



King County

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

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October 11, 2023

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

Dear Councilmember Upthegrove,

This letter transmits a proposed Ordinance, that would, if enacted, extend the ORCA LIFT low-income fare pilot of \$1.00, through the end of 2024, on buses, trolleys, transit vans, dial-a-ride, and streetcars provided by the King County Metro Transit Department.

Approval of this proposed legislation would allow Metro to complete thorough engagement and evaluation of the pilot fare, in compliance with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidance set forth in FTA's Title VI Circular 4702.1B, to better understand how the pilot fare supports mobility for low-income riders across the county. This proposed Ordinance aligns with King County Metro's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, 2021-2031, as adopted by Ordinance 19367, which includes a strategy to "align fares with other service providers, meet revenue targets, and advance equity through Metro's income-based approach to fares."

The ORCA LIFT program offers reduced transit fares to eligible low-income riders. Ordinance 19532, adopted in November 2022, temporarily reduced the LIFT fare from \$1.50 to \$1.00 for twelve months from January 1, 2023 to January 1, 2024. This followed Sound Transit's decision to reduce the LIFT fare and the Metro General Manager's emergency directive in September 2022 to align fares with other service providers. Unless extended, the \$1.00 fare will expire on January 1, 2024, at which point the LIFT fare will return to \$1.50. If approved, this proposed Ordinance would extend the reduced fare of \$1.00 until January 1, 2025.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed Ordinance which would, if enacted, support mobility by reducing fare barriers and increasing access to transit among ORCA LIFT program participants, who are among the region's most vulnerable riders.


The Honorable Dave Upthegrove

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If your staff have questions, please contact Rachel Wilch, Fares Program Lead, Metro Transit Department, at 206-263-0609.

Sincerely,

 for

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Karan Gill, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Penny Lipsou, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive

Michelle Allison, General Manager, Metro Transit Department (MTD)

Christina O'Claire, Director, Mobility Division, MTD