



Date: April 25, 2019  
To: Members of the Sound Transit Board  
Subject: Sound Transit Fare Enforcement

TAB Members:  
Keiko Budech  
Enjoleah Daye  
Lynn Hubbard  
Jennifer Malley-Crawford  
Andrew Martin  
Alexandra Wakeman Rouse  
Carla Saulter  
Lucas Simons  
Erin Tighe  
Barbara Wright  
Michelle Zeidman

*The Seattle Transit Advisory Board shall **advise** the City Council, the Mayor, and all departments and offices of the City **on matters related to transit** and the possible and actual impact of actions by the City upon all forms of public transportation.*

*The Board shall be provided the opportunity to comment and make recommendations on City policies, plans, and projects as they may relate to **transit capital improvements, transit mobility, and transit operations** throughout the City...*

*The Board shall help facilitate City policies, plans, and projects that support local and region-wide transit mobility efforts, to help **ensure a functioning and coordinated transit system** throughout the City and region.*

*The Board shall function as the **public oversight committee of revenues collected under Seattle Transportation Benefit District (STBD) Proposition 1**, as described in Resolution 12 of the STBD...*

*The Board shall make an annual report to the City Council on the status of its work program and the achievement of its goals.*

**City Council Resolution  
31572**

After King County Metro (KCM) staff presented on its new fare enforcement policy at our January 2019 meeting, **we members of the Seattle Transit Advisory Board decided we want to better understand Sound Transit’s fare enforcement policies. We would thus like to extend an invitation to Sound Transit to present on its fare enforcement program at an upcoming Seattle Transit Advisory Board.**

We believe that an equitable fare violation program is an important step toward making public transportation affordable, accessible, and safe for all. We do not want vulnerable populations—those who have the least ability to pay fines and the highest need for transit access—to get stuck in a cycle of debt or in the court system due to an inability to provide proof of payment. We would specifically like to understand the following with regards to Sound Transit’s fare enforcement policies and program:

**The fare resolution process.** The King County audit also found that few people who were cited actually paid their fines, and unpaid fines quickly became misdemeanor charges. KCM’s new program takes civil infractions out of the district court and administers violations in-house, as well as reduces infraction fees and provides community service opportunities in lieu of payment. KCM is also wiping previous citations from riders’ records, as well as clearing citations that went to court including collections fines, allowing all riders a fresh start. We would like to know more about Sound Transit’s fare resolution process, specifically: (a) where do people go to take care of their citation; (b) how many citations end up in collections; and (c) what is the return on investment of fare enforcement and fines/fares paid?

**Data on who is impacted.** Through an audit, King County found that people experiencing housing instability and low-income people were disproportionately cited for fare evasion. We would like to know if Sound Transit has collected and analyzed data on the demographics of people receiving citations, and particularly if Sound Transit has used the data to understand the impacts on people of color, low-income people, and people experiencing homelessness.

**Plans on building a consistent program.** Regional transit users, including visitors, seamlessly use both KCM buses and Sound Transit light rail and buses. We would like to see a consistent fare enforcement policy between Sound Transit and KCM to create a connected, safe, and accessible regional transit system, and would like to understand Sound Transit's plans, if any, to adjust fare enforcement policy to align with KCM.

We welcome Sound Transit staff to attend a Seattle Transit Advisory Board to present on its fare enforcement program. If interested, please contact SDOT board liaison Benjamin Smith at [TransitBoard@seattle.gov](mailto:TransitBoard@seattle.gov) to set up a time to present.

Sincerely,

Seattle Transit Advisory Board