



Legislation Text

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Clerk 02/18/2020

AN ORDINANCE adding an income-based fare subsidy component to the low-income transit fare program; and amending Ordinance 17757, Section 5, as amended, and K.C.C. 4A.700.490.

STATEMENT OF FACTS:

1. The King County council has worked with the King County executive and the Metro transit department ("Metro") to implement a number of programs to make public transit more affordable and accessible to people in need.
2. Ordinance 12643 authorized the sale of transit tickets to human services agencies at a discounted price to allow human services agencies to provide free or low-cost transit tickets to the people they serve and established the regional reduced fare program, which provides a reduced transit fare for people with disabilities and seniors over age sixty-five.
3. Ordinance 13480 authorized transit pass agreements with public school districts and established a no-charge child fare and a reduced-price youth fare for younger transit riders.
4. Ordinance 17757 authorized the use of region's transit fare card, the One Regional Card for All, also known as ORCA, for a low-income fare for people with household income at or below two hundred percent of the federal poverty level.
5. The 2019-2020 Biennial Budget Ordinance, Ordinance 18835, Section 109, Proviso P3, as amended by Ordinance 18930, Section 75, required the executive to develop an income-based fare program to provide no or very low cost access to transit for residents earning one hundred

thirty-five percent of the federal poverty level or less and asked that the program be informed by input from an income-based fare stakeholder group, guidance from academic or private sector experts, data and market research on the transportation needs and access barriers of low-income populations and the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan.

6. Ordinance 18930 changed the eligibility threshold for the income-based fare program to one hundred thirty-eight percent of the federal poverty level or below.

7. In response to Ordinances 18835 and 18930, Metro convened an income-based fare stakeholder group, reviewed guidance from experts and data from market research and transmitted an income-based fare program implementation plan, which was approved by the King County council by Motion XXXXX (Proposed Motion 2019-0022).

8. Adoption of this ordinance would authorize Metro, subject to appropriation authority, to subsidize the low-income fare for Metro's public transit service for people whose incomes are at or below eighty percent of the federal poverty level.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Ordinance 17757, Section 5, as amended, and K.C.C. 4A.700.490 are hereby amended to read as follows:

A. The director of the Metro transit department may implement and administer a low-income transit fare program using the existing smart card One Regional Card for All, also known as ORCA, system. The eligibility threshold for the low-income fare is set at two hundred percent of the federal poverty level.

B. Subject to appropriation authority, the director may authorize subsidizing the low-income transit fare for persons whose household income is verified to be at or below eighty percent of the federal poverty level.

Income verification shall be performed in accordance with written requirements approved by the director, which requirements shall be crafted to impose the least burden possible on the applicant for the program.