Fare Enforcement, Equity & Social Justice: A Balancing Act

Today’s Panel:
Alison Eisinger, Executive Director, Seattle-King County Coalition on Homelessness
Cathy Jimenez, Fare Violation Program Manager, King County Metro
Mario Nunez, Fare Enforcement Operations Manager, Securitas – King County Metro

Moderator:
Hester Serebrin, Policy Director, Transportation Choices Coalition
Catalyst for change

Alison Eisinger, Executive Director, Seattle-King County Coalition on Homelessness
Jessica Ramirez, Director of Community Engagement, Puget Sound Sage
Hester Serebrin, Policy Director, Transportation Choices Coalition
Katie Wilson, Transit Riders Union
Rich Stolz, One America
Sharing City Shelter

Warmth, convenience, shelter from the elements.
Bus shelters.
Of course, if they are too closed in they become unsafe
anything can happen in there
so we’ll have an open front
glass sides
with big gaps
and a tiny little roof
and it’s still a shelter
you can’t possibly get more than half-drowned in there.
It is still an attraction to those homeless people
so we’ll take out the benches
it is harder to drown when you’re standing up
and now everyone, shoppers and commuters and the poor
can huddle together on equally sore feet in the driving rain
in our community bus shelters.

— Anitra L. Freeman
Have you ever been on transit or in a transit station where fare enforcement was inspecting? How did it make you feel in the moment?
Why Metro was ready for change

Cathy Jimenez, Fare Violation Program Manager, King County Metro
Mario Nunez, Fare Enforcement Operations Manager, Securitas – King County Metro
For a fair selection everybody has to take the same exam: please climb that tree.
Creating Equity

THE “UNHEALTHY STREAM” CREATES INEQUITIES

POLICIES, PRACTICES & SYSTEMS— Policies, structures and systems—including those in government—have sustained and even contributed to inequities.

CONDITIONS—Past policies, systems and practices have resulted in adverse social, physical and economic conditions.

OUTCOMES—Government programs historically have tended to react to problems and treat poor individual and family-level outcomes.

THE “HEALTHY STREAM” CREATES EQUITY

PRO-EQUITY POLICIES, PRACTICES & SYSTEMS—For greatest and most effective impact, King County is focusing “upstream” to address root causes and be pro-equity.

CONDITIONS—Pro-equity systems and policies result in improved community conditions, also known as “determinants of equity.”

OUTCOMES—Individuals and families thrive regardless of race and place.

King County METRO
Moving forward together
King County
METRO
Moving forward together

- Accessibility
- Build
- Partnerships
- Workforce

Equity & Social Justice
Safety
Sustainability

2019

4.1M people in the region

5.5M hours of service

430K daily rides

APTA
1
The Balancing Act
A. Pay the penalty fine
B. Add money to your existing ORCA or ORCA LIFT card
C. Enroll in ORCA LIFT or obtain a new Youth or RRFP card
D. Perform two (2) hours of community service
E. Appeal your violation

www.Kingcounty.gov/metro/fareviolation
Please show your proof of fare payment, when asked.

Por favor tenga su comprobante de pago a la mano por si tiene que mostrarlo.

Vui lòng đưa ra bằng chứng trả tiền vé, khi được hỏi.

Когда Вас попросят, пожалуйста предъявите ваш билет.

Fadlan tus wax cadeynaya in aad bixisay lacagta nooliga, marka lagu waydilo.

当工作人员要求您出示车票付款凭证时，请配合！

요청시 요금 지불 영수증을 보여 주세요.

Коли вас попросят, будь ласка покажіть Ваш квиток.

Puđe ሁኔታ ይታበኬ በብሮነ ትርጉት የማህረ ማ የስፋት ይበለን ይበት

Passengers riding on Metro are required to pay the fare prior to or upon boarding the bus as per RCW 35.58.580(2)(a).

www.kingcounty.gov/metro/fareviolation
206-263-3273
What are some of the impacts your agency's current fare enforcement methods may have on your riders' experience?
Wins and Next Steps

Hester Serebrin, Policy Director, Transportation Choices Coalition
“There is ‘much greater recognition from Metro that people aren’t not paying just because they’re scofflaws...but that what we’re seeing is these much larger systemic issues of wealth inequality, the rising cost of living and the homelessness crisis,’ said Katie Wilson, Transit Riders Union.”

- The Seattle Times
“On Wednesday, King County Metro Transit announced fare enforcement changes to promote more equitable outcomes for riders.”

- The Urbanist
“Metro worked with advocacy groups to create the new program and really worked to understand why riders don’t pay. As part of the change, Metro is also wiping out all previous citations and fines and giving all riders a fresh start.” - KIRO7
“Homeless and equitable transit advocates who were involved in stakeholder discussions with the county (which will continue to help shape future policy) praised the proposed policy changes.”

- Seattle Weekly
“Transit agencies often treat fare evasion with arrests and prosecution, but Seattle’s King County Metro is going with compassion and progressivism.” - Streetsblog
“An increasing number of agencies like San Francisco’s MTA, TriMet in Portland, and Seattle’s King County Metro are ushering a new paradigm by decriminalizing fare evasion and developing equitable fare enforcement strategies.”

- TransitCenter

Why Decriminalize Fare Evasion?

January 9, 2019
Overall goal: increase access to public transportation for underserved communities, address disparate impact on low-income and people of color riders.
• A fair and just system that ensures access to transit and payment of fares while acknowledging and addressing the barriers that affordability and enforcement can present to some;
• Ensure that low-income residents can use public transit without fear of being criminally penalized because of their level of resources;
• End disproportionate negative impacts and experiences for people of color, immigrants and refugees, and those with low or no income; and
• Build a transit system where all feel safe, comfortable, and have easy access to help when they need it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upstream area</th>
<th>Affordability Info &amp; outreach</th>
<th>Capital changes</th>
<th>Customer experience</th>
<th>Citations &amp; resolutions</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Cross-agency coordination</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Problem</strong></td>
<td>People with very low or no income cannot afford to pay, but still have ongoing mobility needs, and are disproportionately impacted by fines.</td>
<td>Many folks may not know what payment options, subsidies, benefits, programs, are available to them.</td>
<td>People may not know how to use RR / light rail, or may not have adequate opportunity to pay or load their cards</td>
<td>POC, LEP, and folks experiencing mental illness may feel unsafe with officers or experience bias during interactions, which can escalate into dangerous situations.</td>
<td>Citations are very expensive. The process may be confusing and take time to resolve. If unable to resolve for financial or other reasons, it may go to collections and on your record.</td>
<td>We don’t fully understand who doesn’t pay and why, how many citations are resolved and how, race and housing status of those cited, or their experiences with enforcement.</td>
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<td><strong>Ideas</strong></td>
<td>● Review fare structure and programs to find a way to get cards and fares in the hands of those that need it most ● Review fine levels</td>
<td>● Create more opportunities to provide information on how to pay, how to load your card, how to transfer, etc. ● Continue LIFT and other reduced fare program outreach</td>
<td>● Improve wayfinding, and info on how to pay ● More fare validators ● More places to load card with cash ● Move to ngORCA to remove 24-hr load delay</td>
<td>● Increase anti-bias and de-escalation training ● Look at hiring &amp; diversity of officers ● Reimagine uniforms of officers ● Look for opportunities to decrease escalation in protocol</td>
<td>● Offer non-financial ways to resolve ● Explore ways to resolve citations in-house ● Review fine levels ● Focus groups with those cited to understand barriers</td>
<td>● Engage focus group ● Add enforcement questions to regular rider/non-rider surveys ● Do data collection and analysis</td>
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What will you commit to doing next?
Thank you!

King County Council

Executive Dow Constantine
Making sure all King County residents have the opportunity to thrive
Questions?