



## **King County**

### **Dow Constantine**

King County Executive

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June 27, 2022

The Honorable Claudia Balducci  
Chair, King County Council  
Room 1200  
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Balducci:

Pursuant to King County Council Motion 15600, which created Metro's subsidized annual pass, please find enclosed the required 2021 Evaluation Report for Income-Based Fares. The enclosed report details enrollment, transit ridership, and the experience of customers, Metro, and partners during the first full year of the program. It also describes Metro's multi-year study on program impact and strategies to increase participation.

The subsidized annual pass is an element of Metro's ORCA LIFT fare program, which was established in 2014 and provides a full subsidy for Metro and Sound Transit services for people who qualify. This program aims to increase mobility, access to determinants of equity, and health and well-being for people with no or very low incomes.

In 2021, over 6,000 people enrolled or renewed in the program and riders took more than 1.3 million trips, mostly on Metro buses. This ridership represents two percent of King County Metro ORCA and Access boardings and one percent of Sound Transit ORCA boardings. Subsequent annual reports in 2023 and 2024 will detail learnings, process adjustments, progress on key measures, and potential program modifications to maximize equity, impact, and effectiveness.

Transmittal of this report coincides with the launch of the region's new ORCA system, which will provide new opportunities and a better customer experience. In 2022, Metro and partners will map out a plan for near-term adjustments and longer-term changes that increase efficiency, leverage new ORCA technology, and reduce reliance on manual processes. Improving the equity, affordability, and accessibility of fares is part of ongoing regional discussions about rebuilding ridership, investing where needs are greatest, and prioritizing a seamless regional fare payment system for all riders. As the transit systems in the region increasingly integrate, it is vital that fares strategies and programs align. The subsidized annual pass is an important element of Metro's commitment to mobility as a human right.

The Honorable Claudia Balducci

June 27, 2022

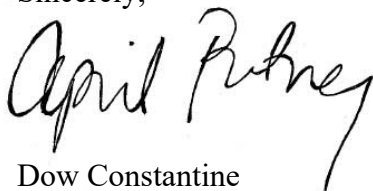
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The work outlined in this report furthers the King County Strategic Plan mobility objective of providing more equitable mobility access and reducing historic gaps. It reflects the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan by applying the Equity Impact Review process to identify, evaluate, and communicate the potential impacts of the program on equity. The work supports the objectives in the Strategic Climate Action Plan by making it easier for more people to ride transit. Finally, it helps achieve Metro's 2021-2031 Strategic Plan for Public Transportation by ensuring that discounts are provided to those who cannot afford to pay full fare.

It is estimated that the report required approximately 200 hours to produce, costing approximately \$10,000 in staff hours. The estimated printing cost for this report is nominal.

Thank you for your consideration of this program evaluation report. If your staff have any questions, please contact Lindsey Greto, Reduced Fares Chief, Metro Transit Department, at 206-263-7886.

Sincerely,

 for

Dow Constantine  
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers  
    ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff  
            Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council  
Shannon Braddock, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive  
Karan Gill, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive  
Mina Hashemi, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive  
Terry White, General Manager, Metro Transit Department (MTD)  
Christina O'Claire, Director, Mobility Division, MTD