

# TRANSIT AFFORDABILITY & ACCESS

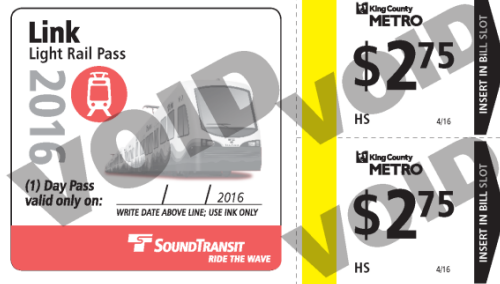
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Building a vision for Seattle  
July 8, 2016

# Leading the Way

- Seattle and King County are already setting an example for other U.S. cities and counties by pioneering innovative programs to make public transit more affordable and accessible.



# But we still have a long way to go

*“ORCA LIFT does not help the people I see daily at work who are living on the most fixed and bare bones incomes: social security, child support, SSI, disability or veterans benefits, and unemployment insurance. I see people in their 70s, who are not in perfect health, trying to walk up Queen Anne hill to get to our office for one of our pre-packed grocery bags – in the rain!”*

- Lisa Barnes, Queen Anne Helpline

*“The homeless have to spend their time getting one ticket a week here and two a month there and four every other month at another place. It’s very exhausting. I wonder, have they at Metro considered a homeless rate for the ORCA card? Do they understand how much time and money that would save? This is my highest hope.”*

- Barb Balden, TRU member

## **Homelessness State of Emergency**

Giving people easy access to public transit improves their quality of life and can help people to find paths out of homelessness.



# Elements of a Vision for Seattle

**What would it mean for public transit to truly be affordable and accessible for everyone in Seattle?**

- Cost is not a barrier to mobility for anyone.
- Everyone has access to frequent, reliable, high-quality transit.
- What if *everyone* in Seattle had a transit pass?

















## **Measurable goals**

- What percentage of Seattle residents have unlimited transit passes?  
What percentage of low-income residents?
- What percentage of Seattle workers get transit passes through their jobs? How many use them regularly?
- How much can Seattle reduce carbon emissions from transportation?

# What is affordability?

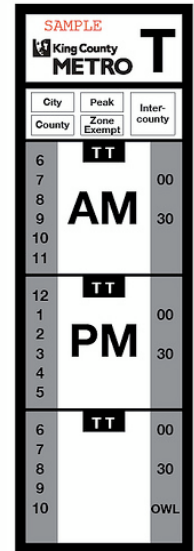
- Say you're a single adult making \$24,000 per year. Not so long ago, your monthly expenses might have looked like....

- \$800  \$1,200   
- But now...    
- \$1,600  \$400     

- Rising housing costs have especially negative impacts on mobility for low-income families.

# What is access?

- Living near a great transit system
- Being able to use and transfer easily between all transit modes
  - Riders who pay with cash pay twice when they transfer from Metro to light rail, Sound Transit buses, or Seattle streetcars, because these modes don't accept paper transfers. Many low-income riders have reasons for continuing to use cash:
    - \$5 load minimum is a barrier
    - Paper transfer window tends to be longer than 2 hours
    - Even with all the publicity and outreach, many still don't know about LIFT, or assume it will be difficult to apply
    - Privacy concerns
- While Seattle may not be able to address all of these issues directly, the city can expand on its recent work connecting people with transit passes.



# Opportunities: how to reach people?

- **Through school**

- Extend transit passes to all low-income youth, year-round
- Work with King County to improve affordability & access for college students



- **Through services**

- Partner with social service organizations to provide passes for low-income seniors, people with disabilities, and others



- **Through home**

- Help to extend the Multifamily Development Passport Program to all low-income housing in Seattle
- Require market-rate development to offer passes



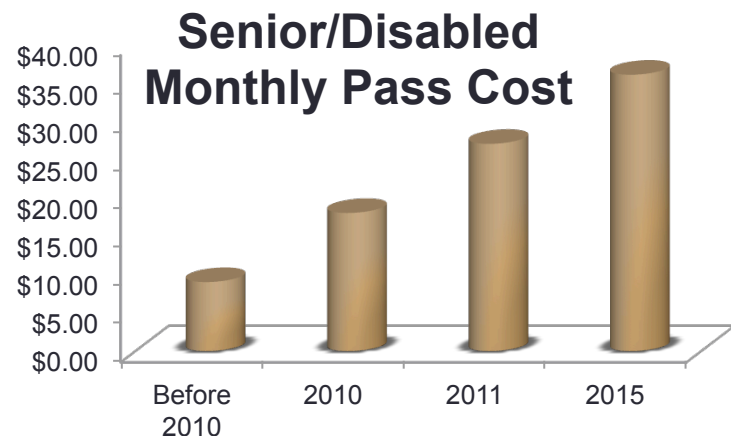
- **Through work**

- Incentivize and mandate better employee transit benefits



# Priorities?

- How can the City of Seattle make the biggest difference to people's well-being and opportunities?
  - Low-income youth
  - Low-income seniors and people with disabilities
  - People experiencing or at risk of homelessness
  - People leaving the criminal justice system
  - Veterans





That's all!