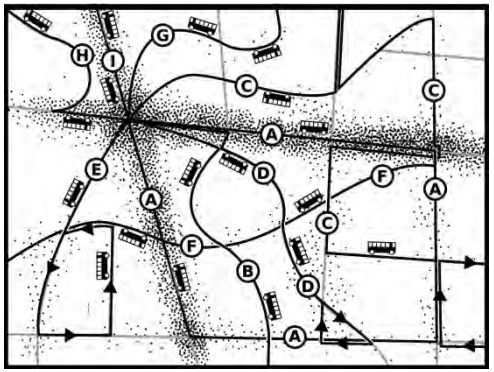
Coverage Goal

- *"Access for all"*
- Support suburban low-density development.
- Lifeline access for everyone, no matter where they live.
- Service to every city or electoral district.

So it helps to choose a point on the spectrum …



Ridership Goal



Coverage Goal