

# Transit Fares Update

King County Mobility Coalition

August 2025

# Agenda and contact information

## Agenda

1. Introduction and background
2. September fare changes
3. Q&A

## Contact

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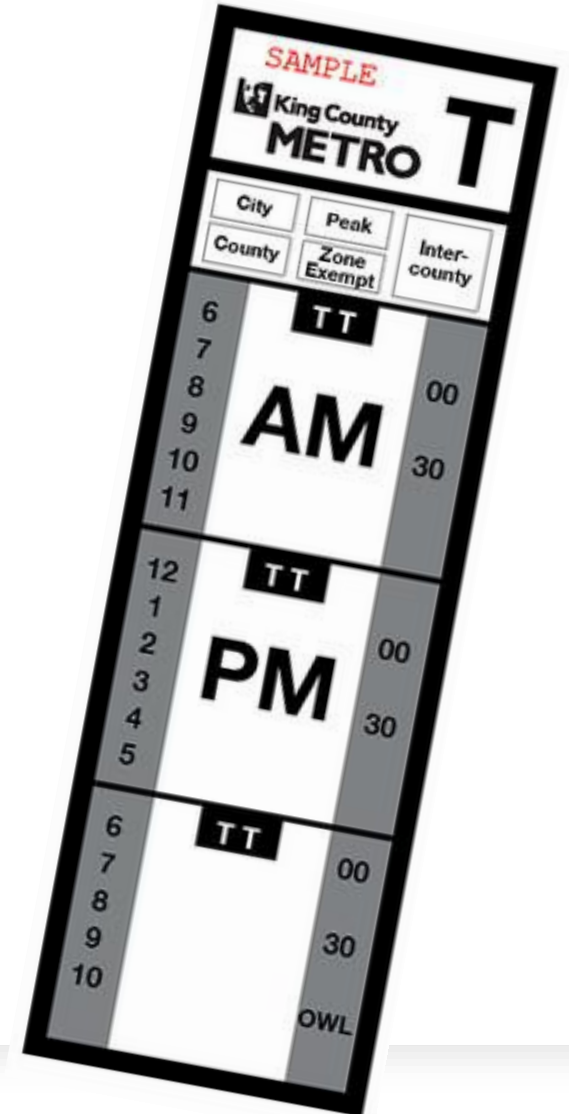
# **1. Introduction and background**

# Fares landscape

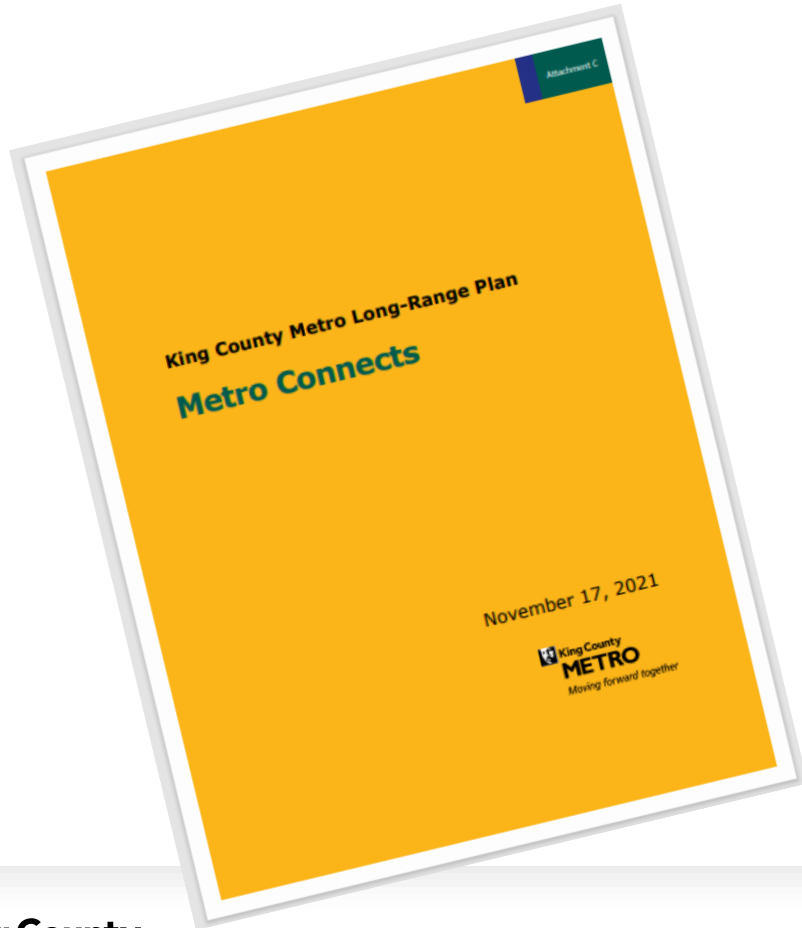


# Fares background

- Fares are an important source of funding
- County Code requires Metro to cover a share of operating costs through fares
- Half of our fare revenue comes from the Business Passport Program, where employers pay for transit passes for their workers
- In the past, Metro's fares were based on zones; traveling between zones cost more than traveling within a zone
- Metro eliminated zones in 2017 and is shifting towards an income-based approach to fares
- Metro's fare revenue declined significantly during the pandemic due to a combination of ridership shifts, policy decisions, and an increase in fare non-payment



# Current policy direction



## Council-adopted policies direct Metro to:

- Take an income-based approach to fares
- Prioritize:
  - Equity and access
  - Meeting revenue targets
  - Aligning regionally

# Fare Policy and Strategy focus areas

## Near-Term

- ★ September fare changes
- Fares Cabinet and Partner Review Board
- Regional Fare Forum

## Longer-Term

- Reduced fare simplification
- Preparing for cashless transition
- New options in ORCA

## 2. September fare changes



# Revenue target changes approved



**During the 2025 budget process the King County Council revised Metro's fare revenue target down** to better align with the current fare and operating cost landscape. Instead of recovering 25% of bus operating costs through fares, Metro is now aiming to recover 10-15% of the costs.

# Fare changes approved

**At the same time the King County Council approved legislation to:**



**Set low-income fares at \$1.00** on Metro buses and Water Taxis.



**Increase adult fares by \$0.25** on buses and Water Taxi.

# Why is it important to change fares now?

- **Metro plans for fare increases every 3 years.** Fare revenue funds transit service and is part of long-range planning to maintain and expand transit over time.
- **Adult fares have not increased for 9 years.** In 2015 adult fares went up from \$2.50 to their current \$2.75 level.
- **Implementing a fare change in 2025 will:**
  - **Help Metro meet revenue targets** and help avoid a bigger price increase if Metro 'kicked the can down the road', delaying an increase until a later year.
  - **Align and integrate** with adult fares charged by other agencies, including Sound Transit Link Light Rail, which implemented a \$3 flat fare in September 2024.
  - **Not increase reduced fares.** Instead, many low-income riders' fares will decrease, and others will stay the same, ensuring reduced fare riders will not see an increase in the cost of transit.

# What is changing? Metro Bus Fares

New **Metro bus** and Metro Flex fares will go into effect on September 1, 2025:

Passenger Type	Current Fare Rate	New Fare Rate	Change
LIFT low-income bus fare	\$1.00	\$1.00	Pilot rate became permanent on 1/1/25
Adult bus fare	\$2.75	\$3.00	+\$0.25
RRFP Senior bus fare	\$1.00	\$1.00	No change
RRFP disabled bus fare	\$1.00	\$1.00	No change
Youth bus	Free	Free	No change

# What is changing? Vashon Water Taxi Fares

New **Vashon Water Taxi** fares will go into effect on September 1, 2025:

Vashon Route Passenger Type	Current Fare Rate	New Fare Rate	Change
LIFT low-income WT fare	\$4.50	\$1.00	-\$3.50
Adult ORCA WT fare	\$5.75	\$6.00	+\$0.25
Adult Cash WT fare	\$6.75	\$7.00	+\$0.25
RRFP Senior WT fare	\$3.00	\$3.00	No change
RRFP disabled WT fare	\$3.00	\$3.00	No change
Youth WT fare	Free	Free	No change

# What is changing? West Seattle Water Taxi Fares

New **West Seattle Water Taxi** fares will go into effect on September 1, 2025:

West Seattle Route Passenger Type	Current Fare Rate	New Fare Rate	Change
LIFT low-income WT fare	\$3.75	\$1.00	-\$2.75
Adult ORCA WT fare	\$5.00	\$5.25	+\$0.25
Adult Cash WT fare	\$5.75	\$6.25	+\$0.50*
RRFP Senior WT fare	\$2.50	\$2.50	No change
RRFP disabled WT fare	\$2.50	\$2.50	No change
Youth WT fare	Free	Free	No change

# What is changing? Other Changes to Note

Seattle Streetcar fares, Metro monthly Vanpool/Transit Pass prices, and ORCA PugetPass options are also changing:

## Seattle Streetcar

On Sept 1, 2025 adult Streetcar fares will increase from \$2.25 to \$3.00

## Vanpool/Transit Pass

On 9/1/25 the price for Metro's monthly Vanpool/Transit Pass will increase from \$99 to \$108.

## ORCA PugetPass

On 8/1/25 ORCA introduced a new \$6.00 PugetPass option. cover the new (No PugetPass options are being eliminated at this time.)

# Key takeaways

- ✓ **Adult fares are increasing** on Metro buses, Metro Flex, and both of Metro's Water Taxi routes.
- ✓ **LIFT fares are aligning at \$1.** Metro bus and Flex riders already ride for \$1. For Water Taxi riders, this will be a significant decrease from current LIFT rates.
- ✓ **There are a few other fare changes** coming to Seattle Streetcar, Metro Vanpool/Transit monthly Pass, and ORCA PugetPass. More info is available here: [King County Metro, Water Taxi and Seattle Streetcar adult fares change Sept. 1, 2025 – Metro Matters](#)





# Customer information about fare changes



More info available here: <https://kingcountymetro.blog/2025/07/28/king-county-metro-water-taxi-and-seattle-streetcar-adult-fares-change-sept-1-2025/>

- **Signage** – on-board buses and at bus stops
- **Online information** – via Metro’s blog and social media channels
- **CBO outreach** – distributing multi-lingual information to partner organizations
- **In-person outreach** – Metro staff ‘street teams’ at busy transit hubs with information about service and fare changes
- **Customer support** – bus operators and staff at pass sales office and Metro customer service will provide information and support for customers

# Questions?