



Resolution No. R2022-09

Amending the Adopted 2022 Budget for Reduced Fare Program Communications and Marketing

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:	Staff contact:
Rider Experience and Operations Committee	04/07/2022	Recommend to Board	Mary Cummings, Chief Administrative Officer
Board	04/28/2022	Deferred to May	Carrie Avila-Mooney, Director Regional Government and Community Relations
Board	05/26/2022	Final Action	

Proposed action

Amends the Adopted 2022 Annual Budget to increase the Agency Administrative Operating project budget by \$400,000 from \$124,128,011 to \$124,528,011 to account for the establishment and delivery of reduced fare program promotion in 2022 and support the goal to enroll eighty percent of the likely ORCA LIFT market.

Key features summary

- A key component of the Comprehensive Fares Strategy and Equitable Fare Compliance efforts is increasing participation in all reduced fare programs to ensure that everyone who needs fare media can get access to it.
- The Board is considering a separate action, Motion No. M2022-27, that would adopt a goal of enrolling eighty percent of likely ORCA LIFT riders in the region. A likely ORCA LIFT rider is defined as an eligible rider that regularly rides transit for 5+ trips per month.
- This effort requires a multi-faceted approach that includes research, community engagement, potential technology upgrades, work with agency partners and marketing and communication materials.
- This scope of work may include consulting resources to implement strategies.
- Multiple Sound Transit departments will work to implement strategies including Government and Community Relations, Communications, Passenger Experience, and Finance.
- The requested amount covers:
 - Community involvement strategy and planning - \$160,000
 - Reduced fare community support project - \$160,000
 - Marketing and Communications - \$80,000
- There are risks around staff and consultant capacity to implement work in 2022.

Background

Sound Transit participates in multiple reduced fare programs. These include ORCA LIFT, ORCA Youth, Senior and Disabled Regional Reduced Fare Permit, and the Human Service Ticket program. Sound Transit works with partners to enroll participants and to promote these programs and currently has an

agreement with King County Metro who leads outreach efforts. King County Public Health is the lead sub-agency to engage partners to reach people who qualify and enroll them in the program. Outreach currently occurs on site at food banks, low-income housing, colleges, shelters, coffee shops and restaurants. There is also a temporary online option. Sound Transit increased its financial distribution to King County Public Health to increase this network of enrollment.

Barriers still exist. These include:

- People can face barriers to enrollment – mental health and substance abuse issues
- People can have other needs that take priority over enrolling in a reduced transit fare program
- Providing necessary documentation can also be a barrier – these are eligibility programs and we need to have proof that we are enrolling people who meet the income guideline
- People who qualify for ORCA LIFT might not have funds to put on their card
- Traditional marketing campaigns do not reach the intended audience, so more time intensive engagement and relationship building is required.

Regional ORCA LIFT enrollment reached a peak of about 72,000 in 2019. ORCA LIFT ridership and enrollment has declined along with transit ridership overall since the beginning of the COVID pandemic. ORCA LIFT and Annual Subsidized enrollment in the region is currently about 38,000.

Sound Transit staff have estimated the size of the regional ORCA LIFT market at about 105,000 adult riders who are not seniors or disabled and are likely transit riders not already participating in institutional pass programs. The eighty percent goal would represent an enrollment target of about 84,000 riders.

The requested budget amendment is needed for Sound Transit to enhance the current efforts that exist.

Fiscal information

This action will amend the annual project budget for the Agency Administrative Operating project by \$400,000 from \$124,128,011 to \$124,528,011 which will, in turn, increase the 2022 annual department budget by \$400,000 to research and deliver reduced fare program awareness and communications outreach to ORCA LIFT program eligible riders leading to increased participation in the program. The program will be managed and administered by the Communications Department (\$240,000) and the Government and Community Relations Office within the Executive Department (\$160,000).

The Agency Administrative Operating project funds administrative overhead expenses that are charged to capital projects as well as expenses that are not allocated to either capital projects or transit operations. This action does not change the authorized project allocation for this project.

Future costs of raising rider awareness to the ORCA Lift program may be included in future budget year development processes.

Disadvantaged and small business participation

Not applicable to this action.

Public involvement

The requested budget amendment will allow Sound Transit to increase public involvement to ensure the agency is researching, planning, and implanting the best way to involve the communities that most need these programs.

Time constraints

A one-month delay would not have a significant impact, however to reach the 80 percent goal, this work must begin in 2022.

Environmental review – KH 3/31/22

Legal review – AJP 4/1/22



Resolution No. R2022-09

A RESOLUTION of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority amending the Adopted 2022 Annual Budget to increase the Agency Administrative Operating project budget by \$400,000 from \$124,128,011 to \$124,528,011 to account for the establishment and delivery of reduced fare program promotion in 2022 and support the goal to enroll eighty percent of the likely ORCA LIFT market.

WHEREAS, the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority, commonly known as Sound Transit, was formed under chapters 81.104 and 81.112 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) for the Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties region by action of their respective county councils pursuant to RCW 81.112.030; and

WHEREAS, Sound Transit is authorized to plan, construct, and permanently operate a high-capacity system of transportation infrastructure and services to meet regional public transportation needs in the Central Puget Sound region; and

WHEREAS, in general elections held within the Sound Transit district on November 5, 1996, November 4, 2008, and November 8, 2016, voters approved local funding to implement a regional high-capacity transportation system for the Central Puget Sound region; and

WHEREAS, a key component of the Comprehensive Fares Strategy and Equitable Fare Compliance efforts is increasing participation in all reduced fare programs to ensure that everyone who needs fare media can get access to it; and

WHEREAS, the Board is considering a separate action, Motion No. M2022-27, that would adopt a goal of enrolling eighty percent of likely ORCA LIFT and annual subsidized pass riders in the region. A likely ORCA LIFT rider is defined as an eligible rider that regularly rides transit for 5+ trips per month; and

WHEREAS, this effort requires a multi-faceted approach that includes research, community engagement, potential technology upgrades, work with agency partners and marketing and communication materials; and

WHEREAS, in December 2021, through Resolution No. R2021-21, the Board adopted the 2022 Budget and Transit Improvement Plan (TIP) authorizing annual spending for operating costs and project costs by category; and

WHEREAS, the Board approved a revised annual budget of \$124,528,011 for Agency Administrative Operating project; and

WHEREAS, increasing the Agency Administrative Operating project budget by \$400,000 to cover anticipated 2022 spending, which will, in turn, increase the 2022 annual budgets for the Executive Department by \$160,000 and the Communications Department by \$240,000 to account for the establishment and delivery of reduced fare program promotion in 2022; and

WHEREAS, additional budget will be used to cover community involvement strategy and planning, a reduced fare community support project and other marketing and communications to support the goal to enroll eighty percent of the likely ORCA LIFT market; and

WHEREAS, a two-thirds affirmative vote of the entire membership of the Sound Transit Board is required to amend the adopted 2022 budget.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the Adopted 2022 Annual Budget is amended to increase the Agency Administrative Operating project budget by \$400,000 from \$124,128,011 to \$124,528,011 to account for the establishment and delivery of reduced fare program promotion in 2022 and support the goal to enroll eighty percent of the likely ORCA LIFT market.

ADOPTED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on _____.

Kent Keel
Board Chair

Attest:

Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator