



Seattle
Department of
Transportation

City of Seattle
Seattle Transit Advisory Board

TAB Members:

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*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

Date: January 29, 2020

To: King County Council

Subject: King County Metro LIFT Subsidy Proposal Response

Dear King County Councilmembers,

We, the members of the Seattle Transit Advisory Board, are writing to share our strong support for King County Metro’s proposed ORCA LIFT subsidy.

Like King County Metro staff, we believe that mobility is a human right and that the county should do everything it can to provide mobility to all of its citizens. Metro’s proposed program subsidizes transit fares for riders who earn 80% of the federal poverty level (\$9,000 annually for an individual and \$19,000 for a family of four), riders for whom any travel costs constitute an extreme financial burden.

This program would benefit participants by providing access to employment, education, medical appointments, and social connections. Residents would no longer have to forego trips (or face humiliation and possibly interaction with fare enforcement) because of our region’s prohibitively expensive fares. A tangential benefit would be a likely speeding of the boarding process, since the program provides cards to riders who might otherwise pay with cash or be unable to afford payment at all.

Because of the significant lead time required to make changes to the ORCA system, and because King County Metro has been directed to implement an income-based fare pilot this year, we urge you to approve this program as quickly as possible. This will give agency staff time to work with the ORCA vendor to get the program up and running by July.

Finally, because the program involves costs—both to administer and in potential lost revenue—and because of the precarious nature of transit funding in our region, we encourage the council to work with other stakeholders to identify a permanent, stable funding source.

Thank you in advance for your commitment to providing mobility for all of King County’s residents.

Sincerely,

The Seattle Transit Advisory Board