



## Access Paratransit Advisory Committee

**Date:** Monday, December 13, 2021

**APAC Members:** Clark Matthews, Dorene Cornwell, Deborah Artis, Kristina Sawyckyj, Ginger Kwan, Christina Schaefer, Joe Welinske

**Metro Staff:** Gunner Scott, Gwen Clemens, Mark Nash, Gwyn Howard, Anahi Sandoval

**MV Transportation staff:** John Gray, Mike Bedlion

**Metro Guests:** David Goodman, Carol Cooper, Ina Percival

Facilitator/ Presenter	Topic
Gunner/Anahi	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>Gunner announced that he is taking on a new role at Metro. This will be his last time staffing an APAC meeting, but other Metro staff will continue to provide support.</p>
Kristina	<p><b>Introductions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name you go by</li> <li>• What pronoun you use (<i>she/her; he/him; they/them</i>)</li> <li>• Review the agenda</li> </ul>
David	<p><b>Metro Fares Stakeholder Group update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project overview</li> <li>• Summary of the community engagement process</li> <li>• Next steps</li> </ul> <p>Carol Cooper provided an overview of the Metro Fares Stakeholder Group process. The group has been working on assessing the future of cash fare collection on board buses. Metro has received policy direction to evaluate options to only accept cash off-board buses, and the team is wanting to work with the community through this process. It is important to Metro to hear from all stakeholders including APAC members as the team is trying to better understand why riders pay cash on board and what alternatives they are. Ultimately, Metro hopes to identify alternatives to cash collection on board bus with a focus on populations that could be disproportionately adversely impacted by a transition to a contactless fare system.</p> <p>David Goodman provided background information and a status update on the project. Metro is interested in only accepting cash off-board buses for several reasons: fareboxes are nearing the end of their useful life, cashless on board could improve speed and reliability of buses, overall cash revenue is declining as a payment method, and cashless payment options on board have reduced risk of conflict.</p> <p>David reviewed the key themes identified through recent engagement with stakeholders and provided information on next steps.</p>

## Questions

- Is there an estimated timeline for the transition to cashless fares on board?
  - Metro does not have a specific date in mind and is currently focused on working with stakeholders to identify benchmarks for what would need to be in place to facilitate a transition eventually.
- Will Metro include accessibility advocates in future focus groups?
  - Yes, Metro is looking to include a wide variety of representatives. Even though Access vehicles don't have fareboxes Metro staff would still like to hear from Access riders to discuss how to make system more accessible.
- During Covid the increase in the percentage of riders who pay cash indicates that those riders are more reliant on transit.
  - Metro worked with a group of researchers to understand how transit ridership has changed since Covid. The research has found that while transit usage has declined across the board, there was a steeper decrease in use by those with higher incomes and the option to work remotely.
- How is Metro planning for families with kids who aren't used to traveling by bus or tourists without smartphones who all would be more likely to want to pay cash on board?
  - Metro is working with stakeholders to better understand the needs of those riders who prefer to pay cash on board.
- Is Metro looking at utilizing the existing cashless system or creating something additional? In other words, would Metro be leveraging the existing payment system, or could new access issues be introduced through a new payment system?
  - Metro will likely base the new payment option/s on the existing system but is wanting to be flexible as much as possible.
- I often ride the bus with my students and some students don't have a bank account and only use cash. Requiring these students to pre-load a card with cash at another location would be a challenge.
- Sometimes I travel with others and want to pay for their fare. Additionally, smartphones are limiting for some folks and could be too complicated to figure out a payment app.
  - There is a potential option to convert existing cards that people may already have into a transit payment card by simply using a sticker that functions with the payment system. The new Orca card system will provide more opportunities.
- For the disability community there still continues to be an issue of needing more fare subsidies/free fares. Transportation is expensive especially for those on fixed incomes/SSI. Since technology would be changing with the new system it would be important to incorporate education on using the system in a variety of languages as well as to provide on-call support. Metro should consider working with caregivers as well. Lots of other countries have more accessible payment systems for their transit systems than King County so this could be an opportunity to

learn from those examples.

- Metro is working with community based organizations to learn how to be more effective and meet needs of community members. Ina agreed that education and outreach will be very important no matter what option is selected as well as making sure more information is available for those who may potentially qualify for transit fare subsidies and may not currently know.
- It would be best to make sure to roll out any changes at the same time for all riders, including those who may qualify for fare subsidies. Phasing changes can make some riders feel like second class.
- Some riders don't have an Orca card because they don't ride the bus that often. This would be the same situation for tourists who may only be visiting the area for a short amount of time.
- Is there a tradeoff of not going to cashless payment on board?
  - The cost to accept cash payment on board increases as less riders pay cash. Installing a new farebox system requires a big capital cost to install and maintain the new system. Overall, the goal is to identify a system that is a more effective, equitable, forward-looking fare system investment. It's important to remember that the current system has its own built-in inequity such as how the current system doesn't provide bus-Link transfers to those who need to pay cash.
- How are other similar cities handling on board fare collection? What is preventing Metro from simply procuring replacement fareboxes?
  - This type of shift is relatively new for transit agencies. Metro has been in touch with other agencies to learn more and have found a lot of common themes. Metro's situation is more urgent due to the current state of fareboxes though. Replacing fareboxes requires many different costs beyond purchasing the machines such as taking the coaches out of service, the labor needed to uninstall and reinstall the boxes, and then processing the cash itself. Maintenance is another cost. Metro has been able to buy up fareboxes from other agencies as they are phased out elsewhere and this has bought more time as it allow Metro to have replacements on hand while conducting repairs.
- It seems like if this type of shift were doable other agencies would have already made the shift. There are a lot of barriers to consider to make sure that those who pay cash on board can continue to ride.
- Sometimes people only transfer bus to bus. Does this mean paper transfers would go away?
  - Metro would maintain the transfer functionality no matter which options are identified.
- In 2019, Metro received over 18 million in cash revenue. How many riders does this account for and what information do we have on who they are and what their needs are?
  - Metro is working with a nonprofit consultant to look more in depth at data including conducting one on one interviews to be better able to answer those types of questions. It is very difficult to track information on cash paying riders vs those riders who pay with

	<p>Orca cards. In 2019, there were 40 million boardings/times that someone boarded the bus. The cash paying figure represents an estimated 1/3 of all boardings in 2019, but only 11.5% of revenue that year.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Staff from the Metro Fares Stakeholder Group to return with updates at a future APAC meeting.</p>
<b>Gwyn</b>	<p><b>APAC recruitment update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application closed December 3</li> <li>• Application review and interview process</li> </ul> <p>About 17 completed applications were received. Gwyn will be reaching out to APAC members who have expressed interest in participating in the application review process in January. Kristina, Clark, Christina, and Joe all expressed interest in taking part.</p> <p>Currently five spots are open on APAC. The first round of review will be an anonymous review phase meaning that reviewers will not receive personal information about the applicant as they score the application. The second round of review will include an interview with the applicant.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Gwyn to be in touch with APAC members participating in the APAC application review process regarding next steps.</p>
<b>Kristina All</b>	<p><b>Old business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review November 8th action items (<i>see below</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The group decided to discuss the dashboard at the next APAC Executive Meeting on December 27.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Review summary of November 8 meeting minutes (Joe)</li> <li>• Check in on potential meeting time adjustment (Kristina)</li> </ul> <p><b>New Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• January meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Update from Dion Graham, Metro’s ADA coordinator (Dion Graham) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confirm APAC topics of interest in advance</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ 2022 Work plan and metrics (Gwen)</li> <li>○ Access Same Day Service Pilot (Casey Gifford)</li> <li>○ APAC report check in (15 minutes – facilitator TBD)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> Metro staff to track following up regarding the Access recertification process. In particular, APAC members expressed interest in understanding how many people are required to recertify annually and how long the process takes.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Metro staff to continue tracking potential meeting opportunities with Sound Transit’s ADA/paratransit committee and possible discussion regarding placement of paratransit stops at new East Link stations.</p>
<b>Kristina All</b>	<p><b>Meeting wrap-up</b></p>

December 13, 2021 meeting action items:

- Staff from the Metro Fares Stakeholder Group to return with updates at a future APAC meeting.
- Gwyn to be in touch with APAC members participating in the APAC application review process regarding next steps.
- Metro staff to track following up regarding the Access recertification process. In particular, APAC members expressed interest in understanding how many people are required to recertify annually and how long the process takes.
- Metro staff to continue tracking potential meeting opportunities with Sound Transit's ADA/paratransit committee and possible discussion regarding placement of paratransit stops at new East Link stations.

**Next Executive Committee planning session (open to all APAC members):**

1. December 27, 2021, 4-5pm
2. <https://zoom.us/j/96688497679?pwd=THg2WUNPT1BkeGJndlNnSkpVZDFCQT09>
3. Meeting ID: 966 8849 7679
4. Passcode: 20021
5. One tap mobile: +12532158782,,96688497679#
6. Dial by your location: +1 253 215 8782

**Next monthly APAC meeting:** January 10, 2022