



Park and Ride Permits: A Step Toward Equitable Access

BACKGROUND

King County Metro and Sound Transit are looking for feedback on a proposed new parking management strategy at park & rides throughout the region: **paid solo-driver permit parking**. Park & ride lots are located near high-frequency transit areas and make transit more accessible for people who do not live near a bus or light rail route.

Park & ride permits are already available for [carpoolers](#) who drive together to select park & rides. The new proposal will allow solo drivers to pay for a reserved space at select transit facilities. Permits are not required; drivers without permits would have access to a portion of park & rides on a first-come, first-served basis.

OUR COMMENTS

This proposal is a useful step to better manage demand at transit centers. We want to see reliable access, especially for those who need it most, fees that accurately reflect environmental and infrastructure costs, and efficient use of current parking.

Access and predictability Many transit riders can't currently use park & rides because lots fill up early, which increases crowding on early morning trips and leaves little to no parking for workers with later start times. Solo-driver permit parking can offer increased certainty and predictability for transit riders and spread out demand for space on transit.

Equitable and performance-based pricing Sound Transit and Metro should move towards market-rate fees, with low-income rates for people who qualify for ORCA LIFT, and a prioritization of permits for low-income users. This will ensure those with the fewest alternatives have access to park & rides. Regardless of what pricing is set, Sound Transit and Metro should be able to adjust to meet goals around reliability and equity.

Multimodal options Charging makes carpooling, biking, and walking more attractive to those who have the option, freeing up park & ride space for those who need it most. With a permit system, commuters are encouraged to consider whether they need to drive.

Better align use and cost 78% of transit riders don't use park & rides, yet all riders and taxpayers are paying for expensive parking infrastructure. People driving to transit centers should pay for park & ride use.

Efficient use of parking space Let's manage the space we already have and avoid building more expensive and environmentally harmful infrastructure. We can't meet demand by building endless parking lots.

Invest in healthy and sustainable access If revenue from parking exceeds what is needed for maintenance and operation of parking management, we want to reinvest it to expand multimodal access—local transit systems and walking and biking networks that give people better access to transit stations.

Regional inclusion Let's build a regional transit system that works for everyone. We welcome all riders to use park & ride facilities, even if they live outside of Sound Transit's taxing district. Pricing shouldn't differentiate across district lines.

Questions? Contact Hester Serebrin, Policy Director at hester@transportationchoices.org

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