

March 24, 2020

Dear Members of the Sound Transit Board:

Thank you for considering changes to Sound Transit's fare enforcement policies and program. We the undersigned organizations appreciate the effort that has gone into this work so far on the part of board members and agency staff.

We are glad that Sound Transit is proposing to increase the number of warnings, reduce fines for fare non-payment, increase officer training, and explore special considerations for youth. We also strongly support Sound Transit's participation in the income-based fare program scheduled to begin later this year, and we're glad to know the agency is preparing for this.

At the same time, we have ongoing concerns with a proposal that keeps the citation resolution process within the court system. While the Community Court proposal attempts to address several underlying issues: level of citation, additional locations for resolving citations, and better connecting people with resources, we believe that any involvement with the courts goes against the social and racial equity values we are striving to implement, and that [Sound Transit has recently adopted as policy](#), and will result in continuing harm to marginalized communities.

King County Metro's experience shows that a less punitive approach to fare enforcement can significantly increase the percentage of citations that are resolved, but historical data show that a large majority of tickets are never resolved. Under Sound Transit's proposal, unpaid tickets would continue to result in debt collection and some fare evasion interactions or citations that lead to suspensions could lead to criminal charges. Any court involvement will perpetuate the criminalization of poverty that disproportionately impacts people of color, especially Black people; people with disabilities; and people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

We ask you to use your position as a board member to divorce any fare enforcement program entirely from the court and criminal legal system, working jointly with Councilmember McDermott and other board members who have taken an active interest in this work.

We are not asking for Sound Transit to simply follow King County Metro's lead. Rather we are asking two of our largest transit agencies to implement equitable and consistent program features, and to work together going forward to iterate in the best interest of their riders.

One instance where we hope Metro and Sound Transit can continue to iterate together is around youth. As you direct Sound Transit to develop a youth-focused program, we ask that you consider removing fines or citations that have the potential to mark a youth's record in any way - this in itself is a reason to remove the citation process from the Courts. This would be an area of growth for Metro as well, and we ask that Sound Transit lead the way.

Thank you for your service on the Sound Transit board and your work on this important issue.

Sincerely,

350 Seattle
500 Women Scientists Seattle
Alliance of People with disAbilities
Asian Counseling and Referral Service
Ballard Community Task Force on Hunger and Homelessness
Black Lives Matter Seattle-King County
Byrd Barr Place
Cascade Bicycle Club
Chief Seattle Club
Church Council of Greater Seattle
Coalition to End Urban Indigenous Homelessness
Downtown On the Go
East African Community Services
El Centro de la Raza
Front & Centered
Homesight
Housing Development Consortium
Housing for All
Interim CDA
Lake City Taskforce on Homelessness
Nickelsville
OneAmerica
Puget Sound Sage
Rainier Beach Action Coalition
Real Change
Rooted in Rights/Disability Rights WA
Seattle Human Services Coalition
Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness
Seattle Neighborhood Greenways
Seattle Subway
Seattle Women's Commission
Sierra Club WA
Statewide Poverty Action Network
Tacoma / Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium
Tenants Union of Washington State
The Urbanist
Transit Riders Union
Transportation Choices Coalition
UAW 4121
UFCW 21
Washington Community Action Network
WHEEL