



King County

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King County Executive

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October 23, 2014

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

Dear Councilmember Phillips:

On June 1, 2014, as required by Ordinance 17757, Section 4.B., I transmitted to the King County Council Metro Transit's Low-Income Fare Implementation Plan. With today's letter I am transmitting an updated plan that reflects further development of this new program. The Metro staff team planning the low-income fare program has made significant progress in the past few months and I am pleased to share this with you.

During the summer, the Low-Income Fare Program Implementation Task Force appointed by the Council met five times to review Metro's initial implementation plan. They completed their report in August. The Task Force's discussions and recommendations were extremely valuable, and the planning team has made adjustments to the plan in response. You will see a table summarizing the recommendations and responses in the updated plan.

I am also pleased to report that Metro, Public Health – Seattle & King County, and the Department of Community and Human Services have continued to collaborate in developing the low-income fare program. In particular, Public Health and Metro are entering into an agreement in which Public Health will provide public outreach and eligibility verification services for the program. Public Health will also coordinate a countywide network of community agencies that Metro is forming to verify applicants' eligibility and distribute One Regional Card for All (ORCA) cards. Metro will provide overall program oversight and manage the low-income fare ORCA cards. This is an exceptional model of government and community agencies working together and pooling their strengths to serve the public—and helping King County become the nation's best-run government.

The program took a major step forward this fall with the release of a request for proposals (RFP) to community agencies for the provision of program services. The network of community agencies, along with Public Health's many public service outlets, will fill a critically important need: making it easy for people throughout the County to have access to the low-income fare. The role of partner agencies is described in detail in the updated plan.

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You will also see in the implementation plan that other key elements of the low-income fare program are falling into place. An online database that will support customer service and program integrity is under development and will make the process of obtaining an ORCA card simple for the new cardholder while ensuring individuals only have one valid card at a time. A number of income verification options for program applicants have been identified, with the intent of enrolling as many eligible participants in the program as possible. A plan has been developed for conducting vigorous marketing and public outreach, including to those who do not speak English as a first language.

With the progress made in the past few months, I am confident that the County is moving toward a successful rollout of the low-income fare next March.

By helping everyone in our community have equitable access to public transportation, the low-income fare program will make significant contributions to the goals of the King County Strategic Plan and our shared vision of achieving equity and social justice.

We estimate that this updated report required 1180 staff hours to research, develop and produce, costing approximately \$113,220. The estimated cost of printing this report is \$5.

Thank you for your consideration of the updated Low Income Fare Program Implementation Plan. A successful launch and ongoing operation of this program will provide significant benefits to participants and to our entire community.

If you have any questions, please contact Matt Hansen, Manager of Customer Communications & Services for Metro, at 206-477-5789, or matt.hansen@kingcounty.gov.

Sincerely,



Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers
ATTN: Carolyn Busch, Interim Chief of Staff
Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council
Carrie S. Cihak, Chief of Policy Development, King County Executive Office
Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget
Harold S. Taniguchi, Director, Department of Transportation (DOT)
Kevin Desmond, General Manager, Metro Transit Division, DOT
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