Sound Transit

Regional Fare Forum Summary Report
Sound Transit Board September 28, 2017

2016 Regional Fare Forum Objectives

A group of 12 representatives from the governing bodies of each of the ORCA agencies met to:

❑ Reaffirm commitments to regional fare coordination

❑ Provide guiding principles for the next generation ORCA system's fare structure

❑ Discuss strategies to further integrate and simplify fare structures for customers to seamlessly travel throughout the region

Regional Fare Forum Participants

Scott Bader
Everett Transit
Everett City Council

Claudia Balducci
King County Metro
King County Council

Rob Dembowski
King County Metro
King County Council

Dave Earling
Community Transit
Mayor, City of Edmonds

Robert Gelder
Kitsap Transit
Kitsap County Board of Commissioners

Ryan Mello
Pierce Transit
Tacoma City Council

Robert Putaansuu
Kitsap Transit
Mayor, City of Port Orchard

Paul Roberts
Sound Transit
Everett City Council

Marilyn Strickland
Sound Transit
Mayor, City of Tacoma

Rick Talbert
Pierce Transit
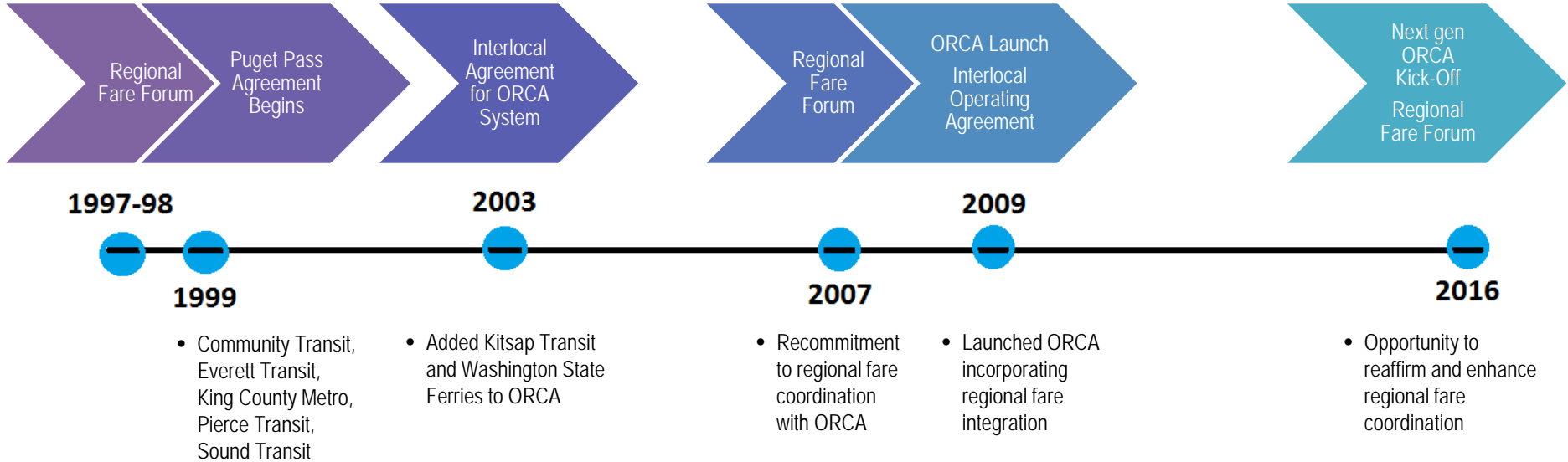*Pierce County Council*

Mike Todd
Community Transit
Mill Creek City Council

Debbie Young
Washington State Ferries
Washington State Transportation Commission

Strong Regional Coordination for 20 years

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Regional Fare Forum | Puget Pass Agreement Begins | Interlocal Agreement for ORCA System | Regional Fare Forum | ORCA Launch Interlocal Operating Agreement | Next gen ORCA Kick-Off Regional Fare Forum

1997-98

1999

2003

2007

2009

2016

- Community Transit, Everett Transit, King County Metro, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit

- Added Kitsap Transit and Washington State Ferries to ORCA

- Recommitment to regional fare coordination with ORCA

- Launched ORCA incorporating regional fare integration

- Opportunity to reaffirm and enhance regional fare coordination

Regional Fare Forum Key Objectives

❑ Agreed on goals and shared policy values

❑ Gained understanding of ORCA customer experience, recognizing fare challenges for riders

❑ Developed a shared understanding of the fare simplification and innovation options

❑ Reached consensus on fare simplification proposals

❑ Determined level of interest in fare capping

❑ Identified a path forward for working with Councils and Boards

Forum Established Shared Policy Values

Policy Value	Description
Simple and easy to use for our customers	Simpler fare structure and media, easier to understand for infrequent customers
Enhance user experience	Improved customer service, real-time account information
Better access/availability to all users	Greater distribution of fare media, convenient access to all
Seamless travel in the region	Extend regional integration, seamless regional branding
Innovative technology	Anticipate new technology, learn from peers, be an international model
Fiscal responsibility	Reduce fare evasion, collect fares to continue to provide service, appropriate distribution of revenue
Operational efficiency	Better data/analytics, improved security, move away from cash collection
Promote equity and social justice	Eliminate barriers that limit access to transportation, support programs such as low income fares

Two options for simplification:

❑ Move from trip-based peak fares to time based fares

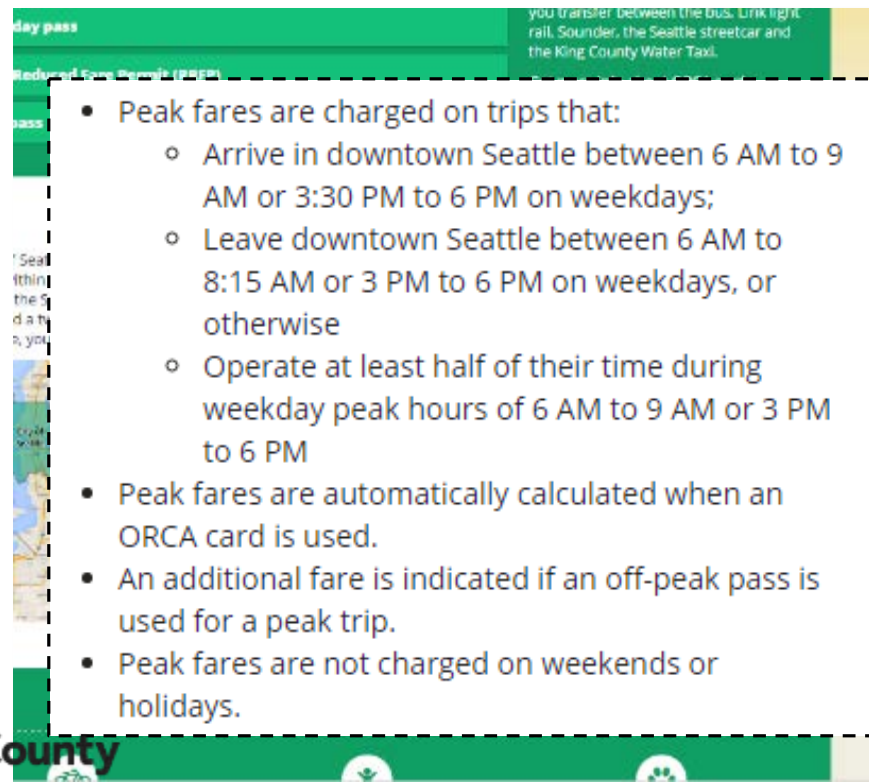❑ Move from zone-based fares to route based fares

Fare Innovation option:

❑ Fare Capping

Different Peak Pricing Structures Used Today

	No Peak Pricing	Peak Pricing
Community Transit	✓	
King County Metro		✓
Pierce Transit	✓	
Sound Transit	✓	

Trip-Based Peak Pricing Used Today

- King County Metro charges higher peak period fares based on when trips are *scheduled* to arrive or depart downtown Seattle (consistent for entire trip)
  - Not impacted by *actual* arrivals and departures
  - Customers must check timetables

Text visible in image:
- Peak fares are charged on trips that:
  - Arrive in downtown Seattle between 6 AM to 9 AM or 3:30 PM to 6 PM on weekdays;
  - Leave downtown Seattle between 6 AM to 8:15 AM or 3 PM to 6 PM on weekdays, or otherwise
  - Operate at least half of their time during weekday peak hours of 6 AM to 9 AM or 3 PM to 6 PM
- Peak fares are automatically calculated when an ORCA card is used.
- An additional fare is indicated if an off-peak pass is used for a peak trip.
- Peak fares are not charged on weekends or holidays.

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Benefits Identified:

❑ Simpler for customers to understand

❑ Reduce fare disputes and complaints

❑ Decrease next generation ORCA budget, schedule, and risk impacts

Different Zone Fare Structure Used Today

- Differing zone fare structures for:
  - Community Transit
  - King County Metro
  - Sound Transit
- Pierce Transit- no zone Structure

Local fares apply on all trips within Snohomish County, including service to Bothell and Aurora Village in Shoreline.

Commuter fares to King County are based on distance:

Customers who board "North/East" of Everett pay a higher fare for commutes into Seattle than customers who board in the "South/Everett" area.

Riders boarding in Seattle must pay the commuter fare for that route.

Zone Boundary
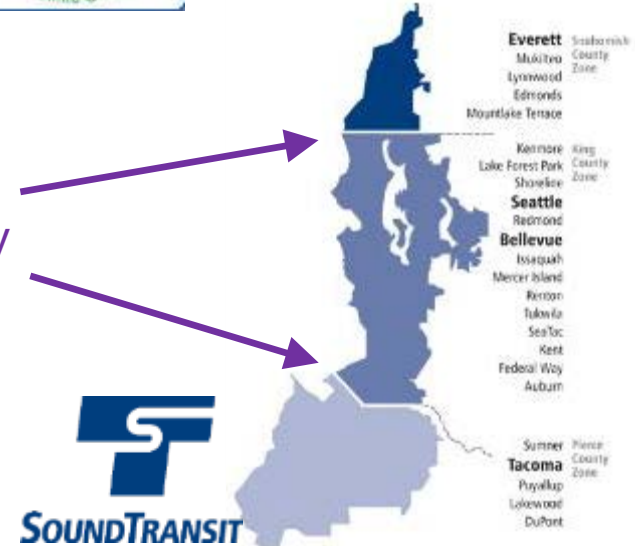
Benefits Identified:

- ❑ Easier to understand

- ❑ More equitable for short trips that cross the zone boundary

- ❑ Speeds up boardings

- ❑ Reduce fare disputes and complaints

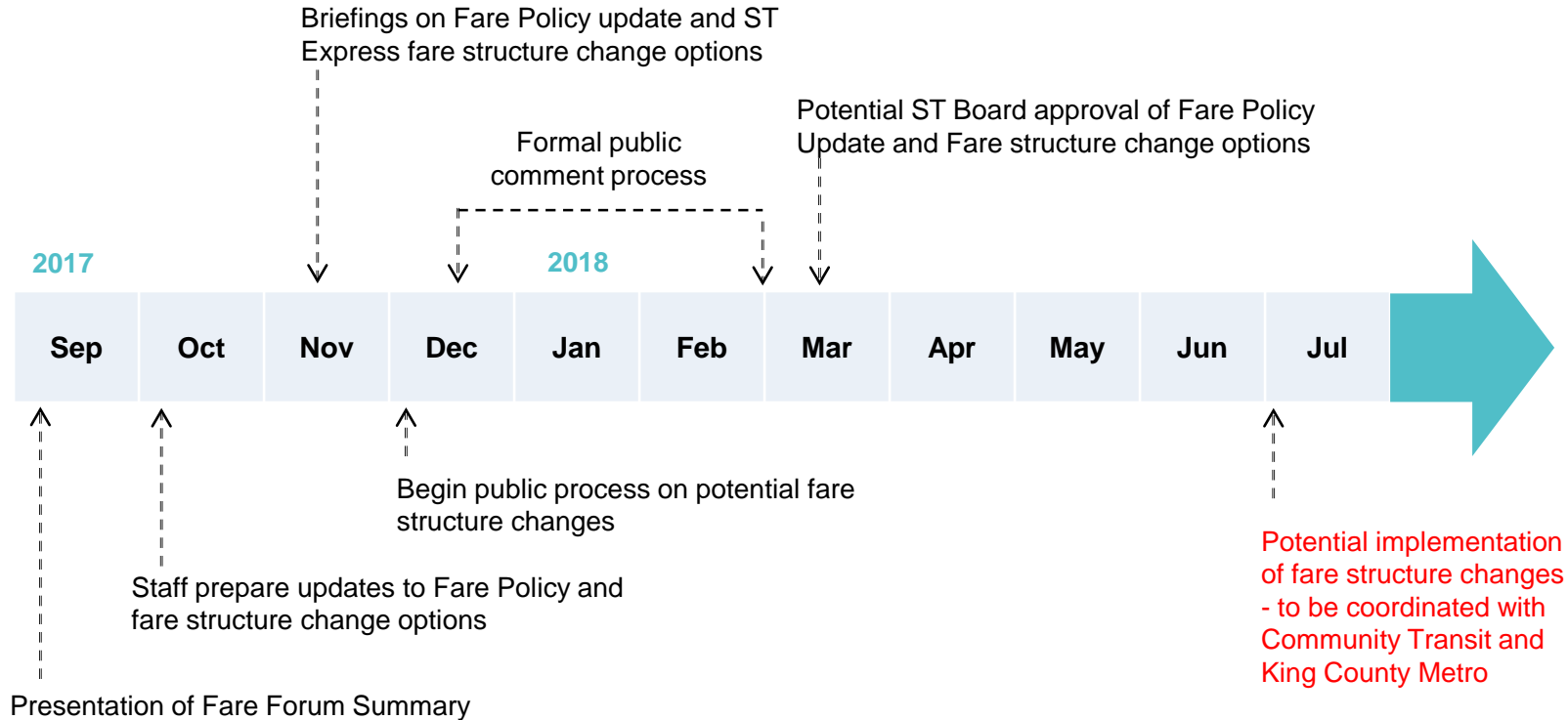- ❑ Decrease next generation ORCA budget, schedule, and risk impacts.

Fare Capping Evaluated by Forum

❑ Caps the fares charged per month no matter how often the customer rides

❑ Once the customer reached a pre-set threshold, all trips the rest of the month would be free

❑ Capping provides the "best fare" for customer, it would result in decreased revenues and increased next generation ORCA budget, schedule, and risk impacts due to the complexity of our regional fare structure

Summary of Forum Recommendations

- ❑ Move from a trip based peak fare structure to a time based peak fare structure (KCM)

- ❑ Move from zone fare structure to route based structure (CT, KCM, ST)

- ❑ Do not pursue fare capping in the initial design of next generation ORCA

Next Steps- Board Process and Coordination with Partner Agencies

Briefings on Fare Policy update and ST Express fare structure change options

Formal public comment process

Potential ST Board approval of Fare Policy Update and Fare structure change options

2017

2018

Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul

Begin public process on potential fare structure changes

Staff prepare updates to Fare Policy and fare structure change options

Presentation of Fare Forum Summary

Potential implementation of fare structure changes - to be coordinated with Community Transit and King County Metro

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