

2018 ST Express Fare Simplification Public Outreach Report

DRAFT - February, 2018

Introduction

This report summarizes the outreach efforts that were undertaken to provide the Sound Transit Board with feedback from a diverse set of stakeholders on the proposed ST Express fare simplification options. It includes a complete list of the outreach methods and examples of the tools used, as well as a summary of the results of the outreach.

The report will be included as part of the staff recommendations that will be provided to Sound Transit's Operations and Administration Committee for their review on March 1st, 2018. A decision whether to adopt the staff recommended fare simplification option will be made by the full Sound Transit Board on March 22nd, 2018.

Background

In 2016, board members and council representatives of the seven ORCA agencies in the central Puget Sound region came together in a third Regional Fare Forum. The purpose of this forum was to provide the next generation ORCA program with guidance on the regional fare structure to be included in the new system design.

The mission of the 2016 Forum was to:

- Reaffirm a commitment to regional fare coordination
- Provide guiding principles for the next generation ORCA system's fare structure design
- Discuss strategies to further integrate and simplify fares for seamless regional travel

Snapshot of the Public Outreach

- Over **1300 people** provided feedback via the survey
- Display advertisements placed in **27 publications**
- Survey and fact sheets available in **7 languages**
- **960 fact sheets** distributed in all 3 counties that Sound Transit serves
- Over **11,000** visits to the project webpage

The 2016 Fare Forum recommended that the ORCA agencies simplify fares by, in part, eliminating zone-based fare structures for bus service.

In 2017, the King County Council and Community Transit Board of Directors adopted simplified fare structures for King County Metro and Community Transit bus services. In fall 2017, Sound Transit identified two options for simplifying ST Express bus fares in alignment with the Fare Forum recommendations. Option 1 was a \$3.25 flat fare for adult riders and

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Option 2 was a route-based fare that eliminated the lower one-zone fare for riders travelling within one county on two-county routes. Option 2 would not change the current \$2.75 adult fare for one-zone trips on one-county routes, and the adult fare for all two-county routes would be \$3.75.

Sound Transit implemented a public outreach effort from November, 2017 through February, 2018, to engage a cross section of customers, representative of the diversity of Sound Transit’s service area, to obtain feedback on these options.

The goals of the public outreach effort were to:

- Inform the public of the fare change options and of the ways to provide feedback.
- Provide culturally-competent, geographically diverse, and demographically-sensitive outreach and feedback opportunities.
- Receive feedback from a diverse set of stakeholders, including traditionally under-represented and hard to reach communities, on their fare change preferences.

To achieve these goals Sound Transit aimed to:

- Recognize that the proposed fare change could affect all riders and provide access to information to communities directly affected by the fare change options
- Clearly articulate information about potential fare change options in a variety of languages
- Offer the opportunity to provide comments on the fare change proposal in a variety of languages
- Provide opportunities for members of the public to engage directly with project staff
- Directly inform and engage existing riders on Sound Transit services
- Conduct outreach in geographically-relevant locations
- Comply with Title VI requirements for engaging traditionally under-represented communities
- Highlight the importance of this fare simplification effort in supporting transit fare coordination with Sound Transit’s partner agencies

Fare Restructure Stakeholder Group

Sound Transit convened a Fares Restructure Stakeholder Group representing a broad range of customers, businesses and institutions throughout Sound Transit's service area. Committee members and their affiliations are listed below:

1. Anne Eskridge, Transportation Services Director, University of Washington
2. Beau Morton, Transit Riders Union
3. Kristina Walker, Downtown on the Go!, Tacoma
4. Erik Ashlie-Vinke, Economic Alliance of Snohomish County
5. Hester Serebrin, Transportation Choices Coalition
6. Augusta DeVries, Bellevue Downtown Association
7. Susan Harris Huether – retired from Washington State Ferries
8. Staci Haber, HopeLink
9. Walt Washington, Sound Generations (invited)

Sound Transit convened the first meeting of this group on November 30, 2017, to get input on draft fare options prior to reviewing these with Sound Transit's board members. Based on input from the committee, Sound Transit modified the Route-Based Fare Option to establish the fares for all ORCA LIFT, Youth, Senior and Disabled riders at the one-county (one-zone) level.

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Sound Transit informed the committee of the Sound Transit Board's decision on which fare options to take to the public, provided the committee with information on the impacts of the fare options on various customer categories and on minority and low-income riders, and extended to committee members the offer of briefings for their agencies/committees/constituents.

Sound Transit convened the second meeting of the committee on February 6, 2018 to provide the committee with a summary of feedback from the public outreach and get their final input on options prior to developing a fare restructure recommendation to the Sound Transit Board.

Their consensus statement is provided as **Attachment A**.

Public Outreach

In addition to the Stakeholder Group, staff undertook public outreach activities that ran from January 16 through February 11, 2018. Staff informed both customers and the general public of the proposed fare changes and invited feedback through a variety of methods. The complete list is compiled in Table 1.

Notification methods

- Project web page
- Fact sheets distributed by in person street teams
- Email and text updates
- Social media posts
- On board coach posters
- Print and digital advertising
- Community and partner briefings and notifications
- Press release and earned media

Project webpage

Detailed background information on the project and proposed fare options were available on a dedicated Sound Transit webpage. The webpage included links to the survey and offered a downloadable fact sheets in 7 languages. Users were able to easily navigate to the page via prominently displayed links on the Sound Transit home page, the Fares and Passes subpage, and the ST Express fares page.

Fact sheets distributed by in person street teams

Information on the proposed fare change was also distributed to ST Express riders in person through paper fact sheets (**Attachment B**) handed out at transit centers in Lynnwood, Tacoma, Federal Way and Downtown Seattle. Staff distributed almost 1,000 fact sheets and carried versions in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian and Tagalog, as well as English.

Email and text updates

An email and text rider alert was sent to over 22,000 ST Express riders who have opted to receive updates concerning ST Express service. They were notified of the possible fare changes and how to learn more and comment. An announcement was also included in the agency's All Aboard Commute Trip Reduction January emailed newsletter.

On board coach posters

With the aim to inform riders where they naturally are, posters were prominently displayed on coaches on all ST Express routes. 430 printed coach posters were distributed to all three bus bases that service ST Express routes.



Print and digital advertising

Display ads identifying the proposed fare changes, where to find more information and how to comment were purchased in six print publications. Digital advertisements linking to the fare change webpage and calling out how to learn more and comment, were placed in twenty-one publications. Translated ads were placed in 5 non-English publications and Facebook ads were run in 7 languages. Ad examples and the list of placements are included in **Attachment C**. Ads ran between January 22nd and February 9th.

Community and partner briefings and notifications

Several community groups and partners were contacted directly about the project. The purpose was to raise awareness about the proposed fare changes and provide tools to groups so they could engage their own membership as they deemed necessary. Project information was distributed in-person at standing collaboration meetings and via email. One in-person, translated briefing, where feedback was also collected, was given to clients at Casa Latina in Seattle.

Press release and earned media

Sound transit issued a press release on January 17 that was delivered to our 282 standard media channels. The project earned attention from 5 media outlets.

Public Comment Methods

Sound Transit provided several methods for the public to submit their feedback and comments. The results of these were consolidated and provided to the Sound Transit Board prior to final action.

The primary tool for the public to provide feedback was through an online survey that was translated and available in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian and Tagalog, as well as English. The customer survey instrument is included as **Attachment D** and the complete results are in **Attachment E**. The public was also invited to provide feedback at the public hearing, by phone, email or mail. At the request of Casa Latina and making use of their translation services, Sound Transit staff also conducted an outreach event to obtain feedback from their clients. Verbatim results from these additional channels are included in **Attachments F, G and H**.

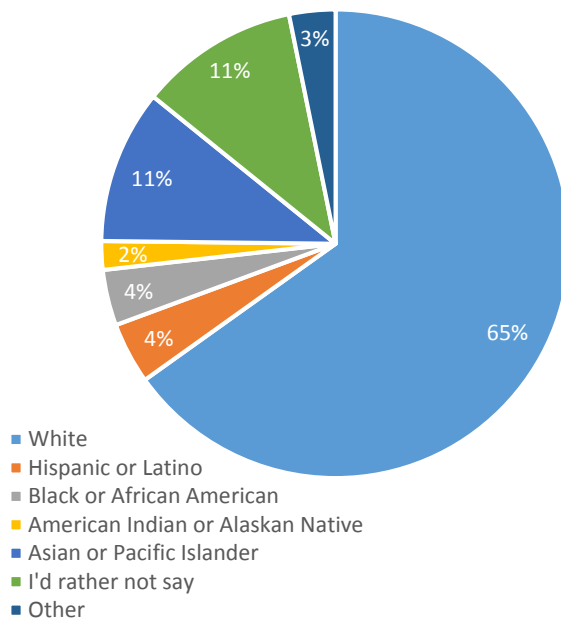
- *Online:* Survey posted on the agency's website, accessed via www.soundtransit.org/farechange
- *Email:* fares@soundtransit.org
- *Phone:* 1-866-940-4387
- *Mail:* Sound Transit | Attn: Cassandra Andrews | 401 S. Jackson St. | Seattle, WA 98104
- *Public Hearing:* Verbal comments collected at public hearing
- *In Person:* Feedback collected at community and partner briefings
- *Foreign Language Line:* 1-800-823-9230
- *Accommodations for persons with disabilities:* 1-800-201-4900 / TTY Relay 711

Outreach to Hard-to-Reach Communities

One goal of the outreach strategy was to enable feedback on the fare change options from a diverse set of stakeholders, including traditionally underrepresented and hard to reach communities. A number of approaches were used to achieve this goal:

- In person distribution of fact sheets that were translated into 6 languages: Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian, and Tagalog, see **Appendix B**.
- The online survey tool was professionally translated and available in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian, and Tagalog.
- A variety of advertising channels were targeted and included small, community based publications. These included ads in 5 non-English publications and ads translated into 7 languages on Facebook, see **Attachment C**.
- In-person, translated briefings for non-English speaking communities.
- Notifications to partner agencies that service immigrant communities.
- Full demographic results of the survey respondents are included in **Attachment E**.

Stated Ethnicity of Survey Respondents



Full-Fare Adult Respondents by County

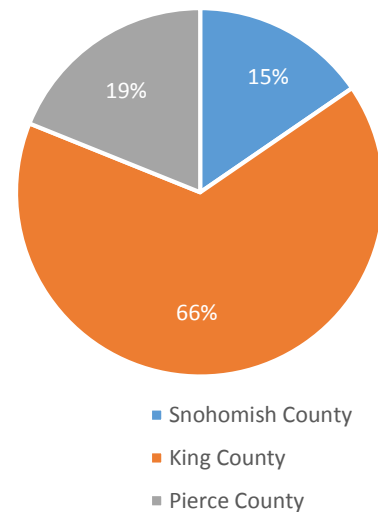


Table 1. Notification and Comment Methods – by Date

Date	Notice	Detail and Reach
11/30 and 02/06	Stakeholder workshops	<p>Workshop 1: Review purpose of fare change, 3 possible fare change options, get feedback on options.</p> <p>Workshop 2: Review impacts of options on low-income and minority riders, review customer survey results, get further feedback.</p> <p><u>Invitees</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anne Eskridge, Transportation Services Director, UW 2. Beau Morton, Transit Riders Union 3. Kristina Walker, Downtown on the go 4. Erik Ashlie-Vinke, Economic Alliance of Snohomish County 5. Hester Serebrin, Transportation Choices Coalition 6. Augusta DeVries, Bellevue Downtown Association 7. Susan Harris Huether – retired from Washington State Ferries 8. Staci Haber, Hopelink 9. Walt Washington, Sound Generations <p>Attachment A: Fare Restructure Stakeholder Group Consensus Statement</p>
01/08 - ongoing	Partner briefings	<p>In-person briefings at standing regional collaboration meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puget Sound Regional Council Committees • Bellevue Transportation Demand Management Collaboration Large Workgroup • Downtown on the Go Committee (Tacoma) • ORCA Fares Subject Area Advisory Team (SAAT) • Sea-Tac/Tukwila Employee Transit Coordinator Quarterly Meeting • King County Metro Transit Advisory Commission
01/16 - ongoing	Webpage	<p>Detailed project information and translated fact sheets available on Sound Transit’s public website with links to it prominently displayed on the homepage, Fares and Passes page and ST Express page</p> <p>11,181 page views during comment period</p>
01/16 – 02/11	Survey	<p>Online survey available in Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog and English</p> <p>Attachment D: Survey Instrument</p> <p>Attachment E: Survey Results and Comments</p> <p>1325 completes responses</p>
01/17	Press release	<p>Distributed official press release to standard media channels</p> <p>282 media contacts, 5 earned articles</p>
01/17	Rider alerts	<p>Digital notice sent by email or text to all ST Express riders who have opted in to receive Rider Alerts</p> <p>22,703 recipients</p>
01/18 and 02/08	Social media	<p>Two tweets were generated by our in-house social media team</p> <p>Twitter #1 3,572 impressions Twitter #2: 2,821 impressions</p>
01/18	Legal notice	<p>Public notice of the public hearing printed in the Daily Journal of Commence</p>

Date	Notice	Detail and Reach
01/18	Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) network	Fact sheets available at CTR outreach events and an article on the fare change options was included in the quarterly CTR network newsletter 104 person email group
01/22 - 02/09	Coach posters	Printed rider alert posters displayed on all ST busses 430 coach posters distributed to all bus bases
01/22 - 02/09	Display ad campaign	Digital and print ad campaign that included English and translated ads placed in local, broad and social/environmental justice publications and paid/targeted Facebook posts See Attachment C: Display Ad Examples and Placement Summary
01/23 – 01/30	Street teams	Fact sheets were handed out in person to ST Express riders at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lynnwood Transit Center: 86 • Tacoma Dome Transit Center: 300 • Federal Way Transit Center: 362 • Downtown Seattle, 2nd and 4th Ave and Transit Tunnel: 198 946 fact sheets distributed
01/25	CEO Report to the Board	CEO reports start of comment period concerning fare proposal; reminder about comment period General public in attendance; video archive of meeting posted online
01/31	Outreach toolkit distribution	Distributed fact sheets and media materials to stakeholder groups and encouraged distribution through their own organizational channels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White Center Community Development Association • El Centro de la Raza • Casa Latina
02/01	Citizen Oversight Panel	Briefed Sound Transit’s Citizen Oversight Panel on fare simplification options at February 1 st meeting
02/01	Public hearing	Centrally located venue to receive in person comments from the public Attachment H: Public Hearing Comments 3 comments, 8 attendees
02/05	Community briefing	Delivered in-person presentation to the clients at Casa Latina. Collected feedback on preferred options. Attachment I: Community Briefing Results Over 50 attendees

Comment Summary

Survey Results

A key element of Sound Transit’s outreach program was an online survey intended to allow customers to provide feedback on the two fare options. Sound Transit’s advertising, web-site and street team efforts encouraged customers to take this online survey. Information materials and the survey itself were translated into Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian and Tagalog. The survey was fielded from January 16 through February 11, 2018 and was completed by 1,325 respondents.

The survey asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements for each option:

- I like this option
- This fare option is easy to understand
- This fare option would make it easier and faster for people to get on the bus
- This fare option is equitable for riders
- This fare option is affordable

“Respondents preferred the \$3.25 Flat Fare option to the Route-based Fare option...

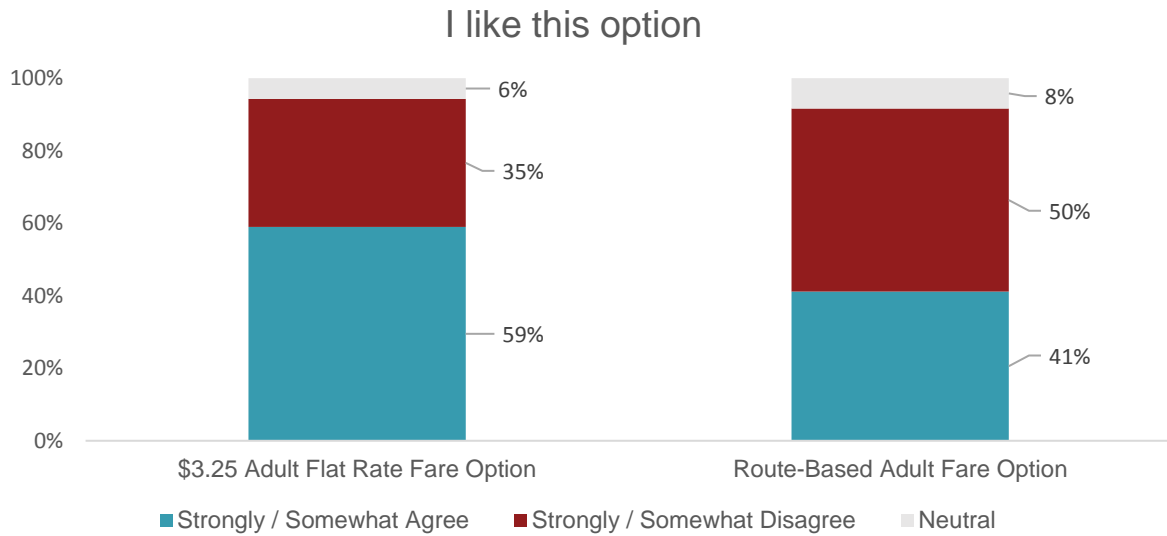
Respondents also rated the \$3.25 Flat Fare option more highly than the Route-based fare option in both, easier to understand and easier/faster to get people on the bus...

A majority of respondents rated both options as both equitable and affordable”

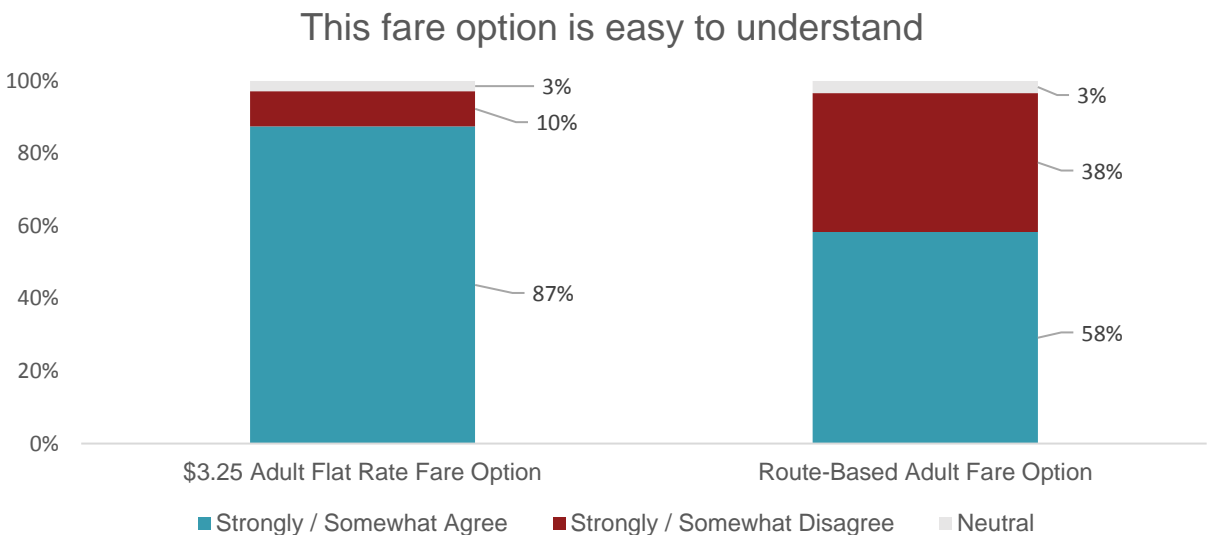
Responses Received

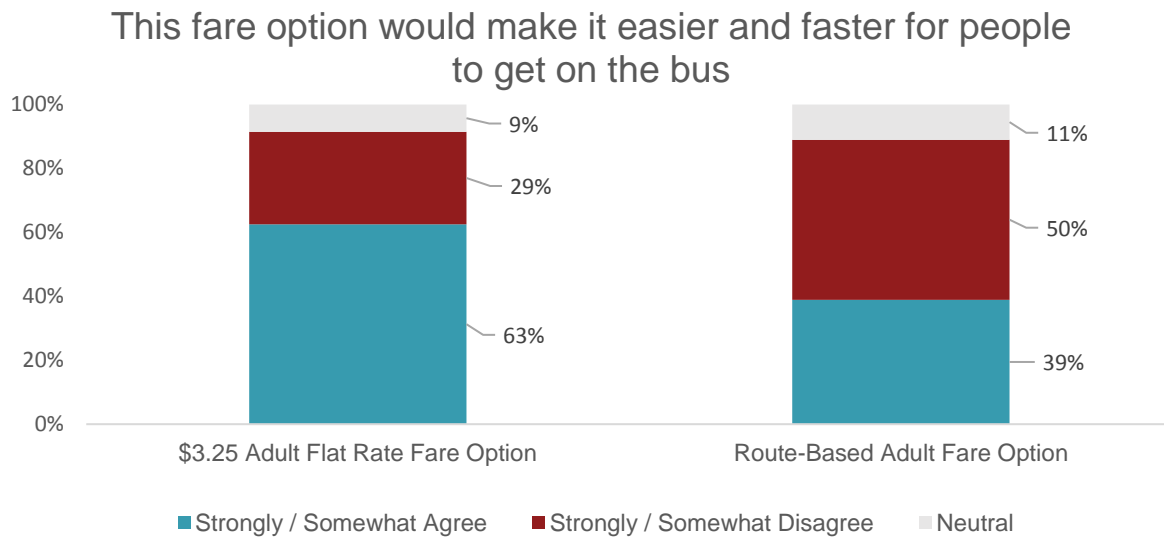
- **1325 surveys** completed – Attachments D and E
- **50 preferences** recorded at Casa Latina community briefing – Attachment I
- **15 emails** – Attachment F
- **4 phone calls** – Attachment G
- **3 verbal comments** and **8 attendees** at Public Hearing – Attachment H

Overall, survey respondents preferred the \$3.25 Flat Fare option to the Route-based Fare option. A majority (59% of respondents) indicated they liked the \$3.25 Flat Fare option. 41% of respondents indicated they liked the Route-based Fare option, and 50% did not like the route-based option.



Respondents also rated the \$3.25 Flat Fare option more highly than the Route-based fare option as both easier to understand and easier/faster to get people on the bus.





In response to the final two statements: this fare option is equitable for riders and this fare option is affordable, a majority of respondents rated both options as both equitable and affordable, with little difference in the ratings between the two options.

Other Feedback

Transit Agency Partners – Attachment F

King County Metro indicated support for Option 2, Route-based Fares, on the basis that it would align fares for most riders on ST Express service in King County with Metro bus fares for all customer categories.

Community Transit indicated support for Sound Transit’s effort to simplify fares in line with the 2016 Regional Fare Forum recommendations.

Community Briefing Results – Attachment I

Of the 50 participants in the briefing at Casa Latina in Seattle, 49 expressed support for Option 1, and one supported Option 2.

Other comments - Attachments F, G and H

Additional comments received via email, telephone and at the public hearing are provided in Attachments F, G and H.

Attachments

- Attachment A – Fare Restructure Stakeholder Group Consensus Statement
- Attachment B – Fact Sheets
- Attachment C – Display Ad Examples and Placement Summary
- Attachment D – Survey Instrument
- Attachment E – Survey Results and Comments
- Attachment F – Email Comments
- Attachment G – Telephone Comments
- Attachment H – Public Hearing Comments
- Attachment I – Community Briefing Results