



# KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

## Signature Report

### Ordinance 19852

**Proposed No.** 2024-0308.1

**Sponsors** Zahilay

1 AN ORDINANCE relating to public transportation,  
 2 revising water taxi rates of fare; amending Ordinance  
 3 18411, Section 2, as amended, and K.C.C. 4A.700.820 and  
 4 establishing an effective date.

5 **STATEMENT OF FACTS:**

6 1. K.C.C. 4A.700.820 provides for fares for regularly scheduled county  
 7 passenger ferry service, including fares for adults paying in cash or with a prepaid  
 8 fare product, children, youth, seniors and persons with disabilities, and low-  
 9 income riders.

10 2. The current low-income fare rate on the West Seattle water taxi route for adult  
 11 cash fares is \$3.75. The current low-income fare rate on the Vashon Island water  
 12 taxi route is \$4.50.

13 3. The King County Metro Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, 2021-2031,  
 14 as adopted by Ordinance 19367, includes a strategy to "Align fares with other  
 15 service providers, meet revenue targets, and advance equity through Metro's  
 16 income-based approach to fares."

17 4. Peer transit agencies, including Everett Transit, Kitsap Transit, Seattle  
 18 Department of Transportation, Sound Transit, and Pierce Transit, have set a flat  
 19 \$1.00 rate of fare for low-income riders.

20 **BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:**

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21            SECTION 1. and amending Ordinance 18411, Section 2, as amended, and K.C.C.  
 22 4A.700.820 are hereby amended to read as follows:

23            A.1. Except as may otherwise be provided by ordinance, the following fare  
 24 categories and rates are established for regularly scheduled passenger ferry service:

<b>One-Way Water Taxi</b>	<b>West Seattle Water Taxi</b>	<b>Vashon Island Water Taxi</b>
<b>Fares</b>	<b>Route</b>	<b>Route</b>
Cash fare	\$5.75	\$6.75
Regular prepaid fare	\$5.00	\$5.75
Child fare	No Charge	No Charge
Youth fare	No Charge	No Charge
Senior and persons with disabilities fare	\$2.50	\$3.00
Bicycle fare	No Charge	No Charge
Low-income fare	<del>(\$3.75)</del> <u>\$1.00</u>	<del>(\$4.50)</del> <u>\$1.00</u>

- 25            2. The fare categories and rates are subject to, and defined by, the following:
- 26            a. All fares shall be established only for a one-way trip;
- 27            b. All fares shall be rounded up to the next whole twenty-five cent increment;
- 28            c. The cash fare is determined by adding a fifteen-percent surcharge to the  
 29 regular prepaid fare and applies to cash and ticket purchases;
- 30            d. The regular prepaid fare is established as the base rate for persons nineteen  
 31 years old and older using ORCA prepaid fare media;

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32 e. The child fare is available to persons five years and under when  
33 accompanied by a parent, guardian, or other person aged sixteen or older and paying the  
34 proper fare as set forth in this chapter;

35 f. The youth fare is available to persons from six through eighteen years old  
36 and persons over eighteen years old who receive valid student pass transit-fare products  
37 under K.C.C. 4A.700.450;

38 g. The senior and persons with disabilities fare is available to persons who  
39 apply for and receive a regional reduced fare permit. The permits are available to persons  
40 at least sixty-five years old and persons with disabilities as provided in the regional  
41 reduced fare permit program authorized under K.C.C. 28.94.255;

42 h. A person with a disability who has been issued an "attendant ride free"  
43 permit as authorized under K.C.C. 4A.700.010 may be accompanied by an attendant, who  
44 is not required to pay a fare;

45 i. A person who has paid fare may bring a bicycle onto a water taxi at no  
46 additional charge, up to the water taxi's bicycle capacity; and

47 j. The low-income fare is available to persons who apply for and are  
48 determined to meet the threshold eligibility requirements for the low-income transit fare  
49 program authorized under K.C.C. 4A.700.490, when effective, and receive a valid low-  
50 income transit fare product. (~~The low income fare shall be twenty five percent less than~~  
51 ~~the regular fare.~~)

52 B. A fare in subsection A. of this section is paid when a person pays the  
53 appropriate amount in cash or presents an appropriate pass, transfer, or other fare

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54 payment media established under and used in accordance with this chapter.

55 SECTION 2. This ordinance takes effect September 1, 2025.


Ordinance 19852 was introduced on 10/1/2024 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 11/19/2024, by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Balducci, Barón, Dembowski, Dunn, Mosqueda, Perry, Upthegrove, von Reichbauer and Zahilay


KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Signed by:  
  
E76CE01F07B14EF...  
Dave Upthegrove, Chair

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:  
  
8DE1BB375AD3422...  
Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of 12/2/2024, \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed by:  
  
4FBCAB8196AE4C6...  
Dow Constantine, County Executive

**Attachments:** A. Title VI Fare Change Equity Analysis Low-Income Water Taxi Fare Reduction

## Ordinance 19852

# Title VI Fare Change Equity Analysis: Low-Income Water Taxi Fare Reduction

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September 23, 2024



**King County**

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## II. Executive Summary

To best serve its most vulnerable riders and ensure a seamless transfer experience with its partner transit agencies, King County is proposing to reduce its low-income fare on the West Seattle Water Taxi from \$3.75 to \$1.00 and on the Vashon Island Water Taxi from \$4.50 to \$1.00.

As a large transportation agency and the recipient of federal funds, King County Metro Transit Department (Metro) must conduct a Title VI Fare Equity Analysis whenever it makes changes to its fares to determine whether the fare changes will have a disparate impact on minority riders or place a disproportionate burden on low-income riders in accordance with FTA Circular Chapter 4, Part VII(b).

Metro did not find that the proposed fare change will have a disparate impact on minority populations, nor a disproportionate burden on low-income populations, and therefore submits the proposed Ordinance to reduce the low-income Water Taxi fare to \$1.00 to the King County Council for approval.

### III. Background

**Department Overview:** King County Metro Transit Department (Metro) is the Puget Sound region’s largest public transportation agency. Metro provides bus, paratransit, vanpool, and water taxi services, and operates Seattle Streetcar, Sound Transit Link light rail, and Sound Transit Express bus service. Metro is committed to providing safe, equitable, and sustainable mobility, and prioritizing service where needs are greatest.

**Key Historical Conditions (or Historical Context):** Metro’s low-income fare, also known as ORCA LIFT, is available to qualifying adults whose incomes are verified to be at or below two hundred percent of the federal poverty level. As of June 2024, more than 70,000 people are enrolled in the program.

**Key Current Conditions (or Current Context):** To best serve its most vulnerable riders and ensure a seamless transfer experience with its partner transit agencies, Metro is proposing to reduce its low-income fare on the West Seattle Water Taxi from \$3.75 to \$1.00 and on the Vashon Island Water Taxi from \$4.50 to \$1.00.

**Report Methodology:** Metro’s policies concerning disparate impact and disproportionate burden for Title VI equity analysis are found in its 2021 Service Guidelines and its 2022 FTA Title VI Program Report. To determine if there is a disparate impact on minority riders or disproportionate burden on low-income riders/users based there must be an unfavorable impact of greater than five percent threshold; that is, if a fare increase impacts minority or low-income individuals by over five percentage points more than non-minority or non-low-income individuals, the fare would be determined to have a disparate impact or disproportionate burden.

Metro employs the following formula to determine if there is a disparate impact on minority individuals:

**IF % Affected Minority Riders/Users – % Affected Non-Minority Riders/Users > 5%**  
**AND** the impact is unfavorable,  
**THEN** there is a disparate impact

Similarly, Metro employs the following formula to determine if there is a disproportionate burden placed on low-income individuals.

**IF % Affected Low-Income Riders/Users – % Affected Non-Low-Income Riders/Users > 5%**  
**AND** the impact is unfavorable,  
**THEN** there is a disproportionate burden

This five percent threshold was developed by Metro through a public engagement process and was approved by both the King County Council and the FTA in Metro’s 2022 Title VI Program Report. The Regional Transit Committee and the County Council’s Mobility and Environment Committee reviewed this policy and forwarded it to the full County Council. The Council followed a public notification and participation process, held a public hearing, and then adopted the updated Service Guidelines via Ordinance 19637. This threshold and policy is applied uniformly to all fare changes.



If a disparate impact or disproportionate burden is found in the FEA, Metro will consider steps to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential adverse impacts.

#### IV. Report Requirements

Metro is committed to providing mobility and transportation services in an equitable, nondiscriminatory, and fair manner in compliance with the requirements set forth by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1B (“FTA Circular”). Metro affirms its commitment Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Among its responsibilities as a large transportation agency and the recipient of federal funds, Metro must conduct a Title VI Fare Equity Analysis (FEA) whenever it makes changes to its fares to determine whether the fare change will have a disparate impact on minority riders or place a disproportionate burden on low-income riders in accordance with FTA Circular Chapter 4, Part VII(b). This FEA will apply the rules and polices set forth in the FTA Circular and Metro’s Service Guidelines to this proposal.

Metro is proud to uphold the civil rights protections championed by its county’s namesake, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Questions about this analysis or Metro’s commitment to civil rights and Title VI should go to [MetroTitleVI@kingcounty.gov](mailto:MetroTitleVI@kingcounty.gov).

##### A. Proposal

Metro is proposing to reduce its low-income fare on the West Seattle Water Taxi from \$3.75 to \$1.00 and on the Vashon Island Water Taxi from \$4.50 to \$1.00.

Table 1. Proposed Fare Change

Fare Type	Current Cost	Proposed Cost	Absolute Change	Percent Change
West Seattle Water Taxi Low-Income Fare	\$3.75	\$1.00	-\$2.75	-73%
Vashon Island Water Taxi Low-Income Fare	\$4.50	\$1.00	-\$3.50	-78%

##### B. Fare Equity Analysis

To conduct this FEA, Metro analyzed data from its low-income fare program registration database. The tables below compare the percentage of minority riders versus non-minority riders, and low-income riders versus non-low-income riders that will be affected by the proposed fare change.

Table 2. Disparate Impact Analysis for Minority Riders

Percent Minority	Percent Non-Minority	Difference
66%	34%	+32%
<p><b>What is the impact on riders/users?</b> Favorable</p> <p><b>Is there a disparate impact on minority riders/customers?</b> No</p>		

Applying Metro’s methodology described in Part III, the proposed fare change does not have a disparate impact on minority riders because the fare increase is unfavorable and the percent difference is below the five percent threshold.

Table 3. Disproportionate Burden Analysis for Low-Income Riders

Percent Low-Income	Percent Non-Low-Income	Difference
100%	0%	+100%
<p><b>What is the impact on riders/users?</b> Favorable</p> <p><b>Is there a disproportionate burden on low-income riders/customers?</b> No</p>		

Applying Metro’s methodology described in Part III, the proposed fare change does not have a disparate impact on low-income riders because the fare increase is unfavorable and the percent difference is below the five percent threshold.

**C. Modification or Mitigation**

Using the methodology described in Part III, the proposed fare change will not have a disparate impact on minority populations nor disproportionate burden on low-income riders. Therefore, no further analysis or discussion on modification or mitigation efforts is required.

**V. Conclusion/Next Steps**

Metro did not find that the proposed fare change will have a disparate impact on minority populations, nor a disproportionate burden on low-income populations, and therefore submits the proposed Ordinance to reduce the low-income Water Taxi fare to \$1.00 to the King County Council for approval.

## Certificate Of Completion

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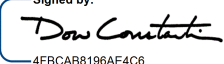
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King County Executive  
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Signing Complete	Security Checked	12/2/2024 12:48:04 PM
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