



Date: May 15, 2017
To: King County Metro
Subject: Metro Fare Review

TAB Members:

- Ifrah Abshir
- Marci Carpenter
- Carla Chávez
- Kevin Duffy-Greaves
- Jennifer Malley
- Andrew Martin
- Ron Posthuma
- Carla Saulter
- Zach Shaner
- Erin Tighe
- Annie Tran
- Katie Wilson

*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**

Thank you for presenting the options for the Adult Fare restructure for King County Metro. The Seattle Transit Advisory Board (TAB) appreciates the opportunity to provide input about this important policy change. We understand that a simpler fare structure will be easier for riders to understand, for service providers to enforce, and it will also reduce barriers to ridership and decrease misunderstandings and altercations between drivers and riders.

The TAB supports an option that would provide the biggest benefit all riders, while maintaining KCM's financial integrity. To that end, we believe additional information is necessary to avoid unintended consequences.

We are concerned about the lack of clarity on who benefits or is burdened by the options Metro is still considering. Specifically, we would like this type of equity analysis included as part of the information Metro provides to the public about the two fare options that are being proposed. Moreover, we are concerned that an overly simplified fare system may not be equitable in terms of how much it costs to provide certain types of service as well as in relation to some customer groups' ability to pay. We would, therefore like to better understand the different policies and objectives that Metro is juggling.

Specifically regarding the two options presented to us, we have several comments about Option A and we would like further information regarding the impacts of Option B.

Option A (\$2.75):

We are concerned that this option effectively subsidizes residents traveling to and from the suburbs at the expense of urban residents, who may be more likely to travel shorter distances more frequently and at non-peak hours. A flat \$2.75 fare is simple to implement and understand, but it might facilitate a transfer of resources from those who use less expensive services to those who use services that are more costly to operate.

We recognize that the suburbanization of poverty may have been a consideration that Metro took into account when deciding to pursue this option. However, without any evidence that the benefits and burdens of this fare option were considered, we feel strongly that the equity impacts of any fare change option should be seriously weighed in these deliberations.

As Metro works to simplify the fare structure, we encourage KCM leaders to also consider the following changes:

- Expand the ORCA LIFT program to include all reduced fare types (senior, youth, etc.), thereby further simplifying the fare structure
- Raise the ORCA LIFT income threshold for eligibility; today, an individual has to have a household income of 200% below the federal poverty level to qualify, leaving transit ridership out of reach for many low-income residents.
- Use resources to understand the barriers to applying for the ORCA LIFT program and develop policy fixes that reduce or eliminate those barriers. Increasing outreach to potential ORCA LIFT users is an important step in increasing transit accessibility, as only a small proportion of those eligible are taking advantage of the program. TAB suggests earmarking any additional revenue received from these fare changes for this purpose.

Sincerely,

Seattle Transit Advisory Board