Equitable Fare Compliance Approach

Staff and CEO recommendations

Board of Directors Meeting

January 27, 2022

SOUND TRANSIT

Why we're here

No Board action today

- Summarize engagement and policy work done to date.

- Discuss initial results from Fare Ambassador pilot.

- Present staff and CEO recommendations on an Equitable Fare Compliance policy.

SOUNDTRANSIT

Fare Compliance vision and outcomes

A system where everyone taps — where everyone who has fare media can get to where they want to go, and everyone who needs fare media can get access to it

- Equity and fairness to our riders, stakeholders, community members, and taxpayers.

- Sound financial stewardship, as indicated by high fare compliance and meeting farebox recovery targets.

- Uphold Sound Transit's values of Passenger Focus, Integrity, Inclusion and Respect, and Safety.

- Continuous improvement that is measurable and accountable.

SOUND TRANSIT
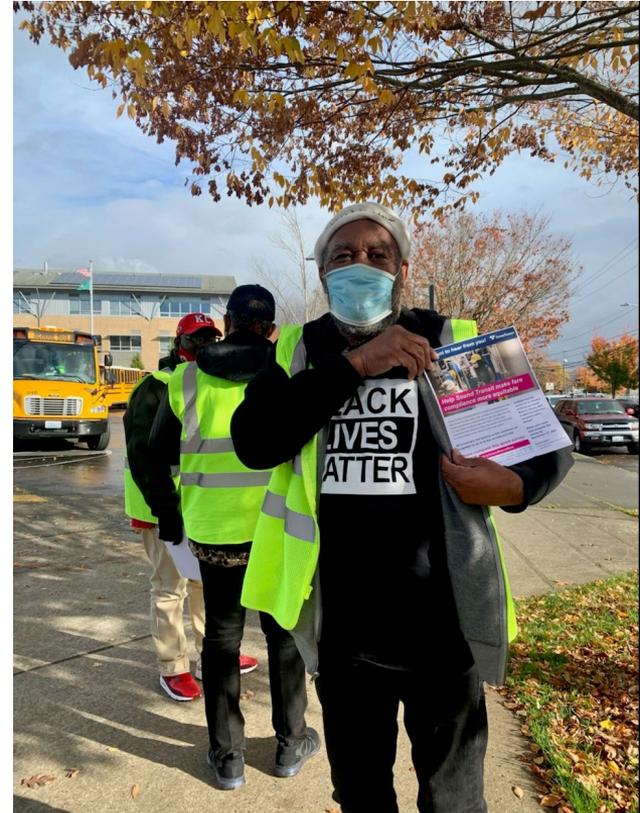
Fares guiding framework

We serve passengers with a fare structure that is regionally integrated to encourage transit <u>ridership</u> through <u>equitable</u> and <u>simple</u> pricing, and <u>financial stewardship</u>.

Draft policy informed by:

- Three years of community engagement
  - Online surveys (8,000 responses)
  - Onboard surveys (1,100)
  - Sounding Board surveys (300)
  - Listening sessions (18)
  - Virtual and in-person Town Halls (3)
  - 2021 Survey (300)

- 2020 Action Plan

- Motion 2020-74

- Learned experience with Fare Ambassador pilot

SoundTransit

Status of recommended Action Plan items

Completed

Enhanced staff training, stopped calling KCSO, changed uniforms and names, made ambassadors temporary ST employees.

Ongoing

Enhanced Fare Paid Zone, fully subsidized pilot participation, expanding education on ORCA and promotion of reduced fares.

SOUNDTRANSIT

Fare Ambassador program initial results

Pilot program through May 2022

- 4 Supervisors
- 15 Fare Ambassadors
- 8 different languages spoken
- 3 weeks of training completed
- On duty 16 hours a day, 7 days a week
- In November 2021:
    - 23,582 fare checks all modes
    - 465 ORCA Lift cards given out on all modes

SOUNDTRANSIT

Fare Ambassador program initial results

Major milestones

- First shifts: September 1, 2021

- Began fare checking and documenting warnings on October 11.

- 84% of surveyed passengers are satisfied or very satisfied after interacting with our Fare Ambassadors.

- Positive feedback for new passenger service approach.

SOUNDTRANSIT

Fare Ambassador program initial results

Concerns

- Low rate of passengers providing identification – below 40%.

- Current staffing levels – able to check approximately 2% of ridership.

- Agency ability to hire and retain a team of hourly frontline staff this large – current staff retention rate 78%.

- Safety incidents with Fare Ambassadors and passengers.

SOUNDTRANSIT

Inspection rate on Link & Sounder

Number of inspections performed and warnings given per month

Inspection and Warning Totals

	September	October	November	December
Inspections	7875	21246	23584	25219
Warnings	1077	2193	2688	2893

Inspections ■ Warnings ·········· Log. (Inspections) ·········· Log. (Warnings)

SOUNDTRANSIT
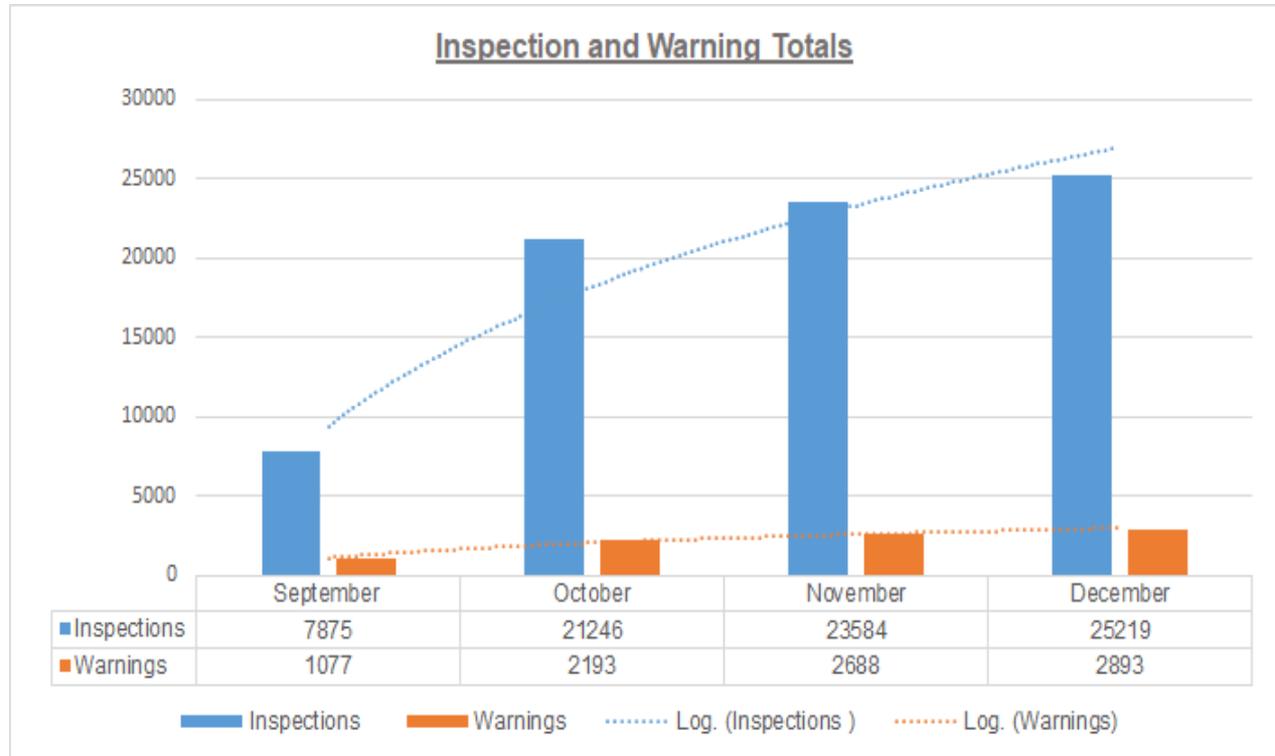
Equity analysis

- Warning and citation demographic analysis drove proposed program elements.

- All elements in the Action Plan were prioritized per three criteria:
  - What racial equity results are desired?
  - What communities of color will benefit?
  - Are there possible unintended negative consequences if implemented?

- Engagement included (but was not limited to) targeted engagement with those most impacted by fare enforcement- people of color in the Rainier Valley.

- Evans School of Public Policy and Governance completed Racial Equity in Fare Enforcement Policies analysis.

SOUNDTRANSIT

Staff and CEO recommendations

To include clarity on:

1. Access to Fares

2. Number of warnings

3. Updated fine amounts and alternative resolution pathways

4. Alternative to suspension

5. Role of law enforcement in fare compliance

6. Fare simplification / reduced confusion

SOUNDTRANSIT

1. Access to fares

- Expand the timeline for Sound Transit's participation in the Annual subsidized pass.

- Reduce ORCA LIFT and Youth Fares from $1.50 to $1.

- Approach and encourage municipalities, school districts and/or Olympia to finance ORCA cards for low-income youth.

SOUND TRANSIT

2. Number of warnings

- Passengers without proof of payment would get **two warnings** in a 12-month period without penalty.

- Fare ambassadors will have an option during the warning phase to flag passengers that are unsheltered or experiencing homelessness or other instability, so they will not progress to the action phase.

First interaction		Second interaction
Warning 1	→	Warning 2

SOUNDTRANSIT
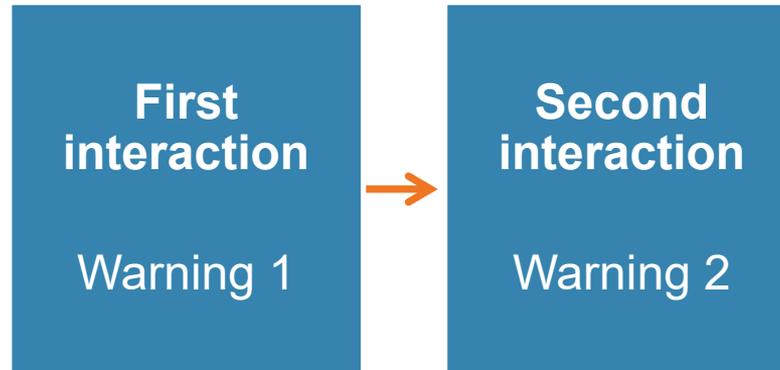
3. Fines and alternative resolution

- Third interaction: $50 fine with multiple resolution options.
- Fourth interaction: $75 fine with multiple resolution options.
- Suspension not included and <u>no law enforcement role</u> in fare compliance.
- Passengers without proof of payment (POP) may continue to ride the system.

3rd interaction

$50 fine with multiple resolution options

→

4th interaction

$75 fine with multiple resolution options

Resolution options (3rd and 4th interaction)

Full-fare passengers

- ST engagement or education activity, load $50 on ORCA card, pay $50 fine, or sign a commitment to tap in the future (3rd interaction only).
- Fourth interaction includes $75 fine with above options.
- Passengers may dispute the fine.
- If no action taken after 90 days, ST may refer to collection agencies.

Reduced fare eligible passengers

- All options above plus ability to sign up for ORCA LIFT and add funds to card.

SOUNDTRANSIT

Repeat non-payment proposal

- On **5th interaction** within 12 months without proof of payment and beyond, Sound Transit would maintain ability to refer to district court for resolution and or dispute.

- This is not a criminal referral; it is a civil infraction like a red light, speed camera, or parking ticket.

- This allows the agency a tool for any passengers that continue to not pay that do not fall into previous categories of support.

SOUNDTRANSIT

Similar agency comparisons

Agency	Warnings	Citations	Notes
DART (Dallas)	Discretion	$100-150	+ $50 admin fee
TriMet (Portland)	One	$75 – $175	Fine escalates each time.
RTD (Denver)	None	$106.50	Could result in Driver's License suspension
METRO (Houston)	Discretion	$199	Admin fee only ($75) if paid within 30 days.

SoundTransit

Program comparison

Non-payment interactions within 12 months	Proposed program	Old program
1st	Warning ($0)	Warning ($0)
2nd	Warning ($0)	Civil infraction ($124)
3rd*	Administrative fine ($50)	Civil infraction ($124)
4th*	Administrative fine ($75)	Civil infraction ($124)
5th and beyond	Civil infraction ($124)	Civil infraction ($124)

*With alternative/non-monetary resolution options

SOUNDTRANSIT

Estimating # of warnings and citations

Using 2019 ridership data

30 million passengers – 8% of rides inspected

- **1st warning (no penalty)**: 51,000

- **2nd warning (no penalty)**: 3,000

- ***3rd interaction ($50 fine)**: 1,700

- ***4th interaction ($75 fine):** 200

- **5th interaction ($124 fine)**: 100

*Includes alternative resolution options

Ensuring that low-income fares reach eligible people

- Establish goal for ORCA LIFT and Annual Subsidized Pass to reach 80 percent of those eligible over a multi-year period.

- Fully fund the communications campaigns necessary to achieve the annual goals.

- Work with CBOs to develop communication strategies that will be effective with targeted communities to achieve the adopted annual goals.

- Recommend doubling fare ambassador program and increasing program in the future to meet engagement goals.

SOUNDTRANSIT

Additional options for Board consideration

- Expand ORCA LIFT eligibility above 200% federal poverty level.

- Extend ORCA LIFT qualification from 2 to 3 years.

- Work with enrolling agencies to automatically enroll and deliver reduced fare media to those eligible to reduce barriers to entry

SOUNDTRANSIT

Policy monitoring, metrics and reporting

Quarterly metric reporting at REO
Some key questions to continuously evaluate

1. Is the program equitable and not harming communities?

2. Who are we not reaching and how can we reach them?

3. Is fare compliance effective without an ID requirement?

4. What is the effect of this policy on fare revenue and our long-range financial plan?

5. Are Fare Ambassadors helping create a positive, safe and passenger focused experience for riders?

SOUND TRANSIT

Thank you.

SoundTransit

soundtransit.org