



Date: Oct 31, 2023

To: Sound Transit REO Committee and Board

From: Transit Riders Union

Re: Comments on 2023 Link Light Rail Fare Proposals

Dear Members of the Sound Transit REO Committee and Board:

Thanks for giving us the opportunity to provide comments on the 2023 Link Light Rail Fares proposals. We hope you will consider a broader range of options than are currently on the table.

The Transit Riders Union advocates for all transit riders in King County and beyond. Our members rely on transit to get around, and many are low-income or on fixed incomes. For our members, access to transit is a life necessity and we urge Sound Transit to consider options that make transit available and affordable to as many people as possible. We strongly support increasing access to regional opportunities through affordable transit fares. Ultimately we support fare-free transit funded through progressive taxes, but we also recognize the agency's current need to utilize fare revenue to sustain and improve our growing transit system and maintain service quality.

To that end, we hope Sound Transit will expand the range of options being considered for fares. In particular, we would like to see the following options studied in more detail:

**A Lower Flat Fare:** TRU is open to a flat fare option, with a focus on equitable access for riders. We would not support a flat fare higher than \$2.75 (comparable with King County Metro bus fares) and advocate for a lower flat fare to improve access to the system. We also strongly support funding and expanding the fully subsidized low-income ORCA card pilot program and other reduced fare programs, to ensure that cost is not a barrier for any transit rider.

**Zone-Based Fares:** TRU would also like to see a zone-based fare option studied and considered, [as recently proposed in The Urbanist](#). For riders who are dependent on Link light rail for daily errands or short trips, a flat fare may be less equitable than a zone-based fare. A zone-based fare structure would favor short- and medium-distance trips over longer ones, by keeping fares lower for most trip pairs and charging higher fares for the longest trips.

TRU is an enthusiastic advocate of expanded transit access and will continue to organize for fair and equitable access to the expanded Link light rail network.

Thank you,

Transit Riders Union