

Resolution No. R2023-34

Public Comment on Fare Changes and Major Service Changes Policy

Meeting:	Date:	Type of action:	Staff contact:
Executive Committee	11/02/2023	Recommend to Board	Nora Friend, Chief Communication and Engagement Officer Luke Lamon, Acting Executive Director, Communications, Marketing and Engagement
Board	11/16/2023	Final action	

Proposed action

Adopts a policy on public comment on fare changes and major service changes and supersedes the public engagement portion of the current fare policy, Resolution No. R2010-10 as amended by Resolution No. R2014-27.

Key features summary

- This policy is needed to resolve a deficiency identified in the most recent Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Triennial review report dated May 5, 2023, with a finding that Sound Transit needs to establish a Board-approved policy about how Sound Transit receives and uses public feedback on major service reductions.
- Sound Transit agrees that there is no written policy as stated in the deficiency, but that robust and equitable engagement takes place for all fare changes, service changes (reductions or additions), parking program and service and fare equity analyses.
- This new policy complies with FTA requirements to inform the public of their right to provide public comment about fare changes and major service changes, particularly major service reductions, under consideration.
- The policy requires Sound Transit staff to do the following for fare changes and major service changes:
 - Publicize plans for proposed service changes/disruptions to reach potentially impacted riders and communities.
 - Prioritize strategies in areas where proposed changes are most impacted.
 - Use equitable engagement practices consistent with Sound Transit's equity tools.
 - Host noticed and publicized, public hearings and in-person and virtual public meetings for all fare and major service changes to collect public comment.
 - Share all received comments with the Board prior to any final decisions.
- This policy will supersede the public engagement provisions of the current fare policy through Resolution Nos. R2014-27 and R2010-10.

Background

In the FTA Triennial Report, the deficiency was noted in Section 5307 Program Requirements and was noted as Deficiency Code 5307:3-1: no written policy for public comment.

While Sound Transit does not have a written policy that describes the public comment process on major service reductions, the Board also recently established a policy for when the agency conducts equity analyses as required by the FTA, Resolution No. R2022-19.

Sound Transit has a robust public engagement program for major service reductions and the agency has been very successful in engaging with communities, riders, stakeholders, and operational and jurisdictional partners to help inform the decisions of our Board of Directors to adopt recommended service changes or revisions, including reductions.

Board approval of this action will complete and provide to the FTA a Board-approved written policy that describes the public comment process on implementing a major service reduction.

Fiscal information

Although there is no direct fiscal action associated with the action, future implementation of this policy may have fiscal impacts to the Agency. Those impacts will be addressed during future actions as they are presented.

This action does not have an impact on the affordability of the Agency's Finance Plan.

Small business participation and apprenticeship utilization

Not applicable to this action.

Public involvement

Not applicable to this action.

Time constraints

A one-month delay would not create a significant impact on complying with the corrective action. Any further delay beyond one month to this action and adoption of the proposed policy would impact the agency's ability to stay in compliance with the FTA's December 30, 2023, deadline for corrective action.

Prior Board/Committee actions

Resolution No. R2022-19: Adopted a Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden Policy and superseding Resolution Nos. R2013-18 and R2013-19.

Resolution No. R2014-27: Amended Resolution No. R2010-10 Attachment A--Fare Policy to establish "Low Income Adult" as a new Reduced Fare category.

Resolution No. R2011-15: Adopted an inclusive public participation policy to assure meaningful access to public involvement and community outreach programs for minority, low-income and limited English proficient populations.

Resolution No. R2010-10: Adopted a Fare Policy and superseding Resolution No. R99-2-2, Resolution No. R2005-05, Resolution No. R2007-06, and Motion No. M2004-53.

Environmental review – KH 10/18/23

Legal review – MT 10/27/23



Resolution No. R2023-34

Public Comment on Fare Changes and Major Service Changes Policy

A RESOLUTION of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority adopting a policy on public comment on fare changes and major service changes and supersedes the public engagement portion of the current fare policy, Resolution No. R2010-10 as amended by Resolution No. R2014-27.

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, Sound Transit welcomes public comment on all actions under consideration by the Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires that the governing boards of all federal transportation grant recipients adopt a policy regarding receiving public comment on all fare changes and major service changes, particularly major service reductions; and

WHEREAS, the FTA requires that Sound Transit provide proof of adoption of a policy regarding receiving public comment on fare changes and major service changes by the Sound Transit governing body per the 2023 triennial review.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that a Public Comment on Fare Changes and Major Service Changes Policy is hereby adopted as follows:

1.0 Scope

1.1 This policy complies with FTA requirements to inform the public of their right to provide public comment about fare changes and major service changes, particularly major service reductions, under consideration. Fare changes are made in accordance with Sound Transit's fare policy, and major service changes are defined and made in accordance with the agency's service standards and the disparate impact and disproportionate burden policy.

2.0 Policy

2.1 Sound Transit implements permanent fare changes and major service changes only after providing the public with reasonable opportunity to provide formal comment.

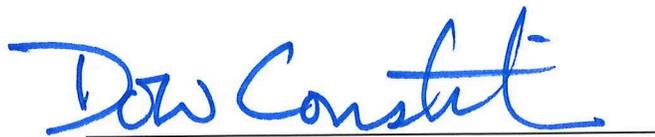
2.2 The chief executive officer develops and publishes the process for requesting and receiving public feedback using the following guiding parameters:

- 2.2.1 Publicize plans for potential fare or major service changes using a variety of media and strategies that have been reasonably shown to reach potentially impacted communities and riders.
 - 2.2.2 Provide informational materials in multiple languages when applicable to potentially impacted communities and riders.
 - 2.2.3 Prioritize outreach in areas where major service changes and/or fare changes are most likely to have community or rider impacts.
 - 2.2.4 Use equitable engagement practices consistent with Sound Transit's equity tools.
 - 2.2.5 Use public meeting venues and mechanisms most appropriate to the proposed action and to the communities and riders being engaged, which will include in person or virtual public meetings or public hearings.
 - 2.2.6 Publish instructions for how members of the public can use available language and accessibility tools and how to request reasonable accommodations, interpretation, and/or translation services.
 - 2.2.7 In appropriate communication materials, provide anticipated dates for public comment, expected Board decisions, and agency implementation.
 - 2.2.8 Document and summarize public engagement actions and public comments including how feedback was considered and/or influenced changes in proposed actions prior to final action by the Board.
- 2.3 All public feedback gathered about a proposed fare change or major service change is shared with the Board before any final decisions or actions.

3.0 References

- 3.1 Resolution No. R2023-01 Board Rules and Operating Procedures
- 3.2 Resolution No. R2011-15 Inclusive Public Participation and Community Outreach (Title VI) Policy
- 3.3 Resolution No. R2022-19 Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden Policy

ADOPTED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on November 16, 2023.



Dow Constantine
Board Chair

Attest:



Kathryn Flores
Board Administrator



Resolution No. R2023-34

Policy Crosswalk: Proposed Revisions to Resolution No. R2010-10

Existing Policy (Resolution No. R2010-10, Sec. 8)	Proposed Policy (Resolution No. R2023-34)	Justification
	<p>1.0 Scope</p> <p>1.1 This policy complies with FTA requirements to inform the public of their right to provide public comment about fare changes and major service changes, particularly major service reductions, under consideration. Fare changes are made in accordance with Sound Transit's fare policy, and major service changes are defined and made in accordance with the agency's service standards and the disparate impact and disproportionate burden policy.</p>	
<p>8. Public Involvement Policy</p> <p>It is the policy of Sound Transit that adjustments to the basic fare structure will be implemented only after opportunities for public comment are provided, affording affected customers sufficient opportunity to provide input to the Sound Transit Board.</p>	<p>2. Policy</p> <p>2.1. Sound Transit implements permanent fare changes and major service changes only after providing the public with reasonable opportunity to provide formal comment.</p>	
<p>Prior to adjusting basic fare structures or pricing, Sound Transit will:</p>	<p>2.2 The chief executive officer develops and publishes the process for requesting and receiving public feedback using the following guiding parameters:</p>	
<p>A. Perform a Title VI report to determine the impact of the proposed change on low income, limited English proficiency and minority populations.</p>		<p>Required by the Board's Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden Policy, Resolution No. R2022-19, and does not need to be in this policy any longer.</p>

<p>B. Appropriately publicize plans to increase the basic fare structure in a variety of ways. Options include the Sound Transit website, agency e-mails, newsletters and other means of correspondence.</p>	<p>2.2.1 Publicize plans for potential fare or major service changes using a variety of media and strategies that have been reasonably shown to reach potentially impacted communities and riders.</p>	
<p>C. Provide opportunities for public input. Options include holding open houses, mailing comment forms to customers, and/or soliciting for public comment via e-mail, at the discretion of the chief executive officer.</p>	<p>2.2.2 Provide informational materials in multiple languages when applicable to potentially impacted communities and riders.</p> <p>2.2.3 Prioritize outreach in areas where major service changes and/or fare changes are most likely to have community or rider impacts.</p> <p>2.2.4 Use equitable engagement practices consistent with Sound Transit's equity tools.</p>	<p>Updated to incorporate current engagement practices.</p>
<p>D. Hold a public hearing with written notice and recording services.</p>	<p>2.2.5 Use public meeting venues and mechanisms most appropriate to the proposed action and to the communities and riders being engaged, which will include in person or virtual public meetings or public hearings.</p>	<p>Updated to bring public meeting requirement in alignment with current industry standards and provide greater flexibility for conducting effective engagement.</p>
	<p>2.2.6 Publish instructions for how members of the public can use available language and accessibility tools and how to request reasonable accommodations, interpretation, and/or translation services.</p> <p>2.2.7 In appropriate communication materials, provide anticipated dates for public comment, expected Board decisions, and agency implementation.</p>	<p>Added to incorporate current engagement practices.</p>

<p>E. Review and document public comments for the Sound Transit Board.</p>	<p>2.2.8 Document and summarize public engagement actions and public comments including how feedback was considered and/or influenced changes in proposed actions prior to final action by the Board.</p> <p>2.3 All public feedback gathered about a proposed fare change or major service change is shared with the Board before any final decisions or actions.</p>	<p>Updated to add more direction for review and presentation of public comments to Board.</p>
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