

# Public Engagement Report

King County Metro Transit

**Implementation plan for Ride Free Area elimination  
and transition to pay-on-entry**



Prepared by KCDOT Communications

May 2012



*We'll Get You There*



# Table of Contents

Executive summary .....	3
Public outreach for the implementation plan	
Planning .....	4
Interagency coordination .....	4
Equity & Social Justice .....	4
Outreach activities .....	5
Community feedback summary .....	8
Appendices	
Appendix 1 – Public comments	
Appendix 2 – Outreach materials	

## Executive summary

### **Background on Ride Free Area**

- Since 1973, King County Metro Transit had an agreement with the city of Seattle to operate a Ride Free Area (RFA) in downtown Seattle.
- In 2010, there were estimated 8.4 million boardings in the RFA. Approximately 2.8 million of the 8.4 million annual boardings were made by people who did not have a pass or a transfer.
- The lost fare revenue from the RFA is more than \$2 million per year for Metro.
- The city of Seattle's payment of \$400,000 annually (unchanged since 1999) covers only a small portion of this cost.

In August 2011, the Metropolitan King County Council approved a two-year congestion reduction charge of \$20 on vehicle registration renewals. This helped prevent a 17 percent reduction in Metro service.

It also directed Metro to eliminate the Ride Free Area or negotiate a new agreement with the city to cover the cost of operation. The latter is not possible, as the city's budget is shrinking rather than growing. So, Metro is moving forward to end the RFA on Sept. 29, 2012. At the same time, it will also transition to a pay-on-entry system for all bus trips to minimize fare evasion and standardize fare payment.

The Council requested an implementation plan on how the RFA will be discontinued. The implementation plan was sent to Council on May 1, 2012. It also directed Metro to include a communication plan within the implementation plan that demonstrates outreach to all affected by these changes – particularly those using transit in downtown Seattle. The communications plan identifies the following audiences: transit customers; transit operations staff; low-income populations; human services and health agencies; transportation partners; stakeholders and community leaders.

In March and April, Metro teamed up with partner transportation agencies to solicit public input on the implementation plan. Using a broad outreach approach, the community was asked to comment on three key elements of the implementation plan: mitigation to provide transportation assistance for people with little or no income; operational changes for downtown transit service; and communications about the changes.

During those two months, Metro received almost 800 public comments on the end of the RFA and implementation plan for transition.

## Public outreach for the implementation plan

### **Planning**

Communications staff began planning outreach in the fall 2011. Working closely with RFA project staff, they started by drafting a comprehensive communications plan that identified targeted audiences, defined key messages, and set goals to accomplish.

Once the communications plan was reviewed and approved by Metro managers, staff began activating the public outreach plan. The initial products launched were:

- A website with background information and a question-and-answer page (Q&A) focused on anticipated questions from the public. Information on the website will be updated throughout the remaining five months lead up to the Sept. 29 implementation;
- A poster to be displayed in buses and distributed through partner transportation and human services agencies;
- Phone hotlines; and
- Handouts for the March 29 open house, which included a brochure with background information, an explanation of the areas where feedback was needed, the Q&A, and a comment form.

### **Interagency coordination**

Staff made contact with other transportation partners, most notably Sound Transit, Community Transit, and the Seattle Department of Transportation. A joint planning meeting was held in December 2011 for communications staff to discuss common goals and concerns. This meeting was also attended by Pierce Transit, which decided it did not need to be actively involved. From that meeting, one staff member was identified from each agency to serve as a single point of contact for interagency communication projects.

Following the December meeting, several smaller group meetings were held to discuss specific tasks such as Equity and Social Justice outreach, integration with ORCA committees, and marketing activities for summer and fall.

### **Equity and Social Justice**

Given the diversity of Metro Transit's bus-riding population, and the number of people with little or no income who have historically used the RFA to travel to essential services, the engagement process was designed to maximize participation. In planning outreach activities, every effort was made to go beyond traditional practices such as residential mailings.

Staff contacted more than 200 social service and health agencies asking them to help spread the word about the comment period and open house. The agencies, and other community

partners, were provided with a poster to display in public areas inviting people to engage with Metro and comment on the implementation plan.

The majority of the people providing feedback during the RFA outreach used the online/print comment form, which included some demographic questions. Analysis of those comments indicates 34 percent of respondents have an annual income of \$35,000 or less, and would be classified as low income. Approximately 13 percent identified themselves as a minority, with 5 percent responding that a language other than English was spoken at home. In addition, 13 percent of people completing a comment form indicated they had a disability. Of those, 63 percent said they had mobility impairment.

### **Outreach activities**

To date, the majority of the activities have focused on both publicizing the comment period on implementation plan that ran from March 20, 2012 to April 6, 2012, and promotion of the March 29 open house. There were also follow-up presentations to boards, commissions, and advisory groups.

During the next five months, outreach will shift to continued awareness and education about the September changes through customer information products and marketing activities.

Activities through April 30, 2012 include:

#### **Notifications**

The notification process was targeted to reach those who live in or adjacent to the RFA, and also those who use it frequently to travel to work or essential services in the downtown area. That was achieved by the following methods:

- Poster promoting open house with link to project web page installed on 1,400 Metro buses, as well as major customer information centers. The posters were also installed on more than 300 Sound Transit and Community Transit coaches. Additionally, Community Transit posted them at the Ash Way, McCollum Park, Monroe and Snohomish park-and-rides.
- News release sent to 108 newspapers, broadcast stations, and local blogs. Followed-up with outreach to key transportation reporters.
- News release sent to transportation partner agencies: city of Seattle; Sound Transit; and Community Transit for distribution and online posting.
- Transit Alerts sent to: 50,000 Metro subscribers; 4,000 Sound Transit subscribers; and 6,000 Community Transit subscribers.
- Paid advertising placed in nine newspapers serving low-income and minority populations in Seattle.
- Web pages about the RFA transition posted on Metro Online and highlighted on King County home page.
- Online information also linked from Sound Transit, Community Transit, and City of Seattle websites.

- Twitter and Facebook used to increase communication about the plan and open house using Metro, Sound Transit, Community Transit, City of Seattle, and community partner (i.e. Downtown Seattle Twitter account) social media channels.
- Email sent from Metro General Manager to 750 recipients comprised of elected officials, community leaders and other stakeholders. Included information about the project, open house, and a poster to display.
- Email sent from King County Department of Transportation (KCDOT) Community Relations to 360 recipients comprised of social service agencies, advocacy groups for low-income and people with disabilities, transportation organizations, labor groups, and educational facilities whose clients, staff, members, and students currently use the Ride Free Area. Included information about the project, open house, and a poster to display.
- Sound Transit CEO included information in weekly e-newsletter that was distributed on March 23.
- Targeted employer outreach through emailed information to: 413 Commute Trip Reduction sites; 102 transportation management programs; and seven regional or city-based transportation management associations.
- Sent information about the project, open house, and a poster to display to the Seattle Convention and Visitor's Bureau.
- Posted information for three days from March 27 to 29 on the Eye On Your Metro Commute blog, which is also fed into the kcmetrobus Twitter account.
- Posted information about open house and comment opportunity in the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) blog:  
<http://sdotblog.seattle.gov/2012/03/26/transit-agencies-seeking-comments-on-operational-changes-in-downtown/>
- Posted information about open house and comment opportunity in the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods "Front Porch" blog:  
<http://frontporch.seattle.gov/2012/03/27/transit-agencies-and-city-host-open-house-thursday-on-ride-free-area-in-downtown-seattle/>
- Hosted an open house on March 29, 2012 at Union Station from 4-6:30 p.m. that was attended by more than 300 community members.

### **Accommodations**

It was anticipated that many people who use the RFA may not have regular access to a computer, may not use English as their primary language, and could have a disability. Accommodations were made to assist them, including:

- Comment form posted online for increased public access and convenience.
- Comments also accepted by email, phone, U.S. mail, and in person at March 29 open house.
- Provided phone lines for Spanish and Vietnamese speakers to record their comments.

- Assigned a Community Relations Planner to contact those who requested a phone call or more information prior to the open house.
- Interpreters for Spanish, Cantonese/Mandarin, Vietnamese, and sign language were available at the open house.
- Open house brochure made available in Spanish, Chinese (traditional), Vietnamese, and large print at the open house and posted on line as a PDF for easier distribution through community organizations.
- Additional staff from Metro's Accessible Transportation services was on hand at the open house to assist people with disabilities attending open house. The Accessible Transportation staff also participating in a training meeting for those staffing the open house to help the best assist people with disabilities who would be attending.
- Translation services were used to for comments that arrived after the open house in languages other than English.

### **Additional outreach**

- Multiple interviews with news media outlets throughout March and April, which generated more than 30 articles, news-blog posts, and broadcast stories during a six-week period.
- Early notification and discussion took place during meetings of a sub-committee convened by Executive Office and Metro to discuss mitigation options for people with little or no income who use the Ride Free Area to travel to essential services in the Seattle Central Business District. The group included representatives from key social and health service agencies, such as: Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness (SKCH); Plymouth Housing Group; Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC); Evergreen Treatment; Pioneer Square Clinic; Real Change; Compass Center; International District Housing Alliance (IDHA); Catholic Community Services of Western Washington (CCSWW); and the Millionair Club. (Oct. 14, 2011, Nov. 14, 2011, and March 9, 2012)
- Presentations made to:
  - Downtown Seattle Association Transportation Committee (Dec. 1, 2011)
  - Downtown Transportation Association (Jan. 4, 2012)
  - King County Transit Advisory Commission (March 27, 2012)
  - Downtown Seattle Association (Apr. 3, 2012)
  - King County Civil Rights Commission (Apr. 18, 2012)
  - South Area County Transportation Board (May 2, 2012)
  - SeaShore Transportation Forum (May 4, 2012)
  - Eastside Transportation Partnership (May 11, 2012)

# Community feedback summary

## Defining feedback needed

One of the challenges for this project was helping the community understand the type of feedback Metro needed. The decision to end the RFA had essentially been made last year, when the city of Seattle indicated it could not increase its subsidy to cover the full cost of operating the RFA. Staff worked to make messaging clear that comments were needed about how to implement the changes, not the future existence of the RFA. Although many of the comments included request not to end to the RFA, the majority provided opinions and advice on the three key areas of the implementation plan: mitigation to provide transportation assistance for people with little or no income who need to access essential services in the downtown area; operational changes for transit service, especially in the downtown Seattle area; and communicating with transit customers about the changes.

## Collection & collation of feedback

Comments were accepted via: the online comment form; mail; email; and by phone. Any comment submitted on either an online or print comment form was input into a web-based survey tool to both collate comments and analyze them and the respondents. The comment form included voluntary questions about respondent demographics.

## Who responded

645 people responded using the online/print comment form

152 people responded by email, mail, or phone

Of those using a comment form, the following demographics were compiled:

### *Use of transit*

3 or more days a week	64.0%
1 to 2 days a week	12.9%
Occasionally (less than once a week)	19.8%
Never	3.3%

### *Use of the RFA*

Yes, in the AM commute	3.7%
Yes, in the PM commute	6.1%
Yes, during both commutes	39.4%
Yes, outside of commute times	19.8%
No, I do not transfer to another service	31.1%

### *Use RFA service to transfer to:*

Metro buses	76.2%
Sound Transit buses	30.7%
Community Transit buses	13.3%
Link light rail	36.3%
Souder trains	9.7%
Seattle Monorail	5.4%

King County Water Taxi	5.6%
Washington State Ferry	9.5%
Employer shuttle	2.3%
Vanpool/VanShare	1.0%
<i>How end of RFA will affect transit use</i>	
I will use transit more than I do now	8.1%
I will use transit the same as I do now	38.2%
I will use transit less than I do now	44.5%
No opinion	9.2%
<i>ORCA card use</i>	
Yes	76.0%
No	24.0%
<i>ORCA card provided by employer/organization</i>	
Yes	44.6%
No	51.5%
<i>How heard about RFA ending in September</i>	
News media	42.9.0%
Blog	9.6%
Poster on bus	25.9%
Transit email alert	21.1%
Transit rider alert	15.8%
Twitter	2.5%
Facebook	7.2%
From a friend	19.7%
From your employer	14.6%
From an organization you're involved with	23.2%
<i>Household size</i>	
1	32.1%
2	41.1%
3	12.5%
4	7.3%
5 or more	7.0%
<i>Number in household who regularly ride bus</i>	
1	56.0%
2	30.6%
3	6.7%
4	2.2%
5 or more	4.5%
<i>Cars owned by members of household</i>	
0	28.1%
1	37.0%
2	27.3%
3	3.9%
4 or more	3.7%
<i>Age</i>	
18-19	0.6%

20-24	5.8%
25-34	20.9%
35-44	20.7%
45-54	24.6%
55-64	22.7%
65 or older	4.8%
<i>Disability</i>	
Mobility	63.5%
Vision	25.7%
Hearing	14.9%
Cognitive	20.3%
<i>Ethnicity</i>	
African-American	5.9%
Asian-American (Pacific Islander)	5.3%
American Indian/Alaska Native	2.4%
Hispanic	1.8%
Multiple Ethnicities	7.5%
White (Caucasian)	77.2%
<i>Primary language spoken at home</i>	
Chinese (Traditional)	2.8%
English	95.2%
Korean	0.6%
Spanish	0.9%
Tagalog	0.4%
Ukrainian	0.2%
<i>Annual household income</i>	
Less than \$7,500	8.0%
\$7,500 to \$15,000	7.8%
\$15,000 to \$25,000	6.7%
\$25,000 to \$35,000	11.5%
\$35,000 to \$55,000	12.1%
\$55,000 to \$75,000	14.5%
\$75,000 to \$100,000	13.0%
\$100,000 to \$140,000	11.9%
\$140,000 and up	8.4%
Don't know	6.1%

## Themes and frequently mentioned topics

Comments received by email or phone were logged into a report. All of the responses were reviewed to identify comments on the three key areas of the implementation plan.

### Mitigations

Themes and topics:

- Option to provide a free circulator downtown was favored, particularly if routing could be expanded to include Harborview Medical Center and the Urban Rest Stop at Stewart Street and Boren Avenue.
- Circulator service should be frequent.
- The circulator should look like regular transit service, and not segregate low-income people into a separate system.
- Increasing the existing human services ticket program could increase the administrative burden for agencies that distribute the tickets.

Representative comments:

- "By far the best idea I've heard toward this end is the creation of one or more free "circulator" transit routes downtown. These routes must cover the area now comprising the Ride Free Area. They must serve key trip origins and destinations used by homeless and other vulnerable Seattleites, such as Belltown, Pioneer Square, and Harborview Medical Center. The circulators must run frequently--at least every 15 minutes. And they must operate at least from 6am to 7pm--the current RFA hours."
- "We endorse the idea of a free, public loop service that operates daily and is available to everyone and can accommodate the passengers who need it (aka "the circulator bus"). We strongly favor this over distributing more bus tickets to people in need. Bus ticket distribution is administratively burdensome, and access can be confusing to clients."
- "We are advocating strongly for the following elements: a free, public loop service that operates daily and is available to everyone and can accommodate the passengers who need it; a predictable schedule with service frequency at least every 20 minutes; hours should ensure that people who rely on overnight-only shelters can get to and from those locations without excessive waits or walks very late at night or very early in the morning; a route or routes that maintain access within the broad downtown area, and helps people get to key locations (including Harborview Medical Center and other hospitals, the International District, and key resources not currently in the RFA)."
- "We need a regional solution that is income-based, and that does not stigmatize the thousands and thousands of our neighbors who are living on \$167 or \$334 or \$667 a month."

## Operations

Themes and topics:

- Questions about if paying on entry could delay buses leaving downtown Seattle during the afternoon commute and increase congestion in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel.
- Problems with exiting through the rear doors if the bus is crowded or people have mobility issues.
- Issues with fare enforcement.
- Concerns that ending the RFA will hurt tourism, and decrease lunchtime restaurant and retail business. This comment was often combined with a request to have a day pass for fare payment.

Representative comments:

- "Either move all peak route buses out of the tunnel, or move to all off bus payment within the tunnel."
- "Please reinstate funding for rear-door ORCA readers. This should allow riders to use all doors, and help mitigate delays after the Ride Free Area is eliminated."
- "As a mobility-device user, I also see a problem with people "cramming" onto a bus and forgetting about the fact that people with limited mobility need to be accommodated, either in the "priority seats" or in the tiedown areas."
- "I ride the 5 every day, and believe you me, there's no way I could walk 50 feet to the back of the bus while it's bumping down Greenwood Avenue without falling or slipping at least a couple of times a month. And I'm not even disabled yet!"
- "Fare inspectors on all buses, randomly to deal with fare jumpers and zone jumpers (i.e. get on downtown for 1 zone, but continue to 2 zones anyway)."
- "Some kind of low cost service needed to encourage shoppers, tourists..."
- "Please, bring back the "all day" pass for weekends and holidays. Better yet, we need a "day pass" for tourists and infrequent riders (available for purchase 7 days a week)."

## Communications

Themes and topics:

- Educating the riders to have fares ready before entering the bus.
- Remind passengers to enter through front door, and exit at rear door whenever possible. Use signage and automated announcements to prompt passengers.

- Promoting the use of ORCA cards to speed board and publicizing where ORCA cards can be purchased and reloaded. Provide incentives to use ORCA for fare payment.
- Begin notification of the September changes early.

Representative comments:

- "Metro needs to make it clear to riders that ORCA is much better than cash and much quicker."
- "Post signs at bus stops with wording along these lines: 'Please have your exact fare, transfer or pass ready when boarding.'"
- "When a stop is requested, use the new on-board automated system to announce 'stop requested - please use the rear exit.' This will help remind everyone to exit through the rear and improve passenger flow."
- "Please post NOW temporary signs in downtown core: 'Free Zone ends Sept. 29.' Please add new voice instructions to automated announcer voice to 'please exit at the back door -- thank you.'"

## Comments solicited for Ride Free Area and pay-on-entry implementation plan

March 20-April 13, 2012

Comments pertaining to implementation plan highlighted: yellow=mitigation; green=operations; pink=communications

### FROM COMMENT FORMS RECEIVED ONLINE, AT OPEN HOUSE, OR BY MAIL

1. *[Originally submitted in Chinese from resident of Sunshine Gardens. Translated by Dynamic Language]*  
Use ORCA (to speed up boarding). (communications) Encourage ORCA. Update materials. (speed up boarding messaging) Use ORCA more often. (encourage ORCA use with) Discounts and monthly cards. I will decrease bus riding.
2. *[Originally submitted in Chinese from resident of Sunshine Gardens. Translated by Dynamic Language]*  
After qualification review, the low-income and no-income people will be able to receive a fixed half-price and discounted fares (opinion of three people). Set up a shuttle with a route along (1) downtown or (2) along such large medical institutions as Harborview Hospital, Pacific Medical Center, and Swedish Hospital.
3. *[Originally submitted in Chinese from resident of Sunshine Gardens. Translated by Dynamic Language]*  
Riding buses in different areas. (move out of tunnel) Route 150. (best way to communicate changes) Post signs on buses/newspapers/contacting community organization. (speed up boarding) Implement ORCA. (encourage ORCA use) Discounts. (areas visited most often) Chinatown and Downtown - Jackson St., Pike St., and Pine St.
4. *[Originally submitted in Chinese from resident of Sunshine Gardens. Translated by Dynamic Language]*  
Please try not to have any delays. We think bus frequency for route 111 should be increased [...illegible] Dispatch one bus every hour because more and more people live there. Place routes explanation on buses using the most-often used language. Use the language used by the most people for the content. More explanation about the benefits of ORCA cards. Without buying the monthly card, it's possible I will decrease my bus ride. The reason I'm taking bus is because I'm not yet too familiar with the subway. Extend the route into Chinatown because there're a variety of delicacies in Chinatown. It is also a very popular gathering place. Please extend route 105 and increase its coverage a little more. Increase bus frequency for route 111. Thank you.
5. *[Originally submitted in Chinese from resident of Sunshine Gardens. Translated by Dynamic Language]*  
If monthly fee for seniors reduce to or maintain at \$27, so it can be used to travel back and forth to downtown multiple times.
6. *[Originally submitted in Chinese from resident of Sunshine Gardens. Translated by Dynamic Language]*  
Other opinion: Please reduce monthly fee for seniors reduce to or maintain at \$27, so it can be used multiple times.
7. *[Originally submitted in Chinese from resident of Sunshine Gardens. Translated by Dynamic Language]*  
(Uses the bus) Only for things that I must go take care of, then I'll ride the bus. It's slow to line up and get on the bus. [...illegible] delay. The best way is to use the inexpensive ORCA card. Distribute brochures through Chinese Information and Service Center. Inexpensive bus cards can help expedite

bus boarding. Inexpensive bus cards are available for purchase from the bus company. (most frequent destinations and routes used) 4th Street and 20th Street. Bus route number 7, 23, 36, 124, 3. Go get food, find jobs and learn English. Mainly, the bus card needs to be inexpensive. We cannot afford the current price.

8. I am exceedingly disappointed Metro has decided to eliminate the RFA. I believe it should be expanded over, for example, five years, to include the entire area. There are many people with disabilities who use RFA service, yet ORCA cards may be too challenging for them to use. At present there is inequity in the Metro revenue models so that workers who assist the disabled as part of their jobs actually pay more than highly paid corporate professionals whose employers are able to negotiate favorable rates. By expanding equity in Metro fares to all, the tiered distinctions will be eliminated, surely a goal also of the ORCA system. I would like to see such systems and across the board funding rather than percentage fee for service Metro as it is at present. We need to create social equality and public transportation is at a scale here in Puget Sound that we can accomplish equitable access to it.
9. *[Summary Comments from the Focus Group at Sunshine Garden Chinese Senior Day Care Center of Chinese Information and Service Center (CISC) on April 5, 2012]*

What is your opinion on minimizing delays of bus boarding in downtown Seattle?

Answer: **A-** Terminate Metro bus ticket cash purchase: Particularly for passengers paying bus fare with change, they take a long time and tend to damage the cash box. So, even if cash purchase of bus tickets cannot be abolished altogether, it is necessary to consider terminating ticket purchase with change. **B-** Make the two-hour transfer time a uniform standard: Many passengers are not willing to apply for ORCA cards because "paper transfers" provided by bus drivers have more time flexibility, even up to three to four hours. Some passengers even use old "paper transfers" in the same color to trick drivers so as to save bus fare. The Metro bus should follow the charging methods of bus companies that have already terminated "paper transfers" (such as: Sound Transit and Community Transit). **C-** One single bus fare rate: Do not set rates for peak hours and non-peak hours so as to avoid passengers' confusion on rates and time wasted by the bus drivers' on chasing bus fare and explanation. **D-** Place clear instructions on visible spots: Minimize the time spent by passengers on inquiring about bus fare. **E-** Fully implement the bus charging method such as that of RapidRide: With the full implementation of ORCA cards for bus fare, the charging method as that of RapidRide can be implemented (swipe ORCA cards through ORCA scanners on buses and at bus stations). With no limitation on bus seating, bus boarding can be expedited. **F-** Implement methods to ensure the safety of passengers exiting from the rear door: Many elderly people are worried when they see shorter Asians holding many things in their hands and move slowly. In case that they are required to exit from the back door and the driver's vision is blocked by the crowd on the bus during peak hours, the door might shut too early and cause some safety problem. It is suggested to add a sensor to the back door, or to remind the driver more frequently to make sure to close the door only after passengers get off completely.

Do you have any suggestions to which bus tunnel route should be moved up to the ground?

Answer: Move routes with bus terminals in the tunnel back to the surface streets, such as: route 106 and 101. (2) Strengthen communication

What is the best way for you to learn about bus services? What do you need to know about expediting the passenger boarding?

Answer: Send a short notice in multiple languages about significant changes. These notices can be posted inside the bus (in different language based on the majority of the race population in a particular district) and the bus stops in the affected districts. Publish free as "community information" in community newspapers in different languages.

If you do not currently use the ORCA card, how can we encourage you to use?

Answer: **A-Encourage more shops such as Saar's Market to provide free adult ORCA Cards with a certain amount of purchase. B-Consider linking up with the lottery. With a certain amount of Mega or Lotto purchase, adult ORCA Cards will be provided for free. C-With the termination of paper transfer tickets, the focus of education and promotion should be on such benefits as "within two hours", "free", "within Puget Sound", "can transfer to different bus company's bus of the same bus fare."**  
Provide transportation assistance to low-income or no-income citizens.

After the termination of the Free Ride Area, will it increase or decrease the number of times you take a bus in downtown Seattle?

Answer: Yes.

If there is a free shuttle in the future, where should this shuttle go?

Answer: We suggest to make route number 99 a free shuttle route. In addition to maintaining the original downtown and Waterfront routes, expansion can be made to include routes to different hospitals: Harborview Medical Center, Pacific Medical Center, and Swedish Medical Center & Hospital.

Other comments:

Methods of transportation assistance to low-income or no-income citizens: Increase the number of tickets to all human services departments. It is limited to the poor people related to human services. If the transportation assistance can be expanded to proven low-income or no-income citizens, they can benefit even more directly. Follow the example of the current "Taxi Scrip program" practice to first review qualifications. Issue certification to those who are eligible. It can be stipulated that a maximum number of discounted or free "tickets" are allowed to be purchased monthly. In this case, those low-income or no-income citizens will get to go out at least once a week!

10. I know this issue has probably already been decided, but I think the Ride Free zone should NOT be eliminated. There are a lot of tourists who are not used to riding the bus who benefit from this service every day. I see them struggling to gather up dollars and change just to get on a bus. I use it all the time during lunch time to go from the Market area to Pioneer Square, and I think a lot of other people do too. I've seen on the news those tiny buses you plan on putting in place of regular buses for those who cannot afford the expense of the bus (the price is getting really costly), which is a very insufficient solution. Those small buses will run far less frequently than the regularly scheduled buses, so people will need to be standing there waiting forever---who in their right mind will do that--poor or not? But that is probably part of the master plan, to create a lack of success, so it can be eliminated in a year or two. I just want my tax dollars to go to a good public transportation system that benefits everyone---let's get more people out of their cars and sharing rides and the only way we are going to do that is with a good public transportation system that meets the needs of everyone. Thanks, Donna Williamson Seattle, WA

11. I am employed by a nonprofit agency that serves a large number of very low-income, chemically dependent individuals in the downtown, Capitol Hill and Southeast Seattle area. Many of these people are homeless and some are also mentally ill. They rely on the free ride zone to help them get around—to support group meetings, medical appointments, local DSHS offices, probation appointments, temporary jobs and almost everything they do. We have many patients who are in early recovery and are struggling to make ends meet on reduced public assistance grants that do not even cover the cost of basic housing, let alone any other living expenses. It will be a major hardship for many of our patients if the free ride zone is eliminated. I understand that Metro needs to deal with a serious budget shortfall and rising fuel prices. However, the poorest and most vulnerable residents of our relatively well-off city should not be expected to make up the difference. **One alternative would be a modest fare increase across the board.**
12. Where can I make an official comment about the move to get rid of the Ride Free Zone in downtown Seattle? I want to speak out against it in hopes of making a difference. Thank you!
13. King County Officials: I am a member of the Compass Housing Alliance board. We have been briefed on the plans to end the free ride area in downtown Seattle. This will impact the approximately 200-300 individuals who use Compass facilities at 77 Washington each day. There needs to be a replacement for the free ride bus system. **A circulator seems like a good substitute. However, it must run frequently enough to be useful to handicapped people and have a route that hits frequently used places in downtown. It should be available to everyone.**
14. The Ride Free Area helps me, those like me, and the other residents of the house I live in by providing essentially an extended transfer time to run errands, make appointments, and meet with case managers. **I would even go so far as to suggest expanding the area covered by it, but maybe setting income limits for its users.**
15. As a low income person, the free ride area helps me get around downtown when the weather is really bad and even when it is nice out. Seattle's downtown free-ride area makes it unique amongst American cities. It is a pleasant thing to have in place and dispensing with it would make Seattle just like every other American city.
16. **I hope you are going to factor in how much this will slow down the schedule.**
17. Understanding that Metro is facing financial difficulties. **I'd like to suggest keeping just a portion of the Ride Free Area, for example - a part of only 3rd Avenue.** This is incredibly important to individuals like myself of little or no income. There are so many important and necessary agencies I use. It would be unbearable to have to pay 2.25/2.50 throughout the day. Every 2 or 3 hours, the ORCA card charges the rider again - that means in one day I could be charged \$10, \$15, or more!! That's unsustainable for a homeless person or another low income person. Please, find a way to meet your financial demands another way. **Furthermore, there is an all-important bus stop at Aurora Ave N and Crockett Street southbound. It stops in front of the Aloha Inn and is slated for removal.** We have people in wheelchairs!!! On crutches!!! With canes!!! You can't find just one more stop in the whole county to remove instead of this one?? Please reconsider!! Thank you.
18. In the Ride Free Area it helps all of the low income people get to helpful places to get back or on foot. As well as get to transferring buses and transit services.

19. I need the free ride because I am jobless and homeless, but I'm living at the homeless shelter at Aloha Inn and I have a training job only.
20. If you must eliminate the Ride Free Area, please consider adding a few buses that run from one end of the Ride Free Area to the other that are free to ride. For example south on second, north on 5th. Two buses running in opposite directions throughout the day. This may be a good compromise on revenue issues that also solves logistic issues around payment of fare. I feel that for myself and many other needy residents of Seattle, this will create a financial strain. This strain may cut us off from essential services - services like food, shelter, medical, recovery, religious, mental health, and hygiene resources. Please do not abandon us.
21. For the sake of others in the house, I would like to continue the bus stopping at Aloha Inn.
22. As a frequent user of Metro and Sound Transit buses, trains, etc., I feel that eliminating the RFA won't impact me directly. However, I am afraid of the impact it will have on the schedules (performance) of service. I hope things will "feel" the same.
23. I believe losing the Ride Free Area will hurt the businesses downtown who rely on Seattle tourism to make money. Tourists will not want to pay the extra money to visit attractions and stores. Also, personally I live downtown and I'm disabled. I do a lot of my business down here and rely on the convenience of the Ride Free Area. Without it I will be affected not only financially but physically. I hope you reconsider keeping the Ride Free Area.
24. The decision to eliminate the Ride Free Area is the result of a fragmented understanding of what it takes to be a major urban center in the 21st century. If elected officials understood that the people whom they serve are best served when there is a robust mass transit system that is accessible, appealing, efficient, and publicly-funded, we would not be struggling, in 2012, to modernize a system that is under-funded and balkanized, one that will be hard-pressed to meet the current needs of a commuting public, much less the growing needs of a major Metropolitan area. As things stand, the people, both elected and otherwise, who have advocated for and apparently succeeded in destroying the ride free area (RFA\_ must now join in good faith efforts to share responsibility for mitigating the effects of the loss of this civic amenity. Why? Because the RFA is part of our regional system of making sure that people -- ALL people -- move quickly throughout the downtown Seattle core. The RFA does not only serve our neighbors who are elderly, disabled, have limited or no incomes, or who are without any other form of transportation. It serves workers throughout the region, visitors, shoppers, and tourists who come through downtown, people accessing the government offices concentrated in the downtown area. It serves people who go to ball games, symphony concerts, need to get a passport or a social security card, people who love dim sum, and people going to the Seattle Center. Please don't forget that reality-- and the potential contained within it -- in the conversation about people who have no homes, who carry all their belongings on their backs or in their hands, and who need to get to an overnight shelter at 10:00 p.m. or to a hot breakfast at 6:00 a.m., or to a medical appointment at 2:00 p.m. when it's pouring rain. Mitigating the loss of this public service will require considering a long-avoided reality -- that people who are poor truly don't have the money to pay for a \$5 Orca card, let alone the fares to add to it. We need a regional solution that is income-based, and that does not stigmatize the thousands and thousands of our neighbors who are living on \$167 or \$334 or \$667 a month. In addition, we need to maintain a free public transit option in the greater downtown area, one that really works for people, getting them up the hill to the major

hospitals, west to the waterfront, and connecting the international district in the south with lower Queen Anne and the area around the Seattle Center to the north. This system may be one, two, or three loops, and must be frequent enough (every 15-20 minutes and daily service, covering at least the current RFA hours) to both generate ridership and meet the need. There is SO MUCH opportunity here to keep buses moving that bring people into our downtown to spend money if they have it, engage in civic and cultural life, and populate our downtown core in the lively way that it should be populated. I truly believe that a great common good can be served by attractive and accessible systems that make it easy and affordable for people to get around, not hard, cumbersome, and irritating. A robust and intelligently-designed, planned, marketed, and executed system could IMPROVE the speed with which people and buses move through downtown streets, and could help make Seattle's heart, and therefore the heart of the region, a better place to use public transportation for everyone. We also need a mitigation solution that increases the accessibility and affordability of reduced fare permits, and includes heavily subsidized or free passes for low income or no income people, and downtown workers (not just government employees). Metro could ease the burden on its own staff as well as on human services providers if it provided passes in addition to the limited subsidized bus tickets it currently makes available. Not only are these totally inadequate to the need, but they ration what should be a simple public good, place huge administrative burdens on those who distribute them, and fail to solve the problem of access for people too poor to pay the fares. The effort to woo voters by providing them with tickets that they can then turn back in to a donation pool is absurd and will surely cost more to administer than it is worth. It also will not generate nearly enough tickets to meet the need. What if Metro put these resources into LONG-TERM solutions that improve accessibility? Please consider this an opportunity to IMPROVE the system, and to make it more just, equitable, and effective. Our County residents and taxpayers -- ALL of us-- deserve no less. The

25. All transit systems should use the same way that Metro will use. When you board the bus you pay at that time. Also you need to have fair patrol patrolling the system just like on Link. If you don't have the money don't get on the bus.
26. Our public transit system needs to be accessible to people who are homeless, low income, disabled and elderly. Today, this is partially achieved through the RFA. This is an important service for those who cannot afford bus tickets. Not only does this service need to be continued, it needs to be extended to provide service to Harborview and other hospitals. I volunteer at an agency that among other things will give out bus tickets to people who are homeless or low income. We give out 2 to 4 tickets every 2 months depending on why they came in. They are thankful for even those few tickets because they can't afford bus tickets. If they can't afford tickets with RFA in place, they certainly won't be able to afford tickets if it goes away. People need the bus to get to shelters, medical appointments, job interviews, jobs, a place for a free meal, job training, the library to use their computers, church, etc. If the RFA is not available, many of the people who use it today will have to walk instead because they don't have the money to buy tickets. If they work, they may not have the time it takes to walk everywhere. If they don't work, they may have health problems that make it difficult for them to walk long distances. They need to be able to take the bus. The RFA needs to be continued or another alternative which makes public transit available to people who are homeless, low income, disabled and elderly needs to be found.

27. All in all a bad bad idea. By taking away the free ride area you are alienating those that may have insufficient funds to pay for public transportation. Many people have figured out a way to survive by using the free ride system and now you force them out of the system completely. Also by implementing an enter in the back and exit in the rear system you are not speeding up boarding but on really full buses causing more congestion.
28. This is the only way some elderly low income people can get to appointments for medical care and social services. Keeps downtown freer of traffic and pollution. This service probably pays for itself! Please try to find a way to keep the downtown ride-free zone!
29. with a ride free area downtown businesses get more of my support. by cutting out the ride free area there are more losses than you may know. downtown consumer;kent willson
30. Imposing four regressive, anti-environment fare increases in four years was enough. Switching to user-unfriendly ORCA cards that cost \$5 and don't reach everyone who needs free ones through human service agencies was more than enough. Eliminating the RFA is gratuitous, unnecessary, political, regressive, cynical, and kicks our most vulnerable neighbors when they're already reeling from budget cuts at all levels of government. Getting around downtown is not so easy if you have a mental or physical disability, if you're a senior citizen, if you have kids in tow, or if you have to carry all your belongings with you everywhere you go. The cold, rain, wind, and even summertime heat can be nasty to walk through downtown, and with our balkanized, uncoordinated, disjointed social safety net; the housing and various housing, medical, social, and other services people need are scattered among many offices in Belltown, downtown, Pioneer Square, First Hill, the International District, and more. Public transit does not exist just to be efficient--to turn a profit. It exists because it is a public good. King County recognized this when it included social equity as one of the three primary criteria to be used in allocating transit service. Eliminating the RFA is utterly inexcusable and indefensible; it should be reinstated at the earliest possible opportunity. However, if it's a foregone conclusion, Metro must mitigate the loss of the RFA as strongly and fully as possible. By far the best idea I've heard toward this end is the creation of one or more free "circulator" transit routes downtown. These routes must cover the area now comprising the Ride Free Area. They must serve key trip origins and destinations used by homeless and other vulnerable Seattleites, such as Belltown, Pioneer Square, and Harborview Medical Center. The circulators must run frequently--at least every 15 minutes. And they must operate at least from 6am to 7pm--the current RFA hours. Late night service, with longer headways, would be preferable. So would the use of quiet, clean electric trolleys on existing overhead wires. The County Council betrayed its neediest constituents by ending the Ride Free Area. I hope Metro will soften that blow with the most robust mitigation possible. Thank you.
31. I believe that homeless or low-income people who live in or receive services in the area covered by the free ride zone should have a special pass or something so they can still use the free-ride zone for free. They will now have more barriers to receiving stabilizing services. I also believe that there should be a free shuttle from 3rd and James up to Harborview Medical Center. There are many very low-income who need services there and at the Cherry Street food bank and that hill is prohibitive for people to climb.
32. Great idea to eliminate the ride free area; maybe this will help generate a little more income, even though I see riders never paying for their fare, regardless of where they get on or off the bus.

33. DESC (the Downtown Emergency Service Center) serves 2,000 homeless and formerly homeless people each day, most of whom are living with serious and persistent mental illnesses. The vast majority of these individuals are served by DESC within the downtown core. Over 200 of DESC's 400+ employees work within the Ride Free Area during its designated hours. Our organizational service model has come to depend on this free resource to transport both clients and staff between service sites. We want to echo the calls of other human services advocates that our public transit system can and must be accessible to and inclusive of people who are homeless, low income, disabled, elderly. The whole community benefits when the system works for all people. DESC appreciates the King County Council and Executive and the Seattle City Council and Mayor working together to preserve the most valuable elements of this vital public good, and improve on the public transit access for vulnerable community members.

1. We endorse the idea of a free, public loop service that operates daily and is available to everyone and can accommodate the passengers who need it (aka "the circulator bus"). We strongly favor this over distributing more bus tickets to people in need. Bus ticket distribution is administratively burdensome, and access can be confusing to clients.

1.a. We strongly recommend that it be a full-sized bus, and not a shuttle bus. A full-sized bus will increase the likelihood of the full range of bus riders using this bus, and decrease the likelihood of creating a de-facto "homeless" bus that will only further stigmatize marginalized community members. If a full size bus is not available, we strongly encourage a van of greater than 25 seats.

1.b. It should have enough stops to address the needs of homeless and vulnerable people, and be useful to those with mobility impairments. The route should include a long stretch of Third Avenue, as many core services are located on this street. We support a route that includes Harborview Medical Center.

1.c. It should have predictable schedule with service frequency at least every 20 minutes.

1.d. Hours should ensure that people who rely on overnight-only shelters can get to and from those locations without excessive waits or walks very late at night or very early in the morning.

2.a. We request that the County provide lower priced or free monthly ORCA passes for people working under county contracts, similar to arrangements with county employees or the employees of large corporations. While a Circulator Bus will assist, it will not fully address the likely reality that vulnerable homeless individuals will not access services as readily as they currently do. We anticipate a greater need for human service workers in downtown Seattle to do outreach to clients who cease coming to service sites when free access to transportation decreases. DESC's service model already depends heavily on mental health and other service staff using the free ride area to conduct regular outreach to clients both on the streets and in supportive housing. In fact, our service model has been recognized numerous times for its flexibility and focus on "in-vivo" services that meet clients where they are -- often in a very literal sense. Doing this level of outreach without a free ride area, and anticipating an increased demand to do so due to decreased transportation access to homeless clients, will create a significant new financial burden to organizations like our's, including the hidden expense of more inefficient client contact.

2.b. We also suggest having some number of ORCA passes that could be used by a variety of staff on an as needed basis. This could be done in addition to or instead of the above request (2.a.). Providing flexible ORCA passes that staff could 'check out' when needed would allow for efficient use across many staff. While it would be ideal to provide one ORCA card per staff person, the reality is that for many organizations, like our's, it is financially prohibitive to do so.

3. We encourage you to consider other creative options that mitigate against the impact of this change. It is clear that there is no silver bullet to replacing many benefits the Ride Free Area provides. For instance, could you consider having a lowered fare for local travel within the downtown area, perhaps through the tunnel stops?

Submitted by on behalf of  
DESC by Nicole Macri, Director of Administrative Services 206-515-1514 / nmacri@desc.org

34. I am very disappointed that Metro and the City of Seattle continue to work against low income and no income folks. Unfortunately the reality is that there are many citizens of our community that cannot afford a \$1.00 loaf of bread let alone bus fare. Many residents rely on Metro as there only means of transportation and when you are low income even \$2.25 is too much. By eliminating the Free Ride Zone you take away the only means of transportation for many low income/no income folks to engage in services and healthcare in the downtown core. It feels as if you are working hard to make sure only upper income folks come into the city. I hope that you will reconsider your decision and continue to support low and no income residents with a Free Ride Zone.
35. It sounds good. The good side: to stop crime and criminal activities on the buses . I saw bad guy came so close to the bus driver and going to hit the bus driver, stop bad people jumps on bus ,from bus to bus after committed crime, when owners of business call the police, they already jump on the bus and disappeared ,when the officers show up, it was too late to catch them. The other side ; many good people no longer can enjoy the experience of riding a bus inner city .
36. As a bus driver, I am fully in favor of eliminating the Ride Free Area (Metro is considering a replacement to serve social service locations with smaller vehicles). As a night driver, I would also like to see an elimination of the OWL transfers, as far too many people on my bus after midnight ride for hours at a time, using the bus for shelter when 30% of shelter beds in the County go empty each night. Having people in various states of inebriation, poor hygiene, and mental health instability pack the bus in the wee hours of the morning far from help should it be needed adds incredible stress to both drivers and passengers using the bus for legitimate commuting purposes.
37. I had an idea that I would like to have considered... it goes along with the free bus pass vouchers that will soon be sent out to residents who renew their tabs in or after June 2012. I think it would be great if they could have an opt-out option to donate the vouchers instead to The Compass Housing Alliance, Homeless in Seattle, or any one of a number of groups / agencies providing help to less fortunate citizens of King County. This would also be eco-friendly as it would eliminate paper vouchers going unused or being thrown away.
38. Eliminating the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle will have a negative impact on the tourism industry in Seattle as visitors use the free ride zone to get around to downtown shopping, museums and other attractions and, more importantly, it will have a significant impact on our low income, homeless, and elderly neighbors in Seattle who rely on the free ride area to get to vital survival services, medical appointments, hygiene services, shelters and housing in the downtown area. If the plan moves forward to eliminate the ride free zone, we must provide alternative free transportation for people desperately in need of it and increase the amount of subsidized bus tickets for people. People need to get to vital services in the downtown area and other services not included in the Ride Free Zone, like Harborview. Offering some of kind shuttle bus to life saving services could be another solution.
39. Eliminating the ride free area is another short term thinking example that will make downtown Seattle a less user friendly place to live. I believe if the County follows through with this plan the low income, elderly and homeless people in our community will be severely impacted. I strongly recommend that some form of assistance is provided to address the potential harm it could do to those we should be providing assistance to.

40. Please provide options for homeless and low-income people in our community to access public transportation. For many, bus access is critical to their health and well being.
41. Please keep the ride free zone, or enact a mitigation plan to make sure that people with low or no income can get to essential services in downtown. Our public transit system can and must be accessible to and inclusive of people who are homeless, low income, disabled, elderly. I believe that the King County Council and Executive and the Seattle City Council and Mayor working together can preserve the most valuable elements of this vital public good, and improve on the public transit access for vulnerable community members. I am advocating strongly for the following elements: a free, public loop service that operates daily and is available to everyone and can accommodate the passengers who need it; a predictable schedule with service frequency at least every 20 minutes; hours to ensure that people who rely on overnight-only shelters can get to and from those locations without excessive waits or walks very late at night or very early in the morning; a route or routes that maintain access within the broad downtown area, and helps people get to key locations (including Harborview Medical Center and other hospitals, the International District, and key resources not currently in the RFA). Thank you for considering my request.
42. It is very important that an alternative form of transportation be offered to the very low to no income. Services provided in the downtown corridor are vital not only to those individuals served, but the community as a whole. Less accessibility to services means an increase in hospitalizations, jail time, and desperate acts such as theft or other crimes that impact the community both financially and it's well-being as a whole. Please support a free circular downtown route that will provide individuals with access to vital services. Thanks you. Sincerely, Angie Burnside, Seattle Resident, Voter, and Social Worker
43. I am the pastor for the Church of Steadfast Love located in Pioneer Square. I see daily the struggle many in this city go through every day. I firmly believe that some form of replacement for free ride zone is important to the very low income people living in this area. Please consider a downtown circulator bus to help folks get to vital survival services like the Hygiene centers, Overnight Shelter programs and Harborview. People living in poverty still deserve respect and decency. This would be an invaluable service. Thank you for your time and consideration. Peace.
44. I would like to ask that our decision makers implement the below items to offset the elimination of the free ride zone in downtown Seattle: a free, public loop service that operates daily and is available to everyone and can accommodate the passengers who need it; a predictable schedule with service frequency at least every 20 minutes; hours that ensure the people who rely on overnight-only shelters can get to and from those locations without excessive waits or walks very late at night or very early in the morning; and a route or routes that maintain access within the broad downtown area, and helps people get to key locations (including Harborview Medical Center and other hospitals, the International District, and key resources not currently in the RFA). Thank you.
45. So many homeless and low-income people depend on the free ride area to get to appointments please do not eliminate it! I also see many tourists use the free ride area to get around downtown. This is too important to eliminate. Sometimes it is not ALL about the money.
46. Please implement some kind of public loop or circulator bus service that is free to everyone around downtown Seattle. It must have a regular schedule and be accessible to people with disabilities. Not

having a reliable form of transportation is a huge barrier for people who are homeless, disabled, and elderly to access services and essential needs.

47. I work downtown and have to have my car. But I don't have to use my car and clog up the streets downtown because of the ride free zone. It would be a true loss to take this away. And an undue burden on those who rely on it.
48. I completely support removing the Ride Free Area out of downtown Seattle. I use the bus every day from North Seattle to commute to my work in Belltown. The type of crowd that uses this is not what the area was originally designed for and supported for by the transportation system. I realize we may have a homeless problem in Seattle but supporting their presence on the bus is probably not the best way to go about it. It is time for MetroKC to focus on keeping the buses clean and safe and honestly this is one step in the right direction.
49. The Free Ride Area has been an important resource for low-income people in our community. I support the City and County in their efforts to come up with a way to continue to provide free transit in the downtown core to enable low income people to access essential services...
50. To Whom It Concerns: I help to provide a free dinner for homeless folks on the last Tuesday every month at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 15 Roy Ave., Seattle. Many guests arrive from the downtown area using the free rides on First Avenue. Please continue this program! It enables us to continue to help the homeless. Mark Magee, Fatted Calf Café, 15 Roy Ave. Seattle, WA
51. Solid Ground commends the City of Seattle and King County for their efforts to find a solution to the needs very low income people have to access essential support services in the downtown area. Based on our 38 years of experience working with these populations, we know the important role the Free Ride Zone has played in helping people access services. We applaud the City and County for efforts to come up with a solution that will continue to meet the needs of low income people. Ruth Massinga Interim Executive Director Solid Ground
52. Please maintain the Ride Free for all the people who depend on this service to get home, get to needed Services in that area and to City and Federal offices. I used the Ride Free for years when I did not have a car and was raising for four children, my children used this service all of the time. The Ride Free, service was one of the hallmark thing that was good about Seattle, guest to our city use it also. This is a time when must continue to find away to service the least of our brethren, the wealth have they own car's. How can we have a Win- Win in keeping the Ride Free Zone.?
53. As an employee of an agency that works with homeless families in downtown I anticipate a number of issues to arise with the elimination of the ride free area. 1) My agency, with an already strained budget will have to offer more and more bus tickets to clients. 2) Clients will not make it to vital appointments with case managers, domestic violence advocates, legal advocates, GED tutors and more if they do not have a way to get there. Further, I anticipate that lack of bus fare will become an easy excuse for clients who are reluctant to come to appointments in the first place, missing out on important services. 3) Vulnerable clients such as domestic violence victims or young, unaccompanied women may stay in unsafe places with abusers or potential abusers because they do not have bus fare to return to our shelter. I understand that King County and Metro are also operating on strained

budgets. I appreciate your solicitation of comments from social service providers as you develop a plan for low-income residents of Seattle.

54. My fear is this will be a big step BACKWARDS in your goal to provide convenient and speedy transportation round the downtown Seattle core. I can envision lines of people clogging the already too narrow Seattle sidewalks (this isn't Manhattan or Chicago), not to mention the absolute clog of buses and people I expect to see in the tunnel. I understand the economics argument...but reducing service should only be considered after all other means have been reviewed...and "waste" reduced to a 3% cap. Do VanPool and VanShare programs pay for themselves, or is METRO subsidizing those programs? I think at last read it was the latter. There's a place to start.
55. I understand from media accounts that Metro is planning to operate a special free bus service in replace of the proposed cancelled Ride Free Area. While it pains me that we have a subset of our community that has fallen through the cracks, creating an entirely new system to service an area that is no longer than 1.5 miles end-to-end is, well, absurd! Those citizens that are truly disabled already have access to transportation services. Who exactly is this proposal suppose to serve and, if they're not disabled, why can't they walk? Metro, and its financial resources, should be solely focused on improving transportation for a region that sorely needs it, not accommodating a very small group that will see little benefit from such an expensive service. James Ferguson Seattle Resident, Downtown Metro Rider and Small Business Owner
56. Hello - We are glad to see this free area being eliminated. It is difficult to currently use the downtown buses due to the number of aggressive or inebriated riders.
57. The elimination of the free ride zone would greatly affect the most vulnerable citizens in Seattle. Low or no income individual's ability to access human services downtown depends on the bus systems. This will particularly affect disabled individuals. By ending the free ride area, individuals will not have access to services which help with basic means of survival such as food, shelter, crisis interventions, and services meant to help individuals take control of their lives. Please consider how many lives will be severely affected by taking away the ride free area from Seattle.
58. As a tourist to the Seattle area on multiple occasions ending the free ride area is not something which is pro-tourism. It helps tourists see more of the downtown area without much stress.
59. Please reconsider this change. The free ride zone was a great idea, and really gets people out of their cars for short trips. It also helps low income people, for medical appts, groceries, and other essential services they forego when they can't afford the bus. Thanks
60. To Whom It May Concern: I am the Program Manager at the Aloha Inn, a transitional housing facility for homeless adult men and women in Seattle. The residents the Aloha Inn serves are very low-income and many access vital health and social services in the RFA. Losing this service will significantly and negatively impact an already vulnerable population. It is crucial that viable transportation options remain, so low-income people can continue to get their basic needs met in the downtown corridor. Thank you for your time and consideration. Regards, Katie Baum, MPA Program Manager Aloha Inn-Transitional Housing CCSWW

61. I am very worried about poor people's access to downtown. Bus fares are so high as to prohibit much travel.
62. 6:24 pm & I still get charged peak fare while boarding. This needs to be fixed! #48 Coach 2883  
04/12/12 west bound
63. Please reconsider eliminating the Ride Free Area. My wife and I volunteer with homeless youth and adults that rely on the RFA to get through downtown multiple times every day. Forcing everyone to pay for even small trips through downtown would severely limit their mobility and access to social services especially if they are not in good health. Thank you.
64. Get rid of it. People can hang out and sleep elsewhere. Time for Seattle to clean up these buses for the working people and tourists.
65. The elimination of the ride-free zone negatively impacts FareStart's ability to serve homeless men and women enrolled in its job training program. If the ride-free zone is eliminated as planned, FareStart's transportation costs could nearly double; increasing by as much as \$3,000 per month to transport homeless students to and from training. Each year, FareStart serves at least 250 individuals who participate in its job training and placement program. At any given time, up to 30 of our most vulnerable clients reside in emergency shelters located in Seattle's Pioneer Square neighborhood. FareStart's adult culinary job training program consists of 16 weeks of full-time job and life skills training which requires attendance at least 6 hours per day, five days per week. All of FareStart's students have little to no financial income other than Food Stamps. FareStart covers the cost for all students who need housing, transportation, basic hygiene products, work appropriate clothing and shoes as well as meals while they are enrolled. This amounts to costs of nearly \$10,000 per individual over the course of 4-6 months. Currently students who reside in shelters located in Pioneer Square can travel on the King County Metro bus to and from training within the ride free zone; having to walk a few blocks from the last ride-free stop. People come to FareStart looking for a pathway out of homelessness and helplessness. FareStart relies on the generosity of its community of supporters as well as government funding to provide the necessary services that make it possible to succeed in this transformative program, and our services have real impact. Each year, over 100 men and women complete the job training program and go on to find stable jobs and housing; ending their dependence on public assistance and charitable services. Even more get access to critical mental health and chemical dependency services and stable housing. We at FareStart urge you to consider the impact this action will have on the city's nonprofit organizations and ultimately the homeless and severely low-income individuals who receive critical services from them. We hope you will reconsider how eliminating free downtown bus service only transfers the burden into the community in another way. We sincerely thank you for the opportunity to submit our appeal to this policy decision and hope that it will help in starting a new conversation to plan for a solution that won't have such a potentially devastating impact on some of the most vulnerable members of our community.
66. To Whom It May Concern: Please do not eliminate the ride free zone this fall. It allows great convenience for people, myself included, to access all sorts of destinations downtown and helps keep our main thoroughfares moving. Many downtown businesses and tourist destinations benefit immensely with the ease that tourists can navigate our Metro area for free. This brings in revenue. Not to mention the difficulties this will create for some of our area's poorer residents. Many people rely on these free rides to access services that are only available in the downtown area. Safety is also a

major factor in keeping ride free busses. If a vulnerable person is ever feeling threatened at a bus stop they can just hop on the next bus free to leave the premise instead of waiting for the actual bus that they need and increase their chances of being harmed. Please reconsider your decision and keep the ride free zone. Forty years of this great asset to our community; please don't let it go. Sincerely,  
Benjamin Curtis

67. I'm a case manager at Solid Ground working with low income people to get housed. Riding the bus is hard enough for people who have disabilities are immigrants or refugees or seniors. The bus fares are expensive for people who don't even have money to afford rent. Please don't eliminated this free service that helps people go around downtown. Many of our clients are trying to look for employment and at least this free service in that area helps to get around. Please think about all the people that is going to affect this change and how many of them don't have the financial resources to pay for this. Thank you, Pamela Calderon
68. I think it's terrible because not to many people leave money for bus fare and just from one end of town to the other? That's silly. It would be good if they keep it going, to me it would be a big mess if they did. Thank you.
69. Please continue to provide free bus service within the downtown core. Even if it is an extension of the waterfront "street car" bus, the service should be available to move low-income folks around. Work with downtown service providers to help map out where to provide service (Harborview, DESC, Northwest Harvest, Union Gospel, Millionair Club, YWCA, and FareStart seem reasonable to include in this conversation although there are others. If expanding the free bus route to include tourist and sporting destinations to promote ridership then so be it. Likewise, if specialized marketing/advertising needs to be sold and broadcast on the bus route to ensure that it is free then pursue that option. However, I think the route should be frequent enough to be convenient and available at least from 7am-7pm on all days.
70. 1. Add a free circulator bus between Jackson & Bell, 1st & 8th. 2. Have the Link be free between Westlake & ID stations. 3. Have an available 'all day pass' for tourists & infrequent riders. 4. Offer a discount via Orca vs paying cash.
71. It will cause people a lot of problems to get to one end of town to another for doctor appointments, or looking for jobs! Getting to places where they can take showers, wash those clothes etc....
72. First and foremost, the ride free zone has been a tradition in Seattle for 30 years just as the Post Intelligence news co. The most in concern are the disabled critical and disadvantage. In case of an emergency, etc. The ride free zone has been appreciated by many patrons of Metro transit and OCRA transportation, serve community transit and all others included, which links Light Rail included. The ride free zone has been a appreciated by persons who can and cannot pay transportation fare. We as citizens of Seattle will all ways appreciate the hospitality of services.
73. I am a social service provider in the downtown, and I am very concerned about losing the free ride zone service downtown. I have many clients who need assistance getting to the courthouse, shelters, food banks, and to simply make their life a little fuller. There are a great many people downtown who find the Orca system too complex to use. It may seem simple to you and me to get a card filled or the correct documents in order, but it is simply overwhelming for a great number of people. On top of

that, if someone loses their Orca card (DD adults and homeless individuals have their belongings stolen constantly), they will be in a difficult spot. At the very least, some sort of free shuttle or special free line needs to be put in place. If not, you will find many, many more aggressive panhandlers, and they'll all be asking for bus fare. Plus, I work downtown. I'm a young professional, I enjoy exploring the small downtown businesses, visiting local restaurants and shopping sites on my lunch break. If I have to pay bus fare just to go 8 blocks, I will no longer be exploring the downtown area in my freetime.

74. Eliminating the free ride zone hurts residents, low income folks and tourists. Without the free ride zone many people will stop taking the bus, adding cars to our already crowded streets. Low income folks won't be able to pay for multiple bus trips. There will not be enough vouchers to go around. And for those low income folks who are not connected to a social service agency won't be able to afford bus rides. Tourists find the free ride zone opens up much more of Seattle to visit and spend their money.
75. Please be sure to make bus passes or vouchers available to social service agencies so low-income folks can make it to their appointments.
76. To set the fee for the ride free area should not be \$2.25 to \$2.50 per ride in the downtown area. I do believe to charge 50 cents to \$1 in this area per ride is fair. This amount would still help Metro with money issues. I work at 202 43rd Ave. The people that live in this area are all very low income groups and can't afford the regular fee for riding the bus in the ride free area. Please remember that the bus passes you have for the handicapped have gone from 50 cents per ride to 75 cents per ride 1-1/2 raise in 1 year. But to charge these people more is too much. Please leave it at 75 cents per ride. Next idea: You charge \$2.25 per trip for non-peak rides and \$2.50 for peak-hour rides. The non-peak also used for holidays and weekends. My suggestion is to charge \$2.50 per trip 24 hours a day, 7 days a week including holidays. I have made this suggestion before, but of course you wouldn't listen because I'm not rich - or someone with a lot of authority to make you hear me. This time please listen. --Kathy Lund
77. Ride Free Area means more than money, it provides movement!
78. Yes please. I have run into many problems that are directly or significantly caused by the RFA. Most commonly, not knowing when to pay. Drivers do not always update the signs that indicate whether to pay on board or not. Drivers also sometimes forget to update the ORCA machine (at least, this was common early on) for the correct pay zone. When you take a bus that starts and ends outside the RFA but goes through it, you have to (on Metro) actually take a transfer slip so you don't end up paying a second time when you get on. It makes no sense -- you need a transfer ticket even though you're not transferring at all! Additionally, on ST where they no longer use transfer slips, you can only do this with an ORCA, otherwise, you're sunk. The worst case is, however, when you start your commute outside the RFA, and switch to a bus while in the RFA. This means you tag your ORCA when you board the first bus, and then not again until you deboard the second bus. But if either bus is late, and/or is jammed in traffic, you can end up double charged because the ORCA transfer window expired between the time you got on your first bus and the time you got off your second bus! This is completely unacceptable! -- and wouldn't happen in a consistent pay-as-you-board system. Please get rid of the RFA. Replacing it with a free DART zone or free shuttle is the best solution.

79. For the love of all that is decent, do not implement a free circulator. Simply issue passes to social service agencies. You would be creating an unhealthy two-tiered system, a rolling Hamsterdam on Wheels, if any Wire fans are reading this. And how would potential riders prove their need? Worse, extending it to First Hill potentially cannibalizes ridership from the new street car. Nothing could be more wasteful in a time of service cuts and funding shortfalls. Thanks for reading.
80. I'm a case manager at The Salvation Army's William Booth Center in Chinatown. We house & serve nearly 200 poor, homeless men daily and the elimination of the RFA in downtown Seattle will unfairly impact them. Many of these people have physical limitations which keep them from walking any distance. Let's find a way to allow low & no-income folks to get the essential support services they need downtown. Let's make Seattle a city that works -- for Everyone!
81. The free ride is crucial to making DT city accessible to ALL of Seattle residents. Downtown is home to several transitional and permanent housing for low-income renters. It also offers low income clinics, drop-in centers, and a variety of other resources. ELIMINATING THE FREE RIDE ZONE ELIMINATES THE CITY'S ACCESSIBILITY. Thank you!
82. The downtown bus tunnel is already very congested during afternoon peak periods. Having everyone pay when they board will make this congestion worse. I suggest removing routes 76,77, and 316 from the tunnel are returning them to their previous routing of 3rd Avenue, Yesler, 5th Avenue, entering/exiting the I-5 express lanes at 5th & Cherry.
83. 1) Please don't waste time providing a shuttle bus alternative to the RFA. It would be ridden less than the "route 99" replacement for the waterfront trolley, and would once again make Metro vulnerable to charges of waste. 2) Either move all Peak route buses out of the tunnel, or move to all off bus payment within the tunnel.
84. Please also raise cash paying fares to entice people to switch to Orca which in turn will make pay as you enter faster.
85. I am a nurse at the 45th Street Clinic and I see firsthand how important the RFA is for the people in our community who rely on it most. PLEASE take steps to support our community! Our public transit system can and must be accessible to and inclusive of people who are homeless, low income, disabled, elderly, and that the whole community benefits when the system works for all people. We believe that the King County Council and Executive and the Seattle City Council and Mayor working together can preserve the most valuable elements of this vital public good, and improve on the public transit access for vulnerable community members. We are advocating strongly for the following elements: a free, public loop service that operates daily and is available to everyone and can accommodate the passengers who need it; a predictable schedule with service frequency at least every 20 minutes; hours should ensure that people who rely on overnight-only shelters can get to and from those locations without excessive waits or walks very late at night or very early in the morning; a route or routes that maintain access within the broad downtown area, and helps people get to key locations (including Harborview Medical Center and other hospitals, the International District, and key resources not currently in the RFA).
86. I fully support the end of the Ride Free Area, and I am grateful that Metro has moved forward with its elimination as a condition of receiving CRC money. My main concern is tunnel operations, particularly

northbound in the PM peak. If proof-of-payment is regrettably off the table for tunnel routes, PLEASE commit as an agency to maintaining the operational performance of the tunnel, and remove as many routes as is necessary to achieve that. The most important routes in the tunnel are LINK and routes that will be future LINK conversions, such as the 41, 71/72/73/74/76/77, and 550. Of secondary importance are regionally important, high frequency routes covering critical suburban corridors (101, 106, 150, 255). \*Please eliminate the peak-only routes that unnecessarily degrade tunnel performance (212, 216, 217, 218, 301, and 316).\* Doing so would also allow you and Sound Transit to align the other Eastgate/Issaquah services (214, 554) and all Green Lake P&R express service (64, 76, 316) on surface streets so that customers could use the same stops for common corridors. Thank you for reading my comments.

87. **If you take away transfers you will destroy the transit system.** Busses have already more than doubled in cost for youth in the last few years, and every bus trip usually requires transfers. Please don't do this, there has to be other ways to help save the budget. I promise you, if you keep making it more and more expensive to ride the Metro, you will destroy the entire bus system.
88. From the perspective of serving homeless and disenfranchised youth that engage our facility for emergency services I would prefer to see the ride free area continued in the downtown core of Seattle. Since Metro has also made a sizeable commitment to the national initiative, "Safe Place" it doesn't make sense for homeless youth to be effectively circumvented from possible inquiry with Metro Bus Drivers as now trained to offer information that would connect them with an area provider. Ron F. Nussli, M.P.H., LMHC, MAC Director of Youth Services New Horizons Ministries
89. The "War on the Poor" continues. How about some details on the transportation options being considered. How could they possibly be cheaper than a ride free zone? ~carter rodriguez
90. Don't do this! **Don't marginalize low and no-income people by putting them in other "transportation options."** Don't make it harder for people to get around downtown. If Metro has a significant problem with people who get on a bus going out of downtown with no intention to pay, find some other way to deal with it.
91. **Pay-when-you-enter should have been implemented a long time ago.** Having to guess when to pay (particularly when a route travels nowhere near downtown Seattle) has regularly left a lot of people fumbling for change in their pockets with other riders waiting behind them. Eliminating the Ride Free Area, however, is just stupid. If King County Metro's plan is to inconvenience thousands of people every day, then the plan will be a resounding success. It will cost businesses and/or their employees extra time and money whenever their employees have to travel from one part of downtown to another, since these folks will have to allow for extra time to walk to their destination instead of being able to count on the existing bus service to get them there in a reasonable amount of time—or they'll have to pay in order to save that time. And many have rightly pointed out the potential hardship for people with fixed, low, or no incomes. This is certainly no way to get people like me, who regularly drive everywhere (of course, bus service stops several miles from where I live), to take the bus instead. And, having grown up with downtown Seattle being a Ride Free Zone, there's no way I will pay to take the bus from, say, Belltown to Pioneer Square—especially not if the full fare is charged. (I might consider paying a reduced fare, but not full fare.) I realize that budgets are tight—but the job of King County Metro is to serve the transportation needs of the residents of King County. The elimination of the Ride Free Area sounds like a step in the other direction.

92. To Whom it May Concern: As a social worker concerned about the well being of people who are low income and homeless, I am deeply disturbed by the elimination of the Ride Free Area. Transportation has always been a key component in aiding disadvantaged people to access necessary social services downtown. By eliminating the Ride Free Zone, you are limiting Metro access to people who can least afford it, disproportionately targeting the most vulnerable among us. I know that we are in a time of budgetary crisis, but I urge Metro to address this urgent issue and come up with a way to assist homeless and impoverished people (which will help everyone overall!) with free transportation in the downtown "services" core. Additionally, increasing availability of subsidized bus tickets, though not a long-term solution, will help.
93. Haa haaa Bussissness wil loose out. The lo. No income effect agencies as DSHS. Or Work Source Harborview. No FREE RIDE. Bus Tickets are gone?Just makes No SENCE. DEBORAH Ruppert
94. I am sorry to hear about the decision to eliminate Ride Free in downtown Seattle. I have worked as a physician in downtown Seattle for years and see how much this services helps people in need access care and services in the downtown area. And, yes, I ride the bus several times a week myself. Although I can afford the fare, I know that paying extra will be a disincentive for me to ride from work at one end of town to the commercial areas for shopping. Hard to see that this won't be a problem for downtown businesses. Overall, this seems like a poorly thought through decision for our aging population, especially when combined with less parking downtown. Please reverse this decision!
95. I am a social worker in the University District and many of my clients have relied on the ride free zone to make their appointments including medical and court appointments. If transfers are also eliminate, many people will have no transportation. Previously I worked in Snohomish County where a ride free area did not exist and transfers were eliminated. Many people inappropriately used expensive forms of transportation such as ambulances to get their needs met. This could result in increased money spent by the County to accommodate increased court fees, usage of ambulances, etc. Please look into other revenue sources to fund this needed service. Additionally, please advocate only for proposals that do not affect marginalized populations such as people who are low-income or people of color.
96. I live on Bainbridge Island and rarely bring a car to Seattle. I work as an RN in a community health clinic in south Seattle and have a partially subsidized Orca pass, which means this change doesn't directly impact me. However, the Ride Free zone is a tremendous boon to tourists, low income people living downtown or near to downtown, and my retired my husband with MS. The ride free definitely speeds up boarding for all riders as buses go through downtown. My husband doesn't have an Orca card. Some days he is too fatigued to walk very far, though he generally opts for walking when time allows so he can maintain his abilities. As ferries are infrequent, approximately every 50 minutes, often taking a bus in the downtown area saves considerable time, a whole extra 50 minutes, when ferry times don't allow walking to event starts or endings.
97. NOT FOR PROFIT BUSINESS'S THAT HAVE EMPLOYEE'S CONDUCT BUSINESS (within the Free Ride Zone) WITH OTHER SUPPORTIVE AGENGIES TO HELP THE POOR AND LOW INCOME, SHOULD HAVE A BUSINESS METRO PASS WITHIN NORMAL M-F 8 - 5PM PASSES TO USE.
98. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need – medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs – the consequences fall on all of us.

99. Please be advised: As a Case Manager for a local nonprofit, serving people who struggle with homelessness, substance abuse, mental health, and people who generally don't have any income, not having access to local services will intensify/hinder their ability to get to agencies for help. Your consideration in assisting with a solution to this urgent matter, or simply leaving the ride-free area in take, is greatly appreciated for the good of those in our community who benefit most from this service. Thank you, Barb Hart
100. Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access bus passes.
101. I appreciate Metro and my disabled bus pass. I would like to keep the ride free area for people who have no other way of getting around downtown.
102. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need – medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs – the consequences fall on all of us.
103. The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access.
104. I think eliminating the ride free area is totally ridiculous. There are too many low income people in Seattle. The people that make good money drive their cars in the first place, and it's the low income people that primarily use the bus.
105. Adding new busses for low-income and homeless folks separates people. I would like to ride the regular bus and not be separate.
106. If you eliminate the ride free it will affect the poor. Most of these people have a disability that limits their mobility. They won't be able to catch a free bus ride and riding for four blocks, they'll have to walk the four blocks, which may be very difficult for them. It will also affect my social structure, since some of my friends live in the ride free zone and won't be able to travel as easily. I won't see them as much as I normally would.
107. If we eliminate the ride free it will hurt the homeless, because the homeless can't afford to spend the money or have lost their benefits, or are too low-income and it will hurt them very much.
108. Eliminating the ride free area would make it more difficult for people to travel in the downtown area and get up the hill, to places to pick up food and clothing, and other items. This will be especially difficult for people during the winter months. It would help to expand the bus passes for low-income folks or the homeless, or free bus tickets.
109. If people were to pay for their bus rides in the downtown area, this would help pay for other necessary construction throughout Seattle, like the construction of the tunnel.

110. All I can say is GOOD JOB! The change to eliminate ride free is way over due. This will make it better for all riders and no confusion as to when to pay. I'm looking forward to the Rapid Ride busses on Aurora also.... Thanks.
111. pay 25 cent on free ride area or reduce on bus pass.
112. Please reinstate funding for rear-door ORCA readers. This should allow riders to use all doors, and help mitigate delays after the Ride Free Area is eliminated. This combined with the new OBS/location aware coaches should allow distance and zone based fares with minimal intervention from the operator. This isn't a new problem, agencies around the world do the same thing... and riders board and alight expeditiously. There is no need for Metro to re-invent the wheel -- just reinstate the funding and enable a tap on/tap off system.
113. I am very disappointed to hear that Metro is considering eliminating the Ride-Free Area. This strikes me as highly unprogressive, at a time when we are trying to reduce car use and pollution throughout our society, encourage transit use, and create more walkable neighborhoods. RideFree reduces congestion by allowing downtown shoppers and event-goers to easily hop a few blocks, thus discouraging them from getting into a car. RideFree speeds up bus boarding in busy downtown areas, making buses more efficient and appealing. I can't imagine that the added revenues would be so great as to justify this choice. ARE WE GOING TO LET PORTLAND KEEP TAKING ALL THE CREDIT FOR BEING THE "COOLER" CITY???
114. The Ride free Area is a welcome and needed service in Seattle. In an effort to make the downtown area car free or certainly car unfriendly this service compensates for the inconvenience once one gets downtown. I can imagine that instituting fare collection will slow down buses. Also if one is trying to eliminate "vagrants" from riding the bus I can only imagine that pedestrians will be queried again and again for change so that they can get on the bus. Also I am wondering why are you soliciting input on what seems like a "Done Deal." This is what breeds cynicism to a government that seems like it's not listening to the public anyway.
115. Our Mayor wants us to be car free, so I can't understand how he would support elimination of the ride free area. Shopping is vital to downtown. With the increase in parking fees, now to 8 pm as well, it just doesn't make sense to discourage more shoppers. Also I worry about the time it will take having people only enter and exit from the front of the bus. With so many people downtown, this will discourage riders and add to traffic delays for all vehicles.
116. I do not think that it should be eliminated in September 2012.
117. I don't want the free zone to be eliminated. I've used it every day. It will be a great burden if it is taken away.
118. I need the Free Ride Zone to get to my appointments.
119. The Free Ride Zone is very beneficial for everybody.
120. I feel that the FREE RIDE ZONE should be left as is "FREE RIDE" ZONE. I need it to and from downtown Seattle.

121. For many people, rich and poor, Free Ride Zone is essential for commuting downtown, especially the poor with health problems, if not for the Ride Free Zone they could not get around. Please reconsider.
122. I would like it to stay because without it would be hard to get from downtown to anywhere paying \$2.50 each way in one area.
123. Knowing that Metro is not generating nominal operating expenses, it would still be nice have a free bus in the downtown area--not the free ride--for the visitors.
124. My first 2-3 days in town were horrible...the hills killed me, as I had luggage. Once I began to use the free zone downtown, I was able to find everything I needed much easier.
125. Do not get rid of the Free Ride Zone.
126. Please keep the free ride zone. We are already losing so much of old Seattle, and I feel it's counter-productive.
127. Taking away the ZONE; have they put any kind of thought into it. I know that's all about MONEY some people just don't have :)
128. I don't want the Free Ride Zone to go away.
129. Don't stop the Free Ride because it helps everyone.
130. -Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. -When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. -The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access. -Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. Increasing access to subsidized bus tickets is an important tool, but needs to be one part of a larger solution. -And by the way, it would be great if we had a free option that went up to Harborview Medical Center. Seriously.
131. I feel that the free ride zone shouldn't be stopped. It will hurt all the homeless to get to and from places that are helping them with their day needs like food, shower, part time jobs.
132. It is a bad thing that will put a lot of people in a bad position.
133. Por favor no quitar area gratis. Atentamente al publico area gratis.  
*Translated with Google Translator to English:* Please do not remove free area. Yours free to the public area.
134. I am fortunate enough to have a disabled bus pass. So for me, I will be OK without the Free Ride but I know SO many other people downtown will be greatly affected when it is eliminated. They really need it. It's going to mess them up.

135. Downtown business will be affected negatively; as for the public, on an individual level it will be healthier. What gain if any is Metro striving for?
136. I think it will cause more problems than good; downtown Seattle will be clogged you'll see!!! Yours truly, JLE.
137. When I have been without a car, I used the free zone; when I worked in downtown, I parked my car and walked to the free zone to save money and one less car in downtown traffic. Now I'm on GAU (reduced to budget cuts to \$197.00). I could use the free zone!
138. I think it will inconvenience both rich & poor/urban&commuters.
139. I think the ride free zone helps a lot of homeless people.
140. I am 100% against that because people shouldn't have to pay to ride a couple blocks. Homeless or not homeless, it is hard for people to afford the bus fare now and they're going to take it away. I think it could negatively cause people to stop caring about our environment.
141. I think they should keep free zone, for convenience. They should generate money elsewhere.
142. I think it's going to affect a lot of people that have financial problems. And I don't think it's appropriate to do so for so many reasons. Since it's been open to the public in these circumstances and they decided 25 to 30 years ago, I think they should leave it like that, since it became like a tradition.
143. Downtown is fairly big and some just need to get to point A to point B. Elderly can't walk far paying just for that area leaves an inconvenience on the people that need it
144. Protest against eliminating the benefit of Ride Free Area A - There have already been several fare hikes in the past for riding public transits. By eliminating the free ride zone will impact living expense and quality. B - It can keep better and clean air if Metro buses are well utilized. C - It benefits short distance travels and parking issues. In addition, it helps working efficiency. I appreciate a re-consideration from all agencies and city and county councils.
145. This change has been needed for some time. The free ride zone slows down the buses through downtown. Paying the fare when boarding the bus has been needed since many people tend not to pay when exiting the bus and it slows things down when exiting. Using the front door to enter and back door to exit is another great improvement. I hope to see all of these changes implemented in October as proposed.
146. Thank you please keep this public service.
147. Thank you for taking the time to read through these comments on this very important issue. We appreciate your time and effort. As a housing case manager for low income people in the city of Seattle, I know that the ride free area has been such a blessing for many people. Individuals with doctor appointments, job training opportunities, and appointments with lawyers use the ride free zone regularly. Several of my clients have mobility issues and use the ride free zone to prevent further injury. I understand the ride free zone is going away, but I also understand there is advocacy happening to create an alternative form of transportation for lower income citizens. I support any

ideas to create another mode of transportation that will care of the vulnerable of our society. Thank you again for your consideration.

148. As a mental health provider to clients at Harborview Medical Center, I am very concerned about the scheduled elimination of the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle. Access to reliable transportation allows my clients with various disabilities, limited income and few resources, stay active, more engaged in medical care and improves health outcomes, which saves the city/county money overall. Please develop transportation options which will support the autonomy and prevent degrading the health of the people in our city who are most in need of support services in the downtown area.
149. Please don't eliminate the Ride Free Area!! As a case manager for homeless men, I see many clients who rely on the ride free area to get to medical appointments, work, educational training, and more. We must have a public transportation system that supports everyone in the county, including people who are homeless, low income, disabled, and elderly. We need a free, public loop service that operates daily and is available to everyone and can accommodate the passengers who need it. It needs a predictable schedule with service frequency at least every 20 minutes with hours that ensure that people who rely on overnight-only shelters can get to and from those locations without excessive waits or walks very late at night or very early in the morning. The route or routes must maintain access within the broad downtown area, and help people get to key locations (including Harborview Medical Center and other hospitals, the International District, and key resources not currently in the RFA). Thank you.
150. Please keep the Ride Free zone in downtown Seattle. Many vulnerable people rely upon the bus to get to medical and mental health appointments, recovery meetings, housing, or DSHS. Due to physical or mental health issues, many of these people are not able to walk to their appointments. Please enable them to access their key services. Thank you! Elana Kupor, Housing Specialist The Aloha Inn Catholic Community Services
151. While I understand the need to eliminate the Ride Free Zone, a way needs to be found to keep it in the tunnel, or find another way to charge riders. As a daily commuter I already see how packed the buses and trains are in the mornings and evenings. If we have to wait for everyone to pay, and hunt for change and/or argue with the driver the answer will be total gridlock. There will be no way to maintain both bus and rail service in the tunnel under these conditions. How about investigating either a way to keep the tunnel section free or to charge upon entry to the tunnel similar to how it is done in major subway systems? Ben Brooks
152. Hello, I think that eliminating the Ride Free Area will have a very negative affect on the most vulnerable members of our society. Please remember that cuts to service, and the increase of the monthly bus pass, to \$27.00 dollars a month for seniors and disabled folks who are barely making ends meet, can mean the difference between life and death. Please consider the following issues:
- Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes.
  - When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us.
  - The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can

access. •Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. •Increasing access to subsidized bus tickets is an important tool, but needs to be one part of a larger solution. Sincerely, Patricia Ann

153. Please we need it now more than ever thank you for all your hard work for us in need.
154. Our public transit system can and must be accessible to and inclusive of people who are homeless, low income, disabled, elderly, and that the whole community benefits when the system works for all people. We believe that the King County Council and Executive and the Seattle City Council and Mayor working together can preserve the most valuable elements of this vital public good, and improve on the public transit access for vulnerable community members. We are advocating strongly for the following elements: 1. A free, public loop service that operates daily and is available to everyone and can accommodate the passengers who need it 2. A predictable schedule with service frequency at least every 20 minutes 3. Hours should ensure that people who rely on overnight-only shelters can get to and from those locations without excessive waits or walks very late at night or very early in the morning. 4. A route or routes that maintain access within the broad downtown area, and helps people get to key locations (including Harborview Medical Center and other hospitals, the International District, and key resources not currently in the RFA). Thank you.
155. This could negatively impact the tourism dollars that get spent throughout downtown. We have a terrible cab service and it has always been an encouragement that buses are free. More importantly, it is completely inequitable to have poor and homeless people pay for downtown transportation as they access services. These fares will simply come out of the human services budgets or the private sector will end up paying them. Every time the private sector philanthropy has to step in cover what the public safety net should provide, we have a more difficult time passing needed levies and taxes.
156. I've lived in Seattle for nearly ten years and relied exclusively on transit for eight of those years. For the entirety of that time, the ride free zone and the changing rules about when to pay my fare baffled me. Even after eight years, I would still occasionally forget and pay at the wrong time. The mechanics around the ride free area are nearly unprecedented on a nationwide scale. In short, few other cities and counties are foolish enough to structure their bus transit that way. Thank you for finally getting rid of it and making bus payment consistent and understandable.
157. I want to register my SERIOUS concern about the loss of the ride-free area in downtown. As a daily bus commuter who works downtown I ride the bus in the ride-free area frequently to our administrative offices, meeting sites, and other locations. I will be OK, since my company gives me an ORCA card as part of my benefits, but I am concerned about massive clogging in the bus tunnels for my evening commute back home. The northbound tunnel stops are already super-crowded, and making everyone get on in the front is going to seriously delay bus traffic. More importantly, I work for a medical organization that serves MANY very poor people who rely on the free ride area to get between social service and medical appointments in the downtown area. You MUST figure out a way to compensate folks fairly for the loss of this critical piece of service, and also organizations like ours that supply bus tickets, and will be needing to provide even more than we already do.
158. Hello: I would like to comment on your schedule to eliminate the Free Ride area. I am employed downtown and work with chronically and recently homeless people (and yes, I ride the bus every day to and from work--I buy a monthly pass). Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect

people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. Even with the Ride Free area, our agency is always swamped with requests for bus passes. I can't imagine what it will be like to have to give passes out for everything. I do a lot of case management and being able to jump on buses with my clients to help get them to doctor appts, social security, DSHS, etc helps speed the process and reduces barriers. As I navigate through downtown on a daily basis, I also see many tourists who comment on how nice it is to have this transportation and it makes them want to return for future visits. So, it's not just the poor who are impacted but I believe it will also impact tourists. This feels like we are cutting off our nose to spite our face. Please keep the ride free area. Thank you.

159. It would not be a good idea to get rid of the ride free area. I can remember when I first moved out in 1999, and living at the Youth Hostel. It was great to be able to get anywhere downtown without having money. I find it hard to believe that with the amount of money just for a one way/one one trip, that KCM is unable to continue this needed service.
160. I work with low income and homeless clients who are based in Belltown. Services for them are spread all over downtown and up the hill to Harborview. It is a huge social injustice to withhold a basic service from some of the people who most desperately need it. As someone who works downtown as well, it's ridiculous to take away the ride free area. So many professionals use the bus to get to meetings during the day. We pay enough money to Metro to get to and from our jobs each day, and that's always worked for you in the past. It should work still.
161. Downtown and the ride free zones are such an essential part of the living experience here in Seattle. I love Metro and the services that it offers but I am crushed about the changes that are in order. I think that it is a complete disregard for the socio-economic challenges of the city. I think that it is saying, "you can't pay, so oh well! WALK." And what does that mean for people with disabilities? How does this hold up for the population of people who live in the downtown area and pay so much for rent that they deserve the ride free area? What will this mean for the tourist that come to Seattle? Its bad enough the bus fare is \$2.25 and \$2.50 at peak hours! I don't like it. What about the multitude of struggling college students who use Metro services, who wont be able to afford \$2.25 EVERY TIME they board a bus. And lastly...will you be adding time to the transfers? Don't do it Metro. Don't do it Seattle!!! Its fine the way it is.
162. Removing the ride free zone will only hurt low income people. i cant imagine that it will generate enough revenue to justify the disadvantaged people it will hurt. it would seem that low income people would just stop riding it in the downtown area, while people with cash would also probably opt to just walk, and people with monthly passes would not matter either way. expecting someone with a disabled bus permit would need to shell out .75 for a short ride across downtown seems an unfair burden to someone with no/low income trying to get to social services or medical appts.
163. Please do not eliminate the ride free area. We understand that Metro is strapped for money. We use the ride free area frequently and eliminating it will be a burden on us. This will disproportionately affect us as we are a low-income family, struggling to pay for basic services. We do not have access to subsidized bus passes from employers or institutions. For our family of four, having to pay for the bus downtown is too great of an incidental expense. We simply would not be able to afford it. Please reconsider your decision. Look for alternate savings measures and alternate income generating measures. Thank you.

164. Dear Sir or Madam, I am writing to urge you to reconsider your plan to eliminate the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle. I believe that the elimination of the Ride Free Area will reduce ridership, increase congestion from added cars on the road, and place additional pressure on street parking. I also believe that it will be a financial hardship for low-income people. For example, I know a low-income person who drives his car to an area near downtown where he can park at no cost, then takes the free bus downtown to his job every day. He is worried about the financial impact this plan will have on his commute. I am also concerned that the plan will slow down bus travel, as riders have to take time to pay. Finally, I am also concerned that this plan will make tourists less likely to take advantage of public transportation. Sincerely, Juanita Holmes
165. I strongly recommend rethinking the elimination of the ride free zone. This public benefit is a widely used resource, by low income persons who may not be able to afford a bus ticket/pass, by working families, by seniors, by students, by those who work downtown, and by those who come to spend their money downtown. Making downtown more accessible through the ride free area is very important to the economics of the city and downtown retail. I would urge you to reconsider this decision.
166. As a longtime social services provider and a resident of Seattle, I am writing to strongly encourage that the Ride Free Area NOT be eliminated. Please consider that: -Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. -When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. -The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access. -Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. -Increasing access to subsidized bus tickets is an important tool, but needs to be one part of a larger solution. Thank you for your time and consideration!
167. Hi, The impact to low-income people is obvious! While it helps that you are working to address this, it's not the same as having a Ride-Free Area. Many will be hurt as they may be unable to get to these social service agencies that could help. It's a Catch-22! Low-income and homeless people must have bus tickets to get to places that will give them bus tickets! On a personal level, I don't think I will go to lunch very often. I'll be more likely to eat at work. It will also impact doing office errands (like going to the post office) during the day. Since I work for a non-profit, extra cost for bus tickets for these currently free errands is not feasible.
168. I know that when the RFA is eliminated, you will be asking that people pay as they enter, when they do enter the bus in every zone. Furthermore, I know that there are studies out there that reportedly mention that this will take more time to load and unload passengers in the current RFA than if the RFA continued. Would it be possible to have orca card readers on both entrances to each bus, one in the front, and one in the back? Then, maybe those who do have ORCA cards - although you needn't advertise this unnecessary for the majority that still pay by cash/may skip paying because they "forget" - can go in through either side of the bus, after first letting people get out. If you have only

the front as an entrance way and the back as the exit, then it would make things a lot harder since people will have to move around a lot (this can be hard during rush hour!), just to get out of the bus.

169. This is UNFAIR to our local economy, our poorest citizens and our downtown businesses. Transit has increased their prices, reduced their services and has specifically declined services to the disabled. This is just "more WAR on the POOR." If transit feels that it can no longer accommodate the downtown ride-free area, let another transit service come in who can!!!!!! If Metro has competition, it will put a stop to this BS, once and for all. Competition will better our chances of getting the services that we really want! Metro has dominated much too long. I and others, wants some options when it comes to using public transportation.
170. The ride-free area is so crucial to people with no or low income in getting around downtown. Many of those people are disabled and being able to hop on the bus for a few blocks without having to pay a fare means that they can make it from shelters to day centers to medical appts on time. Doing away with the ride free area will put even more pressure on strapped social service agencies who can rarely provide bus tickets or transportation as it is.
171. I have used the Ride Free Area quite a bit in the last few months, since I started working in downtown again. I find it convenient for making quick trips across downtown for lunch and shopping. Without this I will likely use the bus quite a bit less. My employer subsidizes commuting costs for using the bus, but it is not usually worthwhile to get a monthly pass because I can't use the bus every day. So any trips during mid day will cost me at least one bus fare, and I'm likely to use the buses less in downtown. Three suggestions that would get me using the bus more without the Free Ride Area: \* Could there be a more liberal transfer policy in the downtown area, so if you have paid a fare to get into downtown, you can move about downtown throughout much of the day. \* If free circulator busses are in place, they need to cover much of the current free ride area, and service the shopping and government office areas. One nice thing about the free ride area is the vast number of travel choices, so I don't have to wait for a bus. If the circulators don't run frequently and go places I'm heading, then it won't be much use. \* Current pricing for passes requires almost 100% use of the bus for commuting to make it pay. Most months there are enough holidays, vacation days, and offsite days for me that it costs less to just pay by the trip. If buying a pass were a bit better deal (even 15 or 16 day payback rather than 18 days), then I would more regularly purchase a pass. The bus stop I exit at going home is the end of the offramp from northbound I-5 at 145th St NE. This stop has a short sidewalk which lines up with the front doors of the bus, but there is no pedestrian walkway at the back door. This type of stop should be another exception to the enter at the front, exit at the back policy. This should be fine at this stop, where pretty much everyone is just exiting, and they rarely pick up new passengers there. If there are other similar stops, they may need more thought.
172. I am very concerned about what will happen in the Pioneer Station Tunnel when the free ride zone ends. One day when I was commuting there was a test and we were told that eliminating the free ride zone would create lots of congestion in a tunnel that already experiences significant traffic flow during peak hours.
173. I am okay with the elimination of the Ride Free Area if you reinstate day passes for tourists and develop other option for low or no-income individuals and families who rely on this service.

174. I work for a non-profit organization in the downtown area that serves survivors of domestic violence and homeless families. Many of our families are in need of getting their basic needs met such as cash assistance and food benefits upon arrival. Since the families are not familiar with the area and have fled a very traumatic experience, they are able to find comfort in the fact that they can ride the bus to the DSHS office and Work Source in Belltown for free. Our organization works on a bare bones budget so providing bus passes to all our residents is not always an option. **If the ride free zone is going to be eliminated, I think there should still be a shuttle that services the downtown area of 3rd ave only.** This would allow the many seniors, people with disabilities and low income families to get to their appointments with ease and comfort. With the budget cuts that already affect this population, this seems like a small request. Thank you for your time.
175. Hello, I have been a Metro customer for 23 years here in King County. While I know that we are facing unusually large budgetary cuts for our needs, I would like to add that the Ride Free Area is essential not only for low-income and homeless people, but for tourists and new comers to our city. Visitors to our city have lamented about how nice it was to take a small trip down the street without having to pay for bus fare. I know that over the years Metro has lost money this way, however, I am worried that it will cause more disruption on certain routes, particularly routes that are frequented by the mentally ill and homeless. **I know that routes 48, 7, 49, 2, 3, 358, 5, 41, 174, 4 and 11 are hot beds for Harborview and DESC patients/clients, however, I don't think making it 'pay as you enter' will lessen this in anyway. I have seen disputes between some passengers that I know are severely mentally ill, and bus drivers. I don't think that is fare or safe to put drivers in a predicament where they have to either (1) drive off (2) tell someone "no" everyday or (3) be in a position where they have to deny someone a ride because of lack of fare. Please consider postponing this move until you actually have a low cost alternative for transportation in place.** I believe that it is our responsibility as NW citizens to care for people that are incapable of caring for themselves, otherwise we all start to suffer as a result. Our homeless and mentally ill population often depend on bus rides for safety and a place to warm-up. If nothing else, can you allow the change to only be in place during cold months and during summer months when the weather is nice, put it in place. Thank you for your consideration!  
E.Douglas
176. This will prevent the poor from being able to travel downtown, and will mean decreased ridership in the downtown corridor.
177. From Sept 19 - Oct 24, 2011, 1440 persons participated in Round 8 of the Countywide Community Forums of King County. One question was asked specifically about this topic: (T-9) "Do you support the decision to eliminate Metro's 'ride free' zone in downtown Seattle as of October 2012?" The King County Auditor tabulated all responses and published their final report online: [http://kingcounty.gov/operations/auditor/communityforums/~media/operations/auditor/documents/CCF/R8\\_report\\_FINAL.ashx](http://kingcounty.gov/operations/auditor/communityforums/~media/operations/auditor/documents/CCF/R8_report_FINAL.ashx) Of the 1440 responses received, the results for this question were: No: 653 (45.3%) Yes: 549 (38.1%) Abstain (or did not answer): 217 (15.1%) Object to the question: 21 (1.5%) The auditor stated, "...a slight plurality disagreed with the decision to eliminate Metro's ride free area in downtown Seattle." These results are only valid for the people participating and do not constitute any kind of scientific sampling -- but like voting itself, the results represent the opinions of all who did participate. Many more similar opportunities are possible for sustained and diverse community dialogue in Seattle. Please let me know if I can offer any assistance. Regards, John Spady  
Volunteer Councilor Coordinator for the Countywide Community Forums of King County and advisory

consultant for the new Bellevue Community Forums and Community Forums Network of Washington State and family partner in Dick's Drive-In Restaurants

178. Sad to see the Free Ride Area go. If you guys are going to make this happen this year, then I hope it will be successful transition! I strongly believe in order for it to be just that, then Metro needs to make it clear to riders that ORCA is much better than cash and much quicker. I see so much of the following: 1.) people fumbling to search for transfers & cash 2.) people paying in pennies 3.) arguments of fare between driver and riders (with 99% of riders in the wrong) This slows our buses down! If you make a specialized effort for everyone, especially low income riders and those in the south sound, to switch to ORCA, then I think this can work out.
179. I am the Executive Director of the Downtown Seattle YMCA. As a large social service provider in the middle of the ride free area I am very concerned at the impact of this change on our service community. Presently people from all walks of life come to the Y for housing, skills development, education, and wellness activities using the free bus. I believe the end of a ride free area will harm our accessibility and reduce our capacity to serve the community effectively. I believe members of our facility who currently travel more than a few blocks may decide to join another facility. Right now many choose to exercise in our not-for-profit social service agency rather than a for-profit health club because they want to benefit their community. With the lack of free parking and the elimination of a ride free area I believe we could lose significant customer base and this would harm our ability to serve the community with housing for the homeless, high school re-entry for disengaged students, job training, and other key programs. Thank you for the opportunity to share the impact as you finalize a decision.
180. Please reconsider your decision to eliminate the Ride Free Zone. Thousands of Seattle's daily population use this service to run quick errands during work, get to much needed emergency services, get to work, and spend time shopping during work breaks. This cut not only would severely diminish the businesses in downtown Seattle but more importantly would eliminate the ability of many thousands of the city's most vulnerable population to utilize life saving services throughout the city.
181. I am writing you in regards to some alternate options you may consider for ending the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle. First of all, I strongly believe that the Ride Free Area is a great tradition for both Seattle area residents and tourists all over the world. I work for a hostel at the International District to help budget travelers to stay in Seattle. During the summer time, our 284 beds are all occupied with them who are mostly from outside of the country. When they check out the hostel, they all appreciate the greatness of the Ride Free Area which they say that they never see such a friendly system in other places. It is now very unfortunate to hear the announcement regarding the ending of the Ride Free Area. From a tourist point of view, I just want to show you some ideas you may consider to keep attracting tourists and move them smoothly in the Seattle area below. 1) Day Pass on weekdays: Currently a day pass is available on weekends only. If the transit authority issues the day pass every day, 7 days a week, this helps travelers move without hassle around the area. 2) Free shuttle bus in the tunnel. If a number 99 type bus runs every 30 minutes in the tunnel from International District station to Convention Place station, tourists will get comfortable impression without knowing the traffic mess on the ground. 3) Bus fare payment at a vending machine. Tourists especially coming from outside of the country don't usually carry small changes. If they can pay a bus fare at a vending machine in a large bill or on a credit card, it would be very simple to ride and convenient for them

without trouble finding a bank around. Thank you very much for your time to read through my ideas. I hope you seriously consider these alternate options after the ending of the Ride Free Area. Sincerely, Yasuaki Shigemitsu Office Supervisor American Hotel 520 K. King St., Seattle 98104

182. I feel if the free ride zone is going to end, then at least a free circulator route should continue for people with no income to get to social service providers.
183. The ride-free area is very helpful in traveling with-in downtown Seattle. Be it an appointment that you need to get to at lunchtime. Going into town for lunch, coming into town and transferring to another bus to get to work on the outskirts of downtown. Also I work for a non-profit/support service and we refer clients to different organizations within downtown Seattle, of which they can get to using the ride-free area service.
184. I have been living in Seattle for 6 years, and I have an internship downtown currently. I use the ride-free zone ALL THE TIME to do errands, go to meetings, and be a better citizen, eg. Today I took the bus to city hall to pay outstanding parking tickets, yesterday I took the bus to meet with a colleague to plan for an upcoming training session we are having, and last week I took it to go shopping at a local downtown business. If the Ride Free zone gets cancelled, I will not be spending nearly as much time (OR MONEY) downtown, because it won't be worth it to me, I will go home and get my car to do those things. Getting rid of this service will be severely detrimental to Seattle businesses and Seattle residents. It also will disproportionately affect people with low-incomes, and with social service needs, which are grouped in the downtown area. Getting rid of the ride-free zone will mean that more people will be stranded and unable to access services, which will put a strain on ALL of us, financially, emotionally, physically, etc. This is a TERRIBLE idea, and it won't mean an increase in revenue, it will mean a decrease in usage. Also: Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access. Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. Increasing access to subsidized bus tickets is an important tool, but needs to be one part of a larger solution. Thank you
185. Have you really considered the impact of this decision on families, especially low income and homeless families. Currently, as a social service provider, I meet regularly with families living in and on the borders of downtown. Often a bus trip can mean digging into their pockets for \$5 or more dollars a trip, depending on the number of adults in the household and the number and ages of children. Foodbanks, DSHS, work interviews, mental health appointments- these are the types of activities that can be affected if transportation costs become too unmanageable for families. Families have urgent and immediate needs; not just for one person but for more than one. A parent can not send a young child alone on a bus to school or to a dental appointment or to childcare. I know families now who strategize where they can use childcare or find services and walk daily up & down hills with strollers and backpacks away from and towards downtown, in order to save on bus fare. Seattle will become a colder, more violent prone, more theft prone community once this fare measure is instituted. I believe

strongly, that it will impact tourism, shopping in downtown and weaken the liveability of our wonderful city.

186. I think it's a shame that we will lose the Ride Free area in downtown Seattle. Many of us commute 2x per day - in and out of the city - and pay a premium amount to Metro. It's been lovely to have the Ride Free Area to get to and from the other end of town for business and shopping trips within the city. I'll be doing more of my shopping locally in West Seattle if I'm going to pay additional during the day for trips within the downtown core.
187. Many cities across the nation have free zones on public transportation during certain hours of the day. We all realize and understand that the purpose of this feature is to attract paying customers to businesses, as to provide them with greater opportunities to spend more money and to boost the economy! It is always advertised positively as to entice consumers to utilize the service. For example, take the bus for free and save money; or how about the one that says riding the bus eliminates congestion. Both these concepts have merit! I certainly understand the city's need to be more fiscally responsible, but once again are the proposed elimination of the free zones for the right reason. Stop and think about the unemployed person who needs to visit the downtown WorkSource to attend a job fair or an interview! Or the individual who needs to get to Public Health for a long overdue check up. Then how about the mom that simply needs to get to the WIC office to pick up her card, so she can get formula for her baby. These are only a few, but there are countless of other situations and examples of how much the free zone is needed! I ask, is anyone really concerned about the less fortunate! Perhaps the solution is to adjust the free zone schedule or route. Maybe it is to develop a free or donation based county run commuter van, that takes people to and from throughout the day without a cost! A van may not completely solve the problem, but it is an option; and would probably cost a lot less than a large bus to operate! Finally, maybe a paying customer ORCA Donation program that allows people to donate dollars to cover the cost of the free zone! This could even be a tax-deduction!!
188. If the ride free zone is eliminated many people will opt not to travel around as much in downtown and many of the businesses operating in downtown will experience a substantial loss. Having a ride free zone promotes Seattle's tourism and food businesses as well as a more engaged, friendly, and open community due to the increased human interaction. I urge the city to maintain the ride free zone for the sake of all of its inhabitants. "A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members," Mahatma Ghandi.
189. I think this is going to have a detrimental effect on low and no-income individuals, which is the population I work with. These clients depend on the free ride zone to get to medical appointments, dental appointments, psychiatric appointments, meetings with their case manager, food banks and more. Even by providing human service agencies with more discounted tickets could never measure up to the amount of tickets that would be needed to cover the costs of these rides. While walking is an option for healthy people, many of the clients I work with have conditions disabilities that make the 1.5 mile round-trip walk to the dentist impossible. One potential change that I think would be exceptionally helping would be to work with Senior Services to extend the Hyde Shuttle service area to include downtown. This could be a great resource for our seniors and disabled adults living in the downtown area. Currently, seniors in the downtown and Belltown areas are not able to utilize this service and it would be great to have this option for when the free ride zone is eliminated.

190. As a longtime social services provider and a resident of Seattle, I am writing to strongly encourage that the Ride Free Area NOT be eliminated. Please consider that: -Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. -When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. -The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access. -Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. -Increasing access to subsidized bus tickets is an important tool, but needs to be one part of a larger solution. Thank you for your time and consideration!
191. I use this benefit often because bus fare is expensive. I would rather the ride free area continue until 7p daily. Robin d. 206 850 3253
192. The ride free zone is one of the more practical and compassionate things this city provides. I think the city should maintain this free zone at least from 6am - 10pm.
193. There is a huge safety issue with this plan to end the free ride area, the standee line violations are going to double at least. Northbound out of downtown on routes such as the 358 have few wrong side of the yellow line violations now because passengers pay when they leave. This route and others have numerous violations every trip southbound because drivers collect fares while the bus is moving in violation of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulation 393.90. Already some commuter bus routes north from downtown have standee line violations because the bus is overcrowded and drivers do not instruct standing passengers to move back closer together. Seldom do drivers turn passengers away when the crowding becomes a safety issue and people end up standing next to the driver on the freeway. Some routes like the 68 to the University of Washington consistently enter Stevens Way on campus with passengers crowded next to the driver. On campus the pedestrian activity is a problem as it is in the downtown area. The driver will be distracted by passengers fumbling with or arguing about the fare while pedestrians step out in front of the bus. One possible solution is to continue the pay as you leave out of downtown system and just end the free ride component. It is unlikely that the Metro system will lose much revenue if the passenger pays when he or she leaves. There will probably not be an increase in passengers not paying. Those passengers who don't want to pay already are allowed to ride the bus if they just ignore the driver's request that they pay. Many passengers with Harborview Hospital as their destination do not pay now as they leave even though the hospital is beyond the free ride zone. If the entire Metro system went to a pay as you leave system, boarding could be faster on all routes. Collecting fares while the bus is moving has to be corrected before the September date of ending the free ride area. The number of deaths and injuries of pedestrians in the downtown area can be avoided, especially if Metro is aware of the problem of standee line violations and creates an effective policy that addresses these violations.
194. Free transportation within the downtown area is valuable for individuals who have low incomes and disabilities. Removing this service will cause an undue burden to those already struggling with accessibility. I hope the King County Metro reconsiders its decision.

195. Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access. Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. Increasing access to subsidized bus tickets is an important tool, but needs to be one part of a larger solution. Eliminating the free ride zone is a bad idea.
196. Please do not eliminate the ride free area. It is used by people representing all backgrounds in Seattle. Having the opportunity to quickly and easily use transit to get from one end of downtown to the other is critical to a vibrant downtown, access to services, and to helping the environment. My parents who are in their 70s/80s use the ride free area when they visit Seattle from the east coast. Like many tourists who both want to see Pike Market and Pioneer Square, but may not be physically able to walk the whole way, they jump on the bus and take transit. They count on having the opportunity to do so as I imagine many visitors to downtown. They help the environment by not driving, and support the economy by having access to more shops and sites. Clients of social services rely on the ability to get to a health clinic, from shelter to a day center, or from child care to a social worker. These folks may not have the means to pay for the bus, the physical ability or time to walk between services, and should have transit available for a short ride without having to use money they may not have. Driving is probably not an option for them and it shouldn't be encouraged if it doesn't need to be. Elderly people, whether visitors to downtown or those going to services need access to the services they depend on - health care, social services or meals. Many depend on the ride free area to get to services, when a physical condition or safety concerns mean that walking a few blocks is out of the question. The options being discussed are not viable. Increasing free bus tickets will not get access equitably to those who need it. The "circulator" van or shuttle puts a stigma on those who can't pay and won't be as quick or convenient as the regular bus routes through downtown are. I understand the total cost is just over \$2M - this is small change even in times of difficult budget cuts. Thank you for your consideration.
197. As a long time, daily weekday transit user in King County I applaud the steps being taken to eliminate the Free Ride area. While I appreciate the ongoing need of low and no income residents to access transit I see no fairness in cutting service to parts of the county while still giving free rides to anyone. This is a program that's time has come and gone.
198. I am wondering how this policy will support other goals of the city, like encouraging the use of public transportation over cars. How this supports density downtown, the use of the museums and other public amenities that are placed downtowns as well as tourism. It seems to punish those of us that take the light rail downtown and then wish to move around the downtown core without using more money. It seems antithetical to enlivening and enriching our downtown. Can we not re-consider a state income tax, a tax on the wealthiest in our state and more progressive ways to fund our services?
199. Hello, My name is Ebony and I am a social service provider. I work with homeless, at-risk and low income young parents. Eliminating the Ride Free Area will drastically impact clients' ability to access

essential services. **Our organization is not able to provide bus tokens for every client that is in need.** The Ride Free Area helps individuals and families get to appointments, food banks, school and employment services. I ask that you continue to think strategically and compassionately about how Metro can bring in revenue and support our most vulnerable with transportation options. Thank you for your time.

200. Let's support public transportation and people living in poverty. Let's be a city that helps its citizens and doesn't drive them away. Keep the ride-free zone in downtown Seattle. People need this.
201. Please don't eliminate the downtown free ride on Metro. I use it often and really appreciate it. I work at a food bank downtown and I know that the people I serve use it to get to and from the food bank, to transfer their groceries. Some of the folks are elderly, disabled or unable to walk and carry groceries for lengthy distances. Without the ride free zone, they would have to pay to travel to the food bank. By eliminating the free ride zone, the city is taking away a great service for all of the community, but especially the poor community for whom the price of a bus ride can be a great expense.
202. Dear City and Metro representatives: I am writing as a Seattle resident and as a human services provider, to urge you NOT to eliminate the Downtown Free Ride Area. Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. **We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access. Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. Increasing access to subsidized bus tickets is an important tool, but needs to be one part of a larger solution.** Thank you very much for considering all the many reasons to preserve our model of downtown accessibility and congestion-reduction for all.
203. This will be a travesty. Having worked for the Downtown Emergency Service Center and Harborview for over 10 years, much of the human services in the downtown area depend on people being able to get around in the ride free area. Homeless folks have to go from Belltown for DSHS needs, then to Pioneer Square for shelter, down towards SODO for bus passes, jail, courts, Pike Market and other medical clinics, and up the hill towards Harborview for urgent care. All these folks are navigating to and from these areas all within the ride free area. Not having the ride free area will significantly block many folks from getting shelter, services, healthcare, taking care of warrants, It would be a huge loss and I'd be happy to talk to anyone about it.
204. I think that this is very unfair, and many tourists and low income people, along with many others, utilize the ride free zone, and it will be a huge shame if it's eliminated.
205. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us.

206. 1-Make DSTT proof of payment platform; 2-Install ticket kiosks; 3-Eliminate paper transfers; 4- Provide incentives to use ORCA; 5-Move benefit program to ORCA; 6-Board/deboard at all doors w/POP; 7-Dynamic signage to indicate bus currently in bay; 8-Drop off buses move forward; 9- Loaders/fare enforcers to assist.
207. This change will force me to walk downtown at times when it is not safe. Need replacement service on waterfront, which is now served by a free infrequent Route 99 or discounted fare of \$1. This will reduce people going up/down downtown area for shopping/dining. Need to provide a "day pass" for riders who want to use bus/streetcar/light rail for one day in downtown. All major cities have that. Make fare standard at all times. Provide incentive for riders to use ORCA over cash by discounting ORCA fares 25-50 cents. Make streetcars/light rail/bus all same fare. It is complicated and confusing now. Make the proposed free shuttle to go on 1st Ave or waterfront, where it does not duplicate other services, or a loop serving major destinations: library, aquarium, sculpture park. Get 255 out of tunnel and follow other SR520 routes on 4th Ave. Route 214, 215, 210, 554, 111, 114, 202 in tunnel along with other I-90 routes for consistency. Finally, eliminate route 42 because of low ridership and use it for connector bus.
208. As the free ride zone services are in the center of the city, it would affect, instead, not to change the change for the people that do not have employment and disabled people who use it daily in order to not be unemployed. Those who do not have the money to pay for the bus. Thank you and wherever you live, may God bless you.
209. As the services in the free ride zone of downtown are currently, to me it seems that they should not make changes for the simple reason that the public that uses it could be people with very low monetary resources and automatically it would affect them on a daily basis. As in one way or another, the buses run in the same direction and route as their usual route, and even through the "Metro" company argues and insists on saying that it has financial losses in order to give us this service, I believe that there should be a good and clear solution. I hope in Jesus Christ that Metro and the bus riders all have good options and profits for both positive sides, never negative for the reason that the economic inflation that in these moments the country is suffering from and speaking on a world level. With care and affection, Your friend, Jesus Orozco Sanches
210. Next October, the Ride Free Area downtown policy will end. There are various ideas to replace it. The one proposal that seems most liked by folks is the free Third Avenue shuttle. This is based on the free shuttle in Olympia that runs from the State Capitol to downtown. The Seattle free shuttle could run from Bell and Third then go down Third to Jackson then go up Jackson to 12th. Every ten minutes during the day seems right. This would help many people (downtown residents, tourists, shoppers, seniors, handicapped and low income). It would also help downtown business and facilities. We hope that this is the proposal that is approved. If you like this proposal you can let Metro know. Thank you.
211. Several questions: 1. As a lift/ramp user, I am concerned about the fact that many people will probably want to use the front door to get off the bus and not be aware that a person may need to use the lift or ramp to get on or off. While all passengers may get on or off while the ramp is out, this is not the case with lifts and could result in some confrontations between drivers, lift/ramp users and other passengers. Please explain how this will be addressed, since many lift-equipped coaches will not be replaced until 2014 at the earliest. 2. Also, buses are going to be delayed every time a lift or ramp is used. How is schedule reliability going to be affected by this? This is an important issue that must be

addressed, especially for routes that carry a lot of lift or ramp users (and when a lot of those passengers are mobility-device users, who must secure their devices in tiedown spaces, usually with driver assistance, before the bus can be moved). 3. While having all passengers pay their fares on boarding is a good idea, there is a problem when any of those passengers is mobility-impaired and usually cannot wait long periods of time before getting on the bus (or need to get off the bus quickly in order to transfer to another bus). How will this be addressed? 4. As a mobility-device user, I also see a problem with people "cramming" onto a bus and forgetting about the fact that people with limited mobility need to be accommodated, either in the "priority seats" or in the tiedown areas. Although newer coaches (and some older ones, especially the articulated trolleys) have the "proper" signage stating that wheelchair users have priority for the tiedown spaces, this is not always enforced - and most coaches (the Gilligs, lift-equipped Flyers and most of the low-floor coaches) do not have this signage, even though it has been requested numerous times. Please explain how this particular situation will be addressed.

212. Please commit to no net increase in travel time for DSTT buses. Do whatever it takes to keep buses and Link moving, either by having rear-door ORCA, handheld PFTPs during peak hours, or by converting the DSTT to proof-of-payment. If you choose to "surface" some DSTT routes, please surface peak-only Eastside routes (212, 216, 217, 218, etc...) that still can easily use the 2nd/4th Ave couplet instead of all-day, high-ridership routes such as the 41, 71-74, 101, 150, etc..
213. I'd like to see a fare discount when paying with ORCA. I think many people know that, if you pay cash, you will likely get a transfer good for more than 2 hours. Please, bring back the "all day" pass for weekends and holidays. Better yet, we need a "day pass" for tourists and infrequent riders (available for purchase 7 days a week).
214. I am opposed to the elimination of the Ride Free Zone even though you are providing alternative sources of services (i.e. bus tickets to the homeless and low income folks). What is to stop you from eliminating these alternative services that I mentioned above? I find it very difficult to trust this system. You're going to have to PROVE that we can trust you to do right by us. Why don't you ask businesses and corporations that do business here to give back 3 to 5% of their tax break? If you have the political will to do that then there would not be a "need" to eliminate the ride free zone. I hope that you will not further betray out trust. Respectfully, Robert K. Imasu (sp?)
215. Hello, my name is Tom West. I live at Tent City 3, a homeless shelter. In the winter our bodies are near the freezing point of dying, so we ride the bus to reheat ourselves. It is the warmest time of the day for us, it is also helpful to get from Pioneer Square to Belltown to go to different agencies for help or to go to the food bank or the soup kitchen. Not all homeless have the help of various agencies, because they live on the street. Its also good for tourists. Thanks.
216. The lack of a ride free area will only further hurt the homeless community.
217. Make people pay when they get on the bus. Just let bus drivers drive the bus. Get police on bus. Ask bus driver first about change in business. Don't run Metro from the office. Ask bus passengers [about] bus service.
218. Great idea. LA does this. Hopefully cut down on free rides! Go Metro. Good luck. Exiting at back sometimes is not at a curb & makes exiting all the bus difficult with folks with knee problems.

219. This statement is going to be a major problem for low income people. Also people who are visiting from out of town. It will hurt a lot of business in downtown Seattle area.
220. The free bus zone downtown has long been a major benefit for all kinds of people. I work for an organization that serves the very low income. Eliminating the free bus service is going to have a severe impact on the poorest people. A lot of those also have serious health issues. Getting around downtown to services if they can't afford to take the bus is no joke. And "transportation options" can do only so much: I expect the options will involve more forms to fill out and verifications to get. The very poor are the people I think of first. But people who work downtown also use the bus to get around for meetings, errands, lunchtime shopping. Paying \$2.25 or \$2.50 to get from Westlake to Pioneer Square is going to be a hardship, especially on people who don't make a lot of money. What about people who visit downtown? Right now, visitors to Seattle have a quick way to get around, and it's a characteristic of other cities I have visited and enjoyed. Seems hospitable. I know the budget is tight. I hope you can find another way to handle it. Thanks.
221. Where do we need to go when we must sustain a livable existence that works in our community? As a community, we need to be better organized overall. For purpose efficiency and whole effect for full impact and the right and the best use of all equipment any time, the shortest distance is between point A and point B as long as your full service area is not compromised. The system is the community. The community is the system. This is true in either instance, and, for all each is worth, right now. If there is to be the future we all envision for both the community and the system it will emerge from the most fundamental view. The right question is posed. The right answer is within it. Our developmental task is to see and to hear it for all that is of meaningful value in all respects. We are standing on the bottom line. Physically as well as mentally we must translate to the ground here, we are as yet without a mathematical formula.
222. Have the businesses provide their own shuttle route. Shorten the southbound tunnel routes. Start at Busway and Royal Brougham. The bus tunnel gets packed with buses. Combine the stops at Pike and 3rd and Pike and 5th to the Westlake Mall between Fourth and Fifth, or move the stop at 5th and Pine to 6th and Pine.
223. Even though it wasn't the original intention when the free bus zone was created, very low income individuals have come to depend on the free bus zone to access social services, many on a daily basis. The free bus has become the link between the many shelters located in the downtown core and social service agencies which meet basic needs by providing hot meals, daytime shelter, medical care, etc. I favor the free circulator as the best option for helping these citizens continue to have access to service.
224. I am concerned about homeless people who have to visit multiple service providers in downtown - getting from one to the next will be difficult, and passes given to service providers is an imperfect solution. It's difficult for providers to make sure that everyone who needs one gets one. I am also concerned about increased load times in downtown, causing buses to delay each other. Also I am concerned about increased fare cheating. In San Francisco, rear doors open at every stop to let people off and huge numbers of cheaters get on. I doubt this will actually make more money through fare collection.

225. I'm really nervous about these changes for several reasons. First, getting rid of the RFA is going to have a huge impact on folks that use the free buses to get to important services. There are a lot of homeless and low income service providers clustered in various places in the RFA and this change will limit the ability of their guests and clients to access their services. Human services tickets are not the answer to solving the negative impacts of the elimination of the RFA - these tickets do not get to everyone and they are a burden on the agency. I am a supporter of the free downtown circulator bus as a "replacement" of the RFA. Tourists, downtown employers, and low income folks will all use this. Also, I'd support having better pass options for tourists - like being able to buy a \$5 disposable card/pass, etc. that you could use for 2+ riders.
226. The current ride free zone is a huge plus for tourists, and those who live or work downtown. It is a huge minus for non-criminals at either end of the ride free zone, regardless of income or employment. I am okay with the ride free zone going away. I am okay with the fire free zone staying as is. I am absolutely not okay with the ride free zone going away for tourists, workers, and residents, but staying for the drug dealers, criminals, thugs, and mentally insane that currently use it to go from one end of the zone to the other, and for quick switching of territory when SPD is patrolling nearby. Please do not additionally subsidize those who make downtown more difficult for honest citizens of all income classes, as well as extremely high tax paying tourists - whose taxes fund social service agencies.
227. Shorten the southbound tunnel routes so the tunnel won't be packed with buses holding up the train or buses being held up by the train. Have routes 101, 102 and 150 start at Royal Brougham, and the route 106 start at Lander - the two stations on the bus way. The stops on 2nd and 3rd need to be combined to have all routes stop from Pine to Pike. Combine two stops on Pine St to Westlake Mall or move the stop at 5th and Pine to 6th and Pine.
228. I think this is another excuse to make the poor and disabled feel like they don't matter. With the price of fuel going up, only the well to do people will be able to afford public transportation. Public transportation should be for the poor, but it's being made more available to the rich. In exchange for eliminating the ride free area, reduce the price of bus fare back to \$1.50. Bring back the all day passes on weekends and holidays. Since there is no more ride free area, extend the transfer time to 3 hours for fare (especially on weekends when the buses run less frequently).
229. Please tell the drivers to speak directly into the bus microphone when they address passenger. No shouting back at them. Please post NOW temporary signs in downtown core: "Free Zone ends Sept. 29" Please add new voice instructions to automated announcer voice to "please exit at the back door -- thank you."
230. This program is a drastic reduction in transit service for many people in King County who pay taxes for Metro service. With this reduction in bus service in Sept. many buses are eliminated coming to downtown further increasing the above burden. Extending the bus stop zones further reduces downtown parking. This program will be a burden on downtown business. Many people will be inconvenienced by having to walk to make connections to other buses and businesses. Poor program!!
231. I oppose doing away with the Ride Free Area unless free buses making a loop through downtown are made available. The low-income and homeless folks who rely on the many social service agencies that are scattered throughout that area cannot afford bus fare when their benefits are being cut, and because demand on services is increasing the social service agencies cannot afford to buy that volume

of additional bus tickets, even at a discount. Metro would not lose money by doing this, since it is not collecting fares from people who only use the bus in the Ride Free Area anyway. You would still be able to cut out the problem of fare-dodgers without creating additional hardship for our neediest fellow citizens.

232. I am currently homeless and have become very dependent on the ride free area over the past two years as I have limited funds, often carry all that I own on my back, and frequently use various resources downtown to check email, shower, shave, brush my teeth, eat, etc. I suppose I have become a bit spoiled by the excellent service Metro has provided in the greater Seattle area for as long as I have lived in Seattle. I am glad that there will be RapidRide buses, I think that will cut down significantly on bus stations getting over crowded. The main places that I go for resources are Urban Rest Stop (9th & Stewart), Connections (3rd & Yesler), the Compass Center (1st & Washington), Work Source (3rd & Virginia), the Family Center across the street from Work Source, and 6th & Columbia for meals. I think that if there were a shuttle that ran a loop from 3rd & James down to Pike Street, up to Pike & 5th Ave, and then down to 5th Ave back to 5th & James that would get people who are dependent on downtown resources within walking distance of any place they need to go. I will definitely miss the RFA, but I understand the budget problems. Thank you for providing one of the best bus systems in the country and being forthcoming with your future plans.
233. Many many persons who live in the apartments (which are located at 4th Avenue & Bell Street) hope that all the bus route 7 should better start from the stop at 3rd Ave and Bell Street. And most of Route 36, except for express, also start at 3rd Ave and Bell Street so that my people can fire the bus directly to International District area.
234. The only thing that concerns me is that I had heard talk of Metro getting rid of transfers for people who ride the bus to town and get dropped off at one end and need to get to the other end of downtown. However, I now know that you are not getting rid of transfers so everything is alright.
235. 1. I support free "feeder routes," like the Route 99. Have one with the same International District terminal, but have it use 2nd/4th instead from Jackson to Bell. 2. Fare inspectors on all buses, randomly to deal with fare jumpers and zone jumpers (i.e. get on downtown for 1 zone, but continue to 2 zones anyway). 3. (Combined with 2) Use ORCA in tunnel for all buses, but still allow getting on the front door. Make it like RapidRide unless ORCA tapped on exit. ORCA tap-on and tap-off on bus possible for 1 one trip if ORCA tapped on exit. This allows entry on all doors in tunnel.
236. I Douglas Petersen will regret the elimination of the "Magic Carpet" Zone and free fare/hassle free transfer points in the downtown Metro Seattle core. I hope the Australian Waterfront Streetcar can be revived for tourists and special events. When the routes work they are great. I hope somehow they can delay the free zone closing for a couple of years because of the construction projects and the constant traffic jams caused by various events.
237. Finally! Pay on entry, exit by rear door is standard in 99% of cities. Our complicated policy confuses both visitors and residents, and makes Seattle's transit system look like a joke. Encourage ORCA use by imposing a 25 cent cash surcharge, and offer a day pass or maximum daily fare. These are also widespread in other cities. Move the peak-only routes out of the tunnel. Replace them with strategic all-day routes to more parts of the county, or replace them with nothing. The DSTT is too valuable and scarce a resource to give to a lucky few peak-only routes and leave idle at other times. Make the DSTT

a POP zone, using the TVMs for bus tickets. Add TVMs (even cheap parking meter ones) on 3rd Ave and other congested places, so that people can buy tickets off board. Make drop-off routes to the forward bay. Any of the alternatives for low-income riders is fine. Next time put more tables in the comment area. I got the last open one.

238. As the concierge for the large H.I. Hostel at 520 S. King, I send guests uptown on free buses to the Market, Greyhound, REI and other spots several times a day. It would be VERY helpful if a circulator bus could stop on Jackson/4 (island stop?) that goes uptown.
239. Free downtown circulator best option & essential for low and no-income people. 3rd Avenue between Virginia Street and James Street essential because of shelters.
240. Comment regarding the elimination of the Ride-Free Area in downtown Seattle: I realize you are trying to put your best foot forward when you enumerate the way eliminating the ride-free area will streamline bus service (everyone pays when they enter, etc.). It is surprising you don't list "recovering crucial funds" to the list. Why is this left out? Two negative effects of eliminating the ride-free area that are of great concern to me are: 1) poor people will not be able to ride the bus downtown for free, and there are a lot of poor people downtown. The media does not talk about the poor as much as about the middle class. But the numbers of poor people in our region are growing and have been for some time. One way to lessen the impact of elimination of the Ride Free Area is the voucher program I believe Metro is planning: vouchers will be given to service agencies to give to clients, and people who register their vehicles will have the option of donating their vouchers to Metro to give to riders who cannot afford to pay. Another way to lessen the impact of the elimination of the RFA is to replace the senior discount program with a low-income discount program. 2) Businesses and the environment will suffer: we don't want more people driving downtown for reasons of traffic congestion and pollution, and elimination of the ride-free area will make it harder for people to go from one part of downtown to the other. In other words, it seems to me that elimination of the RFA is a short-sighted solution that placates only the people who resent anyone getting a "free ride." I want Metro to reconsider this and change its mind!. Means-testing is better than increasing fares or eliminating the RFA! Working with legislators in Olympia to get off their chairs and come up with some socially and environmentally just solutions to our need for public transportation is also essential! Amending the constitution so that gas tax money can be used to support public transportation is one step that needs to be taken: this makes sense!
241. I have a monthly pass and I always ride to and from outside of the Ride Free Area. I prefer to pay my fare and get it out of the way. Use my pass and get it done. I will ride the bus more now. Pay on entry will speed everything up and will bring more revenue. It will help keep service frequent and that is good.
242. This is what I think: Replace free zone with free/low fare bus routes that circle only in downtown covering current free ride territory. All other routes pay as you board full fares. If low fare, provide strategically placed change machines (think of doing this regardless - how many trips are held up because someone doesn't have change?). Also, open many more outlets for ORCA services. ORCA cards should be free to acquire. Some kind of low cost service needed to encourage shoppers, tourists, allow for connections with service providers. Perhaps \$1.00? With NO transfer. Dedicated routes could be down 2nd Ave - up 4th. There is already coverage on 1st Ave (Route 99) make this a little more often than 30 min! Tunnel could be exempt. \*\*Change transfer design. This will thwart

people who try to cheat and not pay anything holding up buses while arguing with driver. Why is ST 522 not a tunnel bus route? Please note: I use ORCA monthly pass so I am not personally affected. I will still buy a pass regardless.

243. Eliminate paper transfers, to encourage the adoption of ORCA cards and help buses operate more efficiently everywhere in the system. When a stop is requested, use the new on-board automated system to announce "stop requested - please use the rear exit." This will help remind everyone to exit through the rear and improve passenger flow. Other transit systems do this. I'm very happy about the elimination of the RFA.
244. I've recently (5 months ago) become a member of the homeless community. I'm normal, 43, and haven't been hired for work for more than 2 years, so have no income. I'm currently reliant on food stamps, food banks (about once a month), and homeless shelters for my basic needs, and know there are many like myself in the Seattle area (which I've always thought of as home since 1985). One of the things that helps me the greatest is the transportation pass (an all-day pass for light rail, Metro, Sound Transit) provided to me by the SHARE shelters, a day and night program at opposite ends of Seattle, as a pretty independent person daily. Also, I use necessary services in downtown Seattle for laundering and sometimes showering (as I do have access to another shower also at one of the shelters, but still occasionally utilize Catholic Charities and other contributing organizations at the Women's Wellness Center. But so often as funding seems to more and more be a potential issue within the homeless community, I know I could possibly do ok at the SHARE Shelter on 12th & Jackson, if the Ride Free Area were to remain if I ever experienced a time when SHARE could no longer afford to provide all-day passes for participants at SHARE shelters. However, it is clear that you do have a need for additional opportunities to increase your company through collecting fares instead of continuing to offer the RFA. You have the right to make good decisions for your employees and your company's welfare. The idea of providing tickets in greater amounts to agencies/organizations is good, but the language sounded to be that they would be offered at 20 percent and not given freely. My concern as a homeless person with no income is that SHARE could not possibly indefinitely offer us help, with providing daily all-day passes, because they will have to start giving to/from tickets daily to the participants at their 12th & Jackson shelter, or instruct them to walk to their daily services. Jackson is a long way from Pine/Stewart, and that choice would likely be just too difficult for SHARE and for the participants (both at 12th & Jackson and at their 15 other current shelters, because someone would have to make sacrifices by walking long distances and perhaps moving to other shelters and getting service elsewhere, if they are even available elsewhere, outside of the main downtown area. At the same time, I can't ask you to endure the sacrifice of passing on the opportunity for increase. I'm not really a person who believes companies should be in the practice of giving free things, especially indefinitely. It has been very different for me to have been in the position of accepting so many things which have been given since I became homeless. Recently, I've realized the opportunity will likely never be there to repay any of what I've been given. I'm also uncomfortable with the idea of charging/granting drivers, who register a car, tickets, with the hope that they will want to donate them to human services organizations. I was really shocked to learn that they were willing to pay to keep Metro going, about a year ago or perhaps it was two years ago - paying somehow through car tab expenses for Metro's costs (in part). It doesn't seem that drivers should pay for the cost of bus riders. I'm delighted about the RapidRide buses coming into downtown Seattle, and also the ideas of a connector from point-to-point like DC and Microsoft have. Is there any chance those could be free offerings - the connector and/or this one/two RapidRide line(s)? At least that way, the truly needy free

riders could be taking a separate mode of transport. Please include me on any future communication about your decision(s). Sincere regards, Jennifer T. Brown P.O. Box 12871 Seattle, WA 98111 P: 253-948-7413

245. The 99 waterfront bus: The current layover stop on Broad and the waterfront is useless. People who board on 1st Ave are stranded at that end of the waterfront. Move that layover spot to somewhere between the Aquarium and the ferry terminal. The bus can park somewhere under the viaduct if there is no suitable layover spot on the waterfront. The proposed "free" circulator bus should at least connect Westlake Center to the International District. Suggest this route: 2nd Avenue to S Jackson to 8th Ave (where current "free Ride Zone" ends) back to S. Jackson to 4th Avenue to Pine Street (back to 2nd). The "Free Circulator" should also come frequently like every 15 minutes.
246. Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access. Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. Increasing access to subsidized bus tickets is an important tool, but needs to be one part of a larger solution.
247. Thank you for making these changes. It will significantly help improve fare compliance and hopefully improve traffic flow.
248. I don't think Metro has an adequate plan to address people most affected by losing RFA. Also need to figure out more comprehensive communications. That it's happening and how to deal with it.
249. Good idea to eliminate the Ride Free Area so that nobody have any excuse to ride to the destination and say "I have no money" and the driver has to let go that guy. Yet it affects some people in downtown. What about extend #99 bus (free bus) to go to the tunnel from 6 am to 7 pm covering the full tunnel route and remain free? That will solve all the problem while all other bus need to pay when people step on the bus. T.W. Wang 206-919-7026
250. Please simplify the fare payment system. No peak/peak times, one price all day every day, no zones. Reduced fare should say how much they have to pay on it - front or back. If people can not live without the Ride Free Zone, then make it so they bus does not leave the free zone. Pay as you leave is promoting fare evasion. Pay as you enter makes more sense. We want all the cops on the bus service on the bus in regular clothes.
251. Please keep free-ride in low-income neighborhoods and in the transit tunnel!
252. Consider making the DSTT proof-of-payment, like other Link stations, and have fare enforcement officers on the platforms and buses/trains, like RapidRide. Failing that, have staff with portable ORCA equipment positioned at the bus back doors so that ORCA holders can enter there. ORCA encouragement: More TVMs with better signage (e.g. "BUY ORCA HERE!") Put some on the street at

busy stops. Give cardholders some incentive for use, e.g. small fare discount. Many people do not know that a "ticket vending machine" also sells ORCAs. Work with hotels to make ORCA available there for purchase by tourists. Surface routes: Implement some of the cancelled restructures that would eliminate turns on 3rd Ave. Get TSP installed on major streets to help buses more through intersections. Dedicated transit queue jumps at some lights. Restructure service outside downtown to funnel riders to Link instead of sending buses all the way downtown. Rear-door ORCA readers?

253. My biggest concern is the time factor of getting the buses loaded. On the more commuter related routes most riders have ORCA cards, but I notice there are more riders that pay cash on inner city routes. Not only will this slow these routes but also buses behind. I do think this is the right move and may assist in fare evasion since a person can't board in the beginning without paying.
254. Mitigation: Are there some RRF users who live downtown and don't buy passes? Would there be some way just to give RRF users 10 rides free/month? Mitigation: I completely understand the concerns of nonprofits who don't want the cost and hassle of administering free bus tickets, especially for people not on their case load. Circulator: I can tell you from riding the 7 that there are lots of seniors who get on and ride just a couple of stops in the I.D. Tourist-friendly: I have a pass. My brain is mush, fluff & sawdust as far as the fare structure. Metro/ST/CT, maybe the ferries, and ORCA need to collaborate about some materials aimed at tourists that present things SIMPLY since it's really complicated. Circulator: I really like the circulator option up Boren. Please include Jackson/I.D. in circulator. Consider taking circulation to Broadway from Harborview and out to Jackson and then down Jackson. 12th & Jackson is a big loading spot and lots of people probably just west of the Ride Free Area. It's by Operation Nightwatch.
255. Eliminating the Ride Free Area is very stupid. I lived in Seattle since Oct. 3, 1973, moving from the country near Chehalis. Please don't eliminate the Ride Free Area. I live close to the RFA and walk about 10 blocks to the first bus stop in the RFA. Sometimes, I walk across town from my Capitol Hill apt. to KOMO Fisher Plaza by walking down Denny Way about a mile, and usually take a bus back to my neighborhood on Capitol Hill. Other times I go through downtown and get on the bus at the beginning of the RFA, change bus at 3rd & Pine to a different bus heading up 3rd Ave toward Seattle Center. And get off the last stop in the RFA at 3rd & Bell then walking about 6 blocks to KOMO Fisher Plaza or about 12 blocks to KING-FM on lower Queen Anne district. Please DON'T get rid of the Ride Free Area. Many shoppers in downtown Seattle who use the RFA would have to pay \$2.25 to ride a bus for only a block. When the RFA is going away, that's no good. Also pay when getting on the bus and used up all of the transfer time before boarding the 2nd bus due to missed connection or an hour layover between buses is no good. Often I go to North Bend on 2 bus rides and pay the fare when I get off the first bus. Please keep the Ride Free Area continued and don't eliminate it. Thank you - Richard Peterson, a piano man & former street trumpeter
256. We need to do more overhead extension for the trolley bus grid. Also let us know about alternative fuel research. We need more H2 powered motorbuses. That is fuel cells. Why not? I am one of the librarian-historians at the Georgetown Power Plant Museum. We would like to be kept up to date on alternative research, we are interested in alternatives at the museum.
257. An open letter to the planners at King County Metro, Sound Transit, Community Transit and anyone else who was involved in the decision to eliminate the Free Ride Area in downtown Seattle: Hello, I work in downtown Seattle and ride in the Free Ride Area almost daily. I work for a non-profit

organization supporting low-income residents in housing. Eliminating the Free Ride Area is just plain poor policy. It is a short-term savings of funds that will ultimately cost the City and the local and regional transit programs more both financially and in the public's regard. The proposed solution to provide more free or reduced bus passes through established social service agencies assumes that all lower-income people living in Seattle are, or should be, connected to a social service program. Neither assumption is true. This change will also disproportionately impact lower income workers in Seattle - the men and women who work in janitorial, retail, property management support, and food services in downtown Seattle - the same people who clean up after many of us when we work or play in Seattle; the people who work the registers when we go shopping, and the people who make our sandwiches for us when we forget our lunch at home. I receive a subsidized bus through my employer, but many of the people I mentioned above do not. Many will now have to pay (or pay more) to go to work starting in September. I'm not sure what the cost will be, but it seems unfair for a public transit system to place the highest burden on folks making \$10 an hour. Increasing user fees always impacts lower-income wage earners the most. If the plight of the lower-income workers doesn't resonate with you, I would like point out that this process will also slow down the transit system for those of us who use it to commute into and spend our entertainment dollars in the city. It really is too expensive to live in downtown Seattle for anyone who is not either a higher-income salary earner or living in subsidized apartments. I earn the median income for King County; have a bus pass, and ride transit to and from work about 3 times a week. I also ride transit in downtown Seattle several times during the week. I've worked, played, and spent my money in downtown Seattle for over 10 years. The recent decisions made by the local and regional transit planners have pushed me to consider looking for work on the east side of the lake. This is a hard decision for me since I like my job and find it very fulfilling. I just can't afford the extra time and expense that have been added (or in the case of the elimination of the Free Ride area, will be added) to my commute in 2011/ 2012. When I leave my Seattle employment, I will spend my entertainment, shopping, and dining out dollars in Bellevue, Kirkland, Bothell...well, pretty much everywhere that is not Seattle. I will miss the friendly, progressive, welcoming city that I came to know and love when I moved to the area 21 years ago. Thank you for considering my input during your Public Comment Period. I hope that this opportunity means that the decision to eliminate the Free Ride Area has not already been irreversibly made and that my words have reached you.

258. We need best service, clean, on-time, and security. More respect of the drivers to us. Sometimes we run to take the bus and just when we catch we knock the door, the door never open. The driver going mocking us. More vigilance with video camera. Sometimes the homeless fight for nothing. Besides they (homeless) eat on the bus and leave the garbage under the seat.
259. I am very disappointed and concerned that the Ride Free Area is being canceled after 39 years of being in effect. This program has substantially lessened the burden of needed transportation costs of our most vulnerable populations. Getting to and from various social services, doctors, job interviews, etc. is something that will now be near impossible or too costly to attempt. This is not how we, the great city of Seattle, should be demanding of our neighbors. There must be a solution which can adequately alleviate the economic burden. Please create a solution that operates nights and weekends as well as during "work" hours. This problem deserves the utmost attention and creative problem solving. Another concern is frequency of the route. An elderly individual standing in the rain to wait for a circulator that only arrives every 30 minutes. And what about who is allowed? It's great if no eligibility were to be required. But, if the new system only has 15-20 seats, then how do we guarantee room (priority?) for seniors, homeless, low-to-no income citizens? Our downtown area was built around

the RFA, and social services sprang up because of it. You must create an equitable solution if we get rid of an essential service. Thank you.

260. Our social service system built up based on the existence of the Ride Free Zone. Taking it away undermines that very basic premise. It's a bad idea to end the Ride Free Zone & NO answer to suggest giving "script" to social service agencies. Another BAD idea. Even for able-bodied it's hard to get from Belltown to Pioneer Sq/Harborview etc. with all ones belongings. City and County governments BOTH need to step up. If the circulator is to be the answer, it needs FULL service, 7 days/week, 20 min (or less) apart, and some evenings (to hospitals). I'm part of a 250-member community group on homelessness. Everyone concerned with housing and other essential services is VERY concerned. So far, we're not reassured. The circulator, as described, is not a substitute. Any new system must stop frequently - every 10-20 min per stop. Must be big enough to accommodate the need.
261. The circulator sounds like a good idea if it could run frequently enough. The beauty of 3rd Avenue right now is that you can hop on any bus for free - it's quick and easy to make connections to other routes. Can you require more employers to provide transit passes? This would both boost revenue and provide more employees downtown with "free" transit service to meetings and meals.
262. This is so sad. I use the free ride zone all the time to get around downtown and run errands, go to meetings, etc. I will definitely not be doing this as often if I have to pay. My daughter is 15 and I would love to be able to get her an ORCA card so she is not left stranded somewhere with no bus fare, but it seems to be impossible. Please make this easier! I run a youth arts & leadership program at the Wing Luke Museum - high school kids, mostly. About once a month I take 15-20 teenagers on a field trip - mostly by taking the bus in the free ride zone. Some of them have ORCA cards, but many of them do not. I will not be able to make these field trips happen with any regularity if we have to pay. Can you create a program for youth groups to get special passes or something?
263. The merchants between Pioneer Square and Pike Place Market will suffer when tourists have to pay to go back and forth. I frequently have appointments from Bell down to the International District and near Harborview. Paying back and forth will seriously limit my coming downtown at all. The merchants will lose and thus our economy. You want people to drive and park more than use the bus?
264. I'm concerned that eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. I think the city and the county need to work together to provide some kind of free option that has short enough headways to be useful (I know the idea for a free circulator has been discussed), preferably something that would include Harborview Medical Center within its boundaries, in addition to the downtown core. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. Other ideas to address this issue would be to increase the amount of subsidized tickets distributed to human service agencies, and expanding the reduced fare program to include people with low incomes. My hope is that the city and the county will work together to create a solution that works for ALL members of our community.
265. I am concerned that with FRA going away that although there are agencies that provide tickets to low income groups, more people will apply for these programs than there are tickets to go around. Will

Metro and the city of Seattle (and whoever else applies) give such agencies more money to provide more tickets?

266. Protest - "Cancellation of Ride Free Area Benefit" A. The general bus fare has been increased many times and in many folds. This affects our living expenditure and quality of life. B. Using more public transit is essential and beneficial to keep air clean and reduce pollution. C. RFA helps short distance travelling, helps the parking issue and increase work efficiency. I wish for the understanding from the involved departments, as well as city and county members. Thank you. (submitted in Chinese, translated by interpreter at March 29 open house)
267. One change in the current transit system to all/enough for the commuter to handle but 3, 4 & 5 changes is ridiculous, UNETHICAL, and too hard to keep up with financially for anyone who's in the working poor category. This removal of my paper transfer is too much of a threat to my immediate safety due to the area I live and can afford as it is. I know I could be seriously harmed for pulling out an ORCA card every morning just to go to work and school for god's sake. And I'm not the only one in fear of being robbed. Take this seriously because you're causing an inadvertent crime spree.
268. I strongly urge you to maintain some form of free bus service within the present "Ride Free" area. Many low-income residents depend on the service. Also, patrons of downtown stores and restaurants value the convenience of a ten-block ride inside a dry bus as an alternative to a ten-block walk in the rain. I would like to see dedicated free buses both above ground and in the tunnel. Because all buses traveling outside that area will require fare payment when boarding, the impact on farebox revenue should be on a small fraction of the losses Metro incurs under the present system.
269. This getting rid of the free ride zone is great. What a lot of the people who do not ride. It looks great and faster downtown to get on a bus. Well at the other end its hell. Being stuck on a bus for hours and long commutes like the 510 and getting up to Everett. Then you get the fool who suddenly do not have money. He or she never had it in the first place. Then everyone is held up waiting for this person to argue with the driver and just hold up the line. So many people have miss connection buses due to this. If the ones who make these decision can see the crap that goes on at the other end. The free zone would have been gone long before now. It is about time we have to pay when we enter. Like most cities!!! I been riding the bus for years here. And what I see of the free zone is a place for bums to just stay warm and ride back and for. Far as I am concern, they have all-day to do nothing. Seattle is not that big. They can walk back and for. Think of healthy incentive. I can go on forever. But one thing this new plan will do is speed up getting off the bus at the end. After sitting so long on a long commute. I WANT TO GET HOME!!!!. The fare jumpers will finally be weeded out here in town and not at the end where it counts.
270. I think it's unfortunate that a city that prides itself on innovation and progressive spirit will eliminate such a beneficial program. As a frequent traveler to Seattle, I appreciate being able to base myself in the CBD and utilize Metro/SoundLink for my transportation needs.
271. My first thought was, "Oh no, they are getting rid of the rid free zone!" But, after reflecting on my experiences riding Seattle buses over the last 15 years, I can't help but see that this is for the best. A couple sample experiences being... last weekend when riding the 150 to Kent, I saw no fewer than 6

people ride and run (putting the driver in the awkward/dangerous position of verbally confronting each of these passengers as they made their get-away). Or, the time a few years ago when some maniac missed the last ride free stop, and then proceeded to pee on the back doors and then kick out several of the windows on a crowded peak 18 bus before the driver let him off. I could go on-and-on. I love Metro and am all for the change if it'll help bring in extra revenue and make public transit safer for both drivers and passengers. -Chris (from Fremont) P.S. Naturally, I hope there will be a program to assist low/non-income riders in-place of the ride free zone.

272. Personally I believe the ride-free system was a huge benefit for bus transportation in downtown Seattle and people visiting or shopping. There should be a daytime pass that covers all day in the downtown corridor. Maybe this already exists but it should be advertised more if so.
273. Please leave the ride free area as it is. I work in community mental health and intern with the Seattle Municipal Court. The ride free area is so important to low-income individuals who need to get from place to place to do what they need to do. In particular, the ride free area encloses a huge amount of public housing as well as mental and physical health services and places of community life, the accessibility of which to those who utilize them would be limited in a serious way were the ride free area to be eliminated. It is another way in which Seattle could choose to let low-income individuals absorb the unintended consequences of municipal decisions. While other options for low-income individuals may be developed, these will, no doubt be more costly to the city and more difficult to navigate and time consuming for those utilizing them. Additionally, it would be important to realize in a discussion of other low-income transportation options that what is "essential" to individuals' wellbeing goes beyond medical and therapeutic services and includes other ways in which we positively interact with our communities. Thank you for your time. Jessica Reiff
274. Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access. Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. Increasing access to subsidized bus tickets is an important tool, but needs to be one part of a larger solution.
275. PLEASE do not eliminate the ride free area in Seattle! Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access. Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. Increasing access to

subsidized bus tickets is an important tool, but needs to be one part of a larger solution. Thank you!  
Lara

276. your information page states that ending the free ride zone will make riding the bus simpler. NOT TRUE for my clients who use Metro every day to traverse the downtown area to receive work training and then conduct job search. Our food service trainees work 8 hour (sometimes 11 or more hours) shifts on their feet but then they will have to walk 25 blocks back to the homeless shelter, in the rain/weather. It damn sure won't be simpler for them OR for the suburban commuters lining up for standing room only rides on 90-footers. Curb time will increase from 1 minute or less to 5 minutes or more. Have you tested this stuff? Have you studied what the impact will be? If so, why are you keeping the bad parts secret? It's a BAD move. I and many others DO NOT appreciate it.
277. ORCA cards: -- Better advertise and increase purchase locations. Idea - purchase pre-loaded cards at retail stores. -- The website is horrible and useless - redesign it! -- Lower the cost of the card to free - \$2.50 at most. Make ORCA card cheaper to use. Charge more for paying cash, e.g. 25 cents more for cash fare. Alternatively, provide a "bonus" for loading your e-purpse. Example: More than \$15 gets a 5% bonus, more than \$25 gets a 15%, etc. Politically, this would be easier to justify. Not having to handle cash saves agencies money, and this isn't "penalizing" cash users. -- Eliminate paper transfers. OR lower the paper transfer time to be less than ORCA. -- Daypass, daypass, daypass! Nice bonus: weekly pass! -- DSTT: Inbound routes pull forward and do not pick up passengers. Change the headsign to read "Drop-off only/No passengers." -- Move routes 71, 72, 73 to surface with routes 66 and 70. Flat tunnel bus fare matching max Link fare. Lets you use some ORCA FTPs for off board payment. -- Add bus TVMs (parking meters) and make plaform POP. -- Rear door ORCA readers. Other option: Give security portable FTPs and have them stand at rear door of outbound coaches scanning ORCA cards. Enables all-door boarding. -- Surface: Provide streetcar-style TVMs to allow for off board payment.
278. About 20 open house attendees who speak Chinese attended as a group from the ICDA at 6th and Jackson. Some live there, others live in other parts of the city and utilize services at ICDA. • Make sure the circulator serves 6th and Jackson (some point in the International District) • Change fares in downtown so we pay by how many stops we go. Many elderly people only go 1-2 blocks in downtown to run errands, do shopping, etc. and its feels like a stretch to pay \$1.25 for that length of trip. Many will choose to walk instead, but this may not be safe for their health. • Charge a small fee for the circulator shuttle. Some are concerned that a free shuttle will attract the homeless, addicted, and criminal folks leaving no room for the elderly and disabled who really need it. There would be no seats left, or they wouldn't feel safe to ride it. • Lower the application fee for the RRF and the fare for seniors. • Lower the fare for local bus service within Seattle to something like \$.25 or \$.75, then more people would use it. • Bring back the reduced fare annual pass - this would be better than more tickets to mitigate. Don't charge more than \$100 per year for the pass. • Allow people to pay once for the whole day, not limited to a 2-hour time period. • Create an ORCA pass type that would limit the distance or amount of trips people can take. • The RFA makes Seattle special. Money could be found by the city and county councils if they get resourceful. Those of us who depend on it are sick and tired of fare increases while seeing less services. Be of service to those who need transportation. Find efficiencies elsewhere. • Concern about resources it will take to operate a free circulator. Why not invest those same resources in reducing the fare so more people can use all service. • Be sure to reach

out to Don Blakeley of the International District Business Association, concern expressed for International District businesses outside of downtown core and the impact on them.

279. We pay taxes for Metro and our fares keep going up and we get less and less service and have to walk farther and farther to catch a bus. The fare for children is out of line and something needs to be done to help people to pay for their fares. The yearly pass for seniors was taken away and now we are paying over \$300 a year to ride the bus and it was done at a time with no raises in Social Security. I'm afraid of what you will do next. P.S. Sound Transit shouldn't have anything to do with Metro in Seattle. What about people with limited incomes trying to get back and forth to work?
280. The elimination of the free ride area will be no big deal as I use #60 route which does not do downtown so it will speed things up to pay as you enter just like the #60 route. Also as I volunteer at the Georgetown Power Plant Museum we would like any information on all energy research that Metro Transit does as we are running out of conventional energy. We at the Museum are interested in clean energy that under no conditions would the EPA bother us. Such as straight H2 or H2 fuel cell. This is what we need to do to help greenhouse gas elimination.
281. I think this is a short sighted idea of how to raise extra funds that will ultimately hurt business downtown, hurt poor and homeless people, and not keep the system solvent. A small increase in peak hour rates would raise more money. I also believe that this will cause an enforcement problem when people board the bus at the back door in downtown. It has the potential to significantly slow down the buses as they travel in the downtown area.
282. My personal preference for an RFA substitute would be for ST buses to continue not collecting fares through downtown. Specifically, south on 5th to Jackson and north on 4th would be nearly perfect. All rides free in the bus tunnel regardless of rail or bus would also be a solution. A Metro circulator traveling south on 3rd to Jackson then north on 4th to Bell would provide an important and useful service. People who are "near poor" but unaffiliated with human service agencies by choice wouldn't make use of subsidized tickets. Agencies running their own vehicles: honestly, pulling riders on an open hay wagon through town with a loud speaker going would be as good. Besides, there are already too many vehicles downtown. People have settled near the city center taking RFA service as part of the infrastructure; now you want to take it away. Make it really convenient to get around - take away the streets, too. And the sidewalks.
283. The Ride Free Area has been a service that both locals and tourists enjoy and benefit from. However, eliminating the RFA will affect the populations strapped for resources the most, and seems to me to be yet another blow to the most vulnerable populations of our city. All we seem to do is take from the poor and disadvantaged, and not being smart and strategic about how to raise revenues instead. Public transportation in this city is bad already. Don't make it worse by taking away the one redeeming factor: the Ride Free Area.
284. Everything you are doing with this matter is worthless. It is a waste of money. The real problem is the transfer system. Thousands of thousands people every day are using the same transfer every 24 days for many years and Metro knows that. How is it possible bus city from Brownsville, TX can make more cash fare every day with only 60 buses than King County Metro with 3,000 buses? And they only charge 1.00 for trip if you want a transfer you have to pay extra 0.25 but you can use once. Brownsville, TX, where I lived before has 100,000 inhabitants small town .

285. Moving from another state with no free ride zone to here was surprising. Seems free ride is mostly used by trouble makers in town. I'm glad to see it go. Put a free shuttle/walk mall (like downtown Denver's) along 3rd Ave. that will help revitalize 3rd - clean it up - and add another tourist option to downtown!
286. You absolutely must not eliminate the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle before you address some serious concerns and have realistic solutions related to them: --multi-zone fares/payments: right now it takes too long for the driver to switch the ORCA system back and forth to pay for multiple people; it will take lots longer to have to switch back and forth for two dozen riders loading downtown --multi-zone fares/payments: how will you know if someone has paid for a multi-zone fare when they exit the bus? --increase in loading times downtown means a DECREASE of service; this causes stacked busses and poor service for riders --increase in loading times in the tunnel means a SIGNIFICANT DECREASE of service causing a decrease in the number of busses allowed in tunnel because of loading delays; this equates to more poor service for riders --payment on entry means at least a three- or four-fold increase in loading times as not only are riders taking twice (or three times in the case of those busses with three doors) as long to load (because they all have to go through the front door), but the act of paying (fumbling for card or cash, not understanding the payment structure, asking questions of the driver, etc.) will then multiply again the delay --will stop lights downtown be refitted with bus sensors to give priority to busses approaching or waiting for the light to increase traffic? --what is being done to ensure some of our most vulnerable populations who rely on the ride free area for critical services are not left without access to those services? --a significant portion of visitors to Seattle rely on the ease of Metro's free ride area; a charge with only a 2-hour window to use a transfer deters visitors to use the system; reasonably priced all-day passes must be available for riders who expect to make multiple trips in one day using Metro As it stands, there are far too many questions about the feasibility of this plan, and far too many concerns about the problems that will have SIGNIFICANT DETRIMENTAL IMPACT to the efficacy of Metro bus service and SIGNIFICANT DELAYS AND DECREASES IN SERVICE to your ridership. Metro is already challenged by delays and route problems throughout its system. Eliminating the Ride Free Area is absolutely NOT the way to maintain service and ridership. The fallout (increase in prices, decrease in service, increase in loading times, etc.) from the elimination of the Ride Free Area will increase the dissatisfaction regular riders feel about the system already. I strongly urge you NOT to eliminate Metro's Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle.
287. The quality of the Metro bus system needs to be improved prior to removing services or increasing fees.
288. This is the best idea ever, 7 years too late. This will stop the intoxicated transients, from jumping a ride.. and bothering people. Now.. Just get more fare enforcement downtown. If we got 10% more people to pay, maybe you would not have to raise prices. Every other city that is as large or larger than Seattle, have fare enforcement. Lets GET EVERYONE TO PAY THEIR SHARE!!!
289. I think this is a really sad place we've come to as a community that we are choosing to eliminate the option of a free ride around downtown when we are pushing people to not drive downtown and trying to promote a more vibrant downtown core. Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes.

Having the free ride area provides access to the most vulnerable for medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs.

290. I am writing as a Seattle resident, a private citizen, and not on behalf of any organization. I use the free ride zone everyday on my way to work and to travel from one part of downtown to another quickly for work purposes. When I am on the bus, I am usually accompanied by visitors to Seattle and by individuals who are homeless. Given the nature of my work at the YWCA of Seattle | King County | Snohomish County, I understand that often people who are homeless and low-income and who are receiving public benefits and/or social services must visit many office locations, make certain appointments, and jump through bureaucratic hoops that send them all over town. The elimination of the free ride zone will certainly impact me - I'll have to walk to work, and around downtown to do my job. But of much greater consequence is the impact on tourists and the homeless population. Why must we make it that much harder for individuals who have fallen into homelessness and for individuals struggling with chronic homelessness to visit DSHS, to receive mental health counseling, to visit WorkSource and look for a job? Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access. Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. Increasing access to subsidized bus tickets is an important tool, but needs to be one part of a larger solution. And by the way, it would be great if we had a free option that went up to Harborview Medical Center. Seriously.
291. I am writing to express my disagreement with your decision of eliminating the Ride Free Area in Downtown Seattle. I have work in the Seattle downtown area for 21 years and I know that public transportation is too expensive for low income individuals. The Ride Free Area in Downtown had been an incredible help for people that have no money to afford public transportation and that need to move around downtown. Fortunately as of today I do not have physical or economical limitations to move around downtown but there are hundreds if not thousands of individuals who have no way to afford the Metro bus fee and on top of this they have physical limitations to move around downtown area. I know that the city of Seattle is facing serious economical times but we should consider other options before we make a decision that will primarily affect the most disadvantaged.
292. The Ride Free Area is not only an essential service for low income people, but it is also a traffic-reducing feature unique to our city. I believe it is a mistake to get rid of this service long-term.
293. Please don't end the ride free zone! This is a huge draw for tourists--all of our guests love it--and encourages more bus riding in general. By doing away with this you're taking away one of the best public benefits in Seattle. In addition, this will disproportionately affect low-income residents of Seattle, who are already hardest hit and have the least amount of money to spare. Traffic will increase as people choose to drive instead of bus. Please don't turn our downtown into a car mecca!
294. I am extremely concerned about Metro eliminating the free ride zone. Human services budgets have already been cut over and over again and we cannot handle the requests for bus tickets as it is. I don't

even see how Metro stands to gain much financial benefit from doing this. Why can't you find an alternative? What about asking area businesses if they would be willing to contribute a small amount in exchange for advertising what they offer? Isn't there a better way? How about all the tourists who use the free ride zone? Might the elimination of this service discourage them from visiting or even knowing about all that Seattle has to offer? You're only adding to the hardships of the most vulnerable people in Seattle, and its a shame.

295. Hello. I am a case worker who works with homeless adults. All of the people I work with will be affected by the elimination of the Ride Free Area. Because of the Ride Free Area, they are able to access services downtown and not have to spend a lot of money on bus fare. We are able to give out some free bus tickets, but these are limited and people run out of these frequently. I am extremely disappointed that it will be ending because eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, and this will affect the whole community. Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. On a personal note, my husband is also a Metro bus driver. Although the union endorses getting rid of the Ride Free Zone because of fare evasion, many drivers do not support this. They fear, as do I, that they will have more conflicts with passengers over the fare and it has been shown that assaults on drivers go up when engaging in fare disputes. This worries me for my family. I hope you take this all into consideration, and I appreciate your time. - Felicia

296. Please see comments immediately below as well as my post below that. I believe that Metro should commit to ensuring that elimination of the RFA results in a better, more reliable and faster transit system rather than increasingly margin speed and reliability. Travel times through downtown on 2nd, 3rd and 4th and in the DSTT are already too slow and Metro should commit to do right by it's riders and not make it worse. Metro should implement as broad of a POP system as viable. Where POP is not used Metro should work to minimize delay associated cash payment. This could include installing parking meter type off-board ticket vending machines. Another option is to have personnel located at high use bus stops downtown to check fare media, allowing for boarding at the rear door during the PM peak. This would speed boarding of vehicles, reducing the delay associated with payment downtown. In the DSTT security officers should help speed the loading of wheelchair users. -----

----- As Bruce wrote yesterday Metro will be holding its first public meeting related to elimination of the Ride Free Area (RFA) this Thursday from 4:00 -6:30 at Union Station. Operational Problems of the DSTT We have written fairly extensively on this operational impacts of this change. A study done by Metro shows that the operations in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT) would see significant and unacceptable negative speed and reliability impacts from elimination of the RFA. The report concluded that none of the operational improvements suggested can fully close the gap between the current peak usage and the reduced peak capacity. Additional, travel time data I obtained from Metro shows that travel time speed and reliability in the tunnel has progressively deteriorated since it reopened for joint operation with Link in 2007. This trend has been most prevalent in PM peak hours, which will also be the most negatively impacted by a pay-as-you-enter fare policy. My purely personal experience indicates that speed and reliability have further deteriorated since this data was collected in Spring 2010. The existing speed and reliability in the DSTT, in my opinion, is already too poor, and further deterioration is completely unacceptable for riders and is a waste of Metro and Sound Transit resources. Why a Proof-Of-Payment System The core of the problem with elimination of RFA for DSTT operations is fare payment and multi-door boarding. Elimination of the RFA and replacement with a pay-as-you-board fare system, the

presumptive system Metro is switching to, will introduce additional boarding delays caused by payment of fares with the driver. Additionally, since riders will pay when boarding, they will only be able to board at the front door, compounding delays. Unlike surface routes, DSTT routes are not through routed, so enforcing a boarding through the front door, leave through the rear door system will have minimal time savings since most buses are either filling or emptying, not a mixture of both. In my opinion the only way to maintain these two key operational benefits of the RFA is through the extensions of the Proof-of-Payment (POP) system already used on Link to DSTT buses as well. Outside the DSTT bus routes would use a standard pay-as-you-enter fare system. A more ambitious system could extend the POP zone to corridors where DSTT buses run frequently like I-90, University Way, Northgate TC, SODO Busway, or SR-520, much in the way RapidRide uses POP. For inbound trips towards the DSTT riders would pay with the driver as they do now, except they would be required to keep proof of payment if they intent to ride into the tunnel. For outbound trips, riders would either need to purchases a ticket at a ticket vending machine on a DSTT mezzanine or tap their ORCA card before proceeding to the station platform. Anywhere on the platform, leaving the platform or on buses or trains in the tunnel, riders would be required to show proof-of-payment to fare inspectors if asked. Difficulties and Possible Solutions However this change doesn't come free. There are some capital and labor costs, as well as policy and technical implication that would need to be overcome. I don't believe any of these difficulties are fatal flaws. Metro would need to purchase a number of ticket vending machines (TVMs) and hire fare inspectors. As Oran wrote previously, Community Transit used repurposed parking meter TVMs at a cost of \$9,000-\$13,000 each for Swift. My back of the envelope estimate is that Metro would need at least 25 TVMs or \$200,000 – \$325,000 dollars using same unit cost assumptions. Some of the additional labor cost could possibility be offset by switching some or all of the DSTT security personnel, who currently just stand around the station platform, into fare inspectors as well as security personnel. Some scale of efficiency might also be possible by combining fare inspection operations for Link with buses. Another problem is that Metro currently has an off peak fare level and two different peak period fare levels in the DSTT, \$2.25 base fare, \$2.50 for buses that don't leave Seattle, and \$3.00 for buses that do. Sound Transit charges \$2.50 for the 550 at all times. DSTT bus fares would need to be harmonized if they are to be effectively enforced. If they are not it complicates ORCA payments and makes it hard to enforce the higher fare, which could only be effectively enforced while on the bus. Because Link fares are enforced outside of the DSTT, they are still enforceable. I would note however that this is part of a boarder issue of fare unification that I think most people agree needs to be more systematically addressed, so perhaps it's good to have this discussion now. The final problem is how the ORCA system should work. How does Metro and Sound Transit know how to divide revenue? How does ORCA correctly charge riders? A technical solution might be to install ORCA card readers on the back door of buses and require riders to tap as they exit, or pay the maximum tunnel fare of \$3.00. A less technical solution that could also address the fare unification issue mentioned above is to simply charge a uniform fare for all DSTT transit service of \$2.75. This is the maximum fare value of a trip on Link, \$.25 cents more than Sound Transit's 550 current fare, between Metro's two peak period fare rates of \$2.50 and \$3.00, and \$0.50 cents above Metro's base off-peak fare. If a riders only travels within the DSTT they would be charged a DSTT only fare, possibly Link's current \$2.00 dollar minimum or perhaps even less. Fare distribution between Metro and ST could then be handled through use of ridership data.

297. While I understand the need to economize I would still love to see the Ride Free Area in downtown. It very much helps the poor who need to access services downtown. However I would not want to see other routes cut by keeping the Ride Free Area.

298. Eliminating the free ride area will affect folks who are already strained for resources, many don't have access to bus passes! The most vulnerable community members can access services WITH the free ride access. If they can't access what they need, it will affect the community in full. Free ride enhances downtown mobility, reduces the use of cars and allows folks to enjoy more downtown shopping and businesses. Subsidized bus tickets is important as well, only part of the long term solution. Harborview should be included on the free ride route as well.
299. I am deeply disappointed that many of the changes that had been planned for September have been rolled back to the status quo. I want a more efficient bus system that has more frequent and more direct service on fewer unproductive routes. Too many routes travel in similar directions, and the system should be simplified. It's upsetting that Metro is more interested in appeasing incumbent riders than attracting dramatically more riders with efficiency improvements.
300. Please keep the free ride area if possible! I work at a non-profit and ride the bus all over town, it is financially helpful.
301. Hello, I wanted to take a moment to advocate that the RFA not be eliminated. I'm taking this moment as a social worker who works with many vulnerable individuals and families -- most of whom depend upon the downtown corridor transportation system. It's my hope that, should an elimination be unavoidable, the needs of vulnerable individuals and families be crystalized in the city's priorities. For many people in this city, transport downtown is not a financial burden; for those of us that can spare the money, we should. However, many of us cannot. And furthermore, those of us who are low and no income -- are disabled, incoherent, have several small children in tow, etc -- are put at higher risk to not receive necessary services. Thank you for your time.
302. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us.
303. Good afternoon, I wanted to send a vote your way for keeping the exiting rules as they are. I completely understand getting off the back door through a regular-length bus, but those new double-length buses only have 2 doors, as opposed to the old ones that had 3. I ride the 5 every day, and believe you me, there's no way I could walk 50 feet to the back of the bus while it's bumping down Greenwood Avenue without falling or slipping at least a couple of times a month. And I'm not even disabled yet!
304. Eliminating the RFA in downtown Seattle will increase the burden on the city's most vulnerable, who already face barriers to transportation because of financial and physical limitations. Many of the city's homeless use this valuable service to travel to and from homeless shelters, housing appointments, medical appointments, job searches, etc. The elimination of the RFA places additional barrier for people who are trying to access these services and who are striving to lift themselves out of homelessness. Of particular importance is protecting this service in the main downtown corridor from the ID to Belltown, and improving access to Harborview Medical Center. Please consider alternative proposals to mitigate the impact of the elimination of the RFA on low-income populations as suggested by Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness. Thank you for your time.

305. This plan seems horribly short-sighted on the part of elected officials. While I realize that Metro is simply the messenger and implementer, I hope that all the work you are doing to communicate with the community, and to mitigate the myriad of problems this is going to cause, are heeded by government. I agree with SKCCH's positions that follow: Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access. Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers.
306. I think it's a shame the ride free area is going away, but I understand it was out of your control. I'm happy to hear that you are concerned about providing options for low or no-income people. My biggest concern is operational efficiency, since even with optimization this will significantly delay the boarding process at downtown stops.
307. Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access. Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. Increasing access to subsidized bus tickets is an important tool, but needs to be one part of a larger solution. And by the way, it would be great if we had a free option that went up to Harborview Medical Center. Seriously.
308. Taking away the RFA will negatively affect the people that I work with who already struggle to get around town. I work for a low income housing building, where most of the tenants don't necessarily have access to disability pass, or even with that pass are unable to afford the cost. The RFA has allowed them to access services all over town, including public health care and YWCA services. Without the RFA, it will place more pressure on our program to supply tickets- money which we don't have. Homeless folks also use the bus as a way to get around and also a way to stay warm- while this can cause problems, it is also a service that many are grateful for. We are taking away benefits for the people who most need them, and I struggle to imagine how individuals will be able to make ends meet in Seattle.
309. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us.
310. I absolutely do not support eliminating the ride free zone in downtown Seattle which would have a very harmful and negative impact on our less fortunate citizens including disabled people, poor people and seniors. Low to no income people need to be able to easily get to the critical services to maintain

their health and well being. I have always been especially proud of Seattle because of the free ride zone. Many of my friends and visitors to the area have commented how great it was not to have to deal with bus fares while shopping or visiting land mark sites such as the Pike Market or waterfront. The goal for as long as I can remember has been to maintain the vitality of the downtown core and provide amenities to support residential neighborhoods downtown. The best way to do this is to promote tourism, businesses and residents. The ride free zone supports these goals and has been significant in re-vitalizing downtown. Please reconsider your plan and don't throw the baby out with the bath water. Yes, budgets are tight right now however the benefit of the ride free zone far outweighs the income from charging fares.

311. Taking away the Free Ride Zone will disproportionately impact members of our community who are already at a disadvantage monetarily, and will negatively impact their ability to become more able to contribute to our community in a positive way. Taking away this option will hinder these individuals' ability to find employment in the downtown area, to get to/from job training/job search, and to have access to much needed mental health and medical appointments. This ultimately makes our community much less viable as a whole, and less safe. We WANT people in our community with limited resources to HAVE ACCESS to the few services they do have available that they need in order to stay well. Taking away the Free Ride Zone will NOT impact those in our community with the most money, but also those organizations who are working constantly to provide for the ever growing needs of the most disadvantaged in our communities. Prices for the cost of Metro service is already expensive as it stands. Much more so than in other cities. This will place an unrealistic burden on the non-profits who serve these individuals--and for what? How about we ask the people in our community WITH the money FOR the money, rather than taking away what is vital from those who already have very little.
312. The RFA is a vital and necessary resource for many King County residents. I believe even the KC Council understands this is a "cost-cutting" measure that won't save any money for the county.
313. Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access. Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. Increasing access to subsidized bus tickets is an important tool, but needs to be one part of a larger solution. It would be great if we had a free option that went up to Harborview Medical Center. Thank you!
314. I support the value of the ride free area. The buses are going ANYWAY and I seriously don't see that it costs millions to provide the service. However, it benefits the entire community when people can access services, healthcare and basic shelter. And - it increases downtown mobility. A couple times a month I'll go uptown to meet a friend for lunch (read: spend my money at a local business for lunch). I

would not typically walk there, nor will I pay \$5 there and back to take the bus to go to lunch. Keep the ride free zone!

315. Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access. Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. Increasing access to subsidized bus tickets is an important tool, but needs to be one part of a larger solution. And by the way, it would be great if we had a free option that went up to Harborview Medical Center. Seriously. Sincerely, Rachel Acosta, King County Resident and Metro Bus rider"
316. Please keep the Free Ride zone. It is essential for our more vulnerable citizens who use it to access medical care, housing, and case management. Many of them cannot afford bus passes, and will not be able to access these services on foot, due to physical or mental health issues. Sincerely, Elana Kupor, LMHC
317. Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources and it will actually cost more in the long run when folks cannot access the services they need including basic food, medical and shelter needs. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access and any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. This will also adversely affect business downtown because the increased parking fees and/or paying to go 10 blocks is not a good choice for folks with no or not a lot of income and in addition, there are some with limited mobility which would preclude walking that 10 blocks or even 2. Thanks for your time and consideration of these comments. Cheryl
318. Eliminating the Ride Free Area will disproportionately affect people who are already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. When the most vulnerable members of our community can easily access services, it benefits the entire community. When people cannot access the services they need - medical services, mental health services, basic food and shelter needs - the consequences fall on all of us. The Ride Free Area enhances downtown mobility, reducing dependence on automobiles and enhancing accessibility to downtown business for everyone. We must work together to create a free and frequent option in the downtown core that everyone can access. Any solutions we create should not place additional burden on already overstretched human service providers. Increasing access to subsidized bus tickets is an important tool, but needs to be one part of a larger solution. If anything, we should be expanding the RFA. Seriously, climate change is real! Sincerely, Adam Doody Concerned Citizen, Tax-Payer
319. Don't do it! The elimination of the Ride Free Area disproportionately affects poor people, and will cause much pain and hardship in the poor peoples' community. Why add to their hardship? Here's another thing: eliminating the Ride Free Zone also will affect ordinary downtown workers (like me),

and shoppers and tourists who might very well hop on a bus from Belltown to Pioneer Square for lunch, but won't if they have to pay/use their pass/GET a pass. It's not worth it. Don't do it!

320. Are you CRAZY.....what is the actual point. This is best way to get people out of their car even when they drive into downtown.....they at least get an idea of what bussing it is like. Absolutely ridiculous idea.
321. This is long overdue. **It will eliminate the "ride and dash" problem that I see occurring on a daily basis,** and will reduce the number of folks who use the buses as mobile homeless shelters.
322. The Ride Free Area is widely used by our most vulnerable community members to access needed services. Its elimination will disproportionately effect a population already strained for resources, many of whom do not have access to bus passes. Access to services for vulnerable community members is a boon to the entire community. When people don't get the services they need (including emergency medical, mental health and legal, among others), the consequences fall on all of us. **Strategies for mitigation of elimination should include continued free service in some form, accessible to all. This service should be frequent enough to be useful (15-20 minute headways at most!) and extend to where needed services are located, including Harborview campus. Solutions should not place even greater burden on already stretched direct service providers. Simpler and more ready access to reduced fare passes should be provided for vulnerable community members. Increasing access to bus tickets is helpful, but needs to be one part of a larger solution.** THE LEAST FORTUNATE MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY HAVE TIME AND AGAIN SHOULDERED THE BURDEN OF BUDGETARY CHALLENGES FOR WHICH THEY BEAR NO RESPONSIBILITY. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE LEAST ABLE TO ADVOCATE FOR THEMSELVES AND MOST IN NEED OF HELP. PLEASE WORK TO EASE THE BURDEN ON THIS POPULATION IN A WAY THAT IS HUMANE AND EQUITABLE.
323. I have always been a champion of public transportation but I don't have the opportunity to ride Seattle's buses/light rail often because I am an avid cyclist. The only interaction that I'd had before last August was a couple unfortunate altercations with rude and boisterous bus drivers -- but that is a completely different matter and I wish now that I'd taken the time and filed a complaint about one such confrontation with a disorderly bus driver. I have been unable to ride my bike for many months due to an injury and instead of driving my car and adding one more vehicle to the fray I have opted to connect with the city and to do as I preach by taking the bus to work from my home in N Seattle to my workplace on Mercer Island. I truly enjoy the concept of taking public transportation and I love being a part of the mass movement of people in an inverse proportion to how much I despise driving my car in traffic. You'd think this would be a perfect match, but **the time it takes for me to get to work via bus, I am finally beginning to realize, might not be worth it. I can easily ride my bike to work (14-miles) in about 50-minutes and in a car it takes between 25-45 depending upon traffic, but on the bus it almost always takes an hour or more. More than once I have spent 30+ minutes just waiting for my bus transfer! Not only that, the buses are sometimes so crowded that I am unable to sit and read or multitask, one of the benefits of riding the bus.** This week I just learned that you will be doing away with the free ride area downtown and I'm pretty bummed about that for all that reasons that you've been hearing from others. I am realistic about the costs of doing business in an era that is increasingly hard to get public funding, but we have to consider other less tangible reasons for having these kinds of programs. I hope you will reconsider. I do want to thank Sound Transit for being so responsive about a bike related issue that I had while riding aboard buses (my bike was not fitting on the racks

and although I didn't hear about the specific fix, my bike now seems to work on all of their racks).  
Thanks for your time, Douglas

324. This move, in my opinion will disenfranchise low income and cash strapped residents of Seattle and greater King County who come downtown to look for work or shop that depend on the ease of ride free. I think you do more harm than good by asking each passenger to pay as they board downtown, this will slow up the boarding process and clog traffic even more which is the last thing paying customers who have worked all day want. If you do this, in spite of what the public thinks at least have a plan in place to update the transfer pass system, such as extend the transfer period to accommodate multi zone riders as they have longer commutes and typically make more connections. With the current limits on the transfer passes folks will not have time shop if they are worried about the transfer pass running or being charged a full fair every time they board a Metro bus. Just seems like a greedy move by the county to bleed people dry in an already downed economy. Also keep in mind, folks like me will no longer come downtown to shop on the weekends if I'm forced to be nickel and dimed by Metro for wanting to ride a few blocks and the city of Seattle for parking. I thought we were a green sustainable city where taking Metro was encouraged. Eliminate ride free and keep raising the price of Metro and people will quit riding altogether. This is from a 30+ year Seattle and SE King County Metro rider.
325. I am incredibly happy that the City of Seattle is removing the ride free zone for Metro buses. As a person who uses the bus to commute to and from work (live in Fremont, work at 4th and Union) I believe this is the right decision, especially if the alternative is removing bus routes. The majority of the people that bus to work have orca cards with monthly bus passes attached (though this could use a slight decrease in price as \$90 is a steep price) I also think that removing the ride free area will increase the quality of the buses. While lower income folks may have a harder time finding ways to ride the bus, it will help keep the homeless population from boarding and harassing paying customers for money. I look forward to a safer and more comfortable commute.
326. Very glad--it's about time! I regularly ride the bus and am willing to pay as I enter for every ride. I'm betting the pay-as-you-enter policy will also eliminate much of the crime by keeping the trouble-making freeloaders off the bus. This will also have good results at the transit centers since the freeloaders aren't just causing trouble there after free-riding from downtown. Good job, Metro!
327. I am extremely disappointed that the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle is being eliminated and think it will have a very detrimental impact on downtown businesses. I work downtown (4th and Union) and the people in my office and I frequently use the free ride area (especially the bus/light rail tunnel) during our lunch hours. It enables us to travel further distances (ex: Int'l District) for our lunches and for lunch events. The elimination of the free ride area will discourage us from doing this, as many will either not want to pay or do not have Orca Cards, etc... While I mostly drive to work (from Tacoma), I do occasionally take the Sounder train. The one inconvenience with the train is it lets us off south of downtown at King Street Station. This inconvenience has been addressed by the free ride area, since it is relatively easy to transfer over to the tunnel or catch a bus at 4th and Jackson. If I will need to pay additionally to take this short bus ride, I most likely will no longer take the Sounder train at all. The free ride area greatly expands the "reach" of people who work downtown, extending the area in which we can shop, eat, etc.. and without it, I believe many businesses will suffer.

328. What ever happened to wanting to keep vehicles out of downtown???? Don't you think this would bring in more vehicles?
329. I'm really concerned about the elimination of the RFA and how will it affect the residents of Seattle, especially low-income, homeless, and/or disabled individuals. Thousands of people rely on this service to go to their doctor, pharmacy, case manager, job, job training, grocery store, and a number of other services. Without this service, these people will suffer a significant financial burden and may even lose access to the services that they depend on. It's not fair, and it's definitely not fair to service providers either. The burden of this decision will fall on all ready over-burdened service providers. How is this going to be good for anyone?
330. I work in Seattle's CBD (Central Business District). During the lunch hour, I often take the free bus service to International District/Chinatown for a taste of the ethnic fares, which are also very price competitive and tasty. If you were to require fares for this trip to ID/Chinatown, it may reduce the frequency of my and my colleagues' visit to that area for lunch. We are aware of the fact that the ID/Chinatown's merchants are already hurting in this economic recession and the recent increase in parking meter fees as well as the extension of the required parking fees until 8 PM have seriously aggravated an already bad situation for these restaurants during the dinner hours. If this bus fares were added during the lunch hour, that area will really suffer greatly. In all situations, if the merchants were to suffer, the immediate impact will be a drop in the city's collection of sales tax and if situation gets real bad, the combination may put some long time merchants totally out of business if the economy doesn't recover sooner. I am sure that this is not the intent of our Mayor or the City Council, but that is the projected scenario if this line of thinking were to prevail. With all due respect, in the interest of keeping the Greater Downtown Core a vital humming neighborhood, the city and Metro should think a bit out of the box on this potential change. How about creating a free zone from 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM, during the peak of the lunch hour? This would go a long way to assuage the fears of the merchants and at the same time promote the economic integration of the "haves" with the less than fortunate emerging class south of the CBD? Sincerely,
331. Just another way to get those of us that already pay too much to continually pay more...
332. Please let me continue to leave through the front door! I want to be able to say thank you to my driver. It's important to let the driver interact with the customers- Metro doesn't seem to know this, with the automated announcements and everything, but the driver is a valuable resource of information and service, and should be thanked for the great job he does. It's a Seattle tradition!
333. Only one real comment I want to leave here- to suggest leaving the exiting rules as they are. If the entire fleet was tiny buses, exiting through the rear door would make sense, but the option just isn't viable here. Asking women in heels, children, even able-bodied folk to negotiate their way to the back door to exit is going to cause more problems than it solves. If the disabled are allowed to exit the front, there's no reason to disallow it from other people. Thank you for understanding.
334. Coming from San Francisco, MUNI is very adamant about having its riders enter-front, exit-back. It caught on throughout the region. I believe Metro Transit should do the same. It keeps buses moving. However, like SFO, Metro needs to communicate its intentions with the Asian community. Many elderly Chinese do not understand English and must be alerted to the new changes directly. So having

Chinese posters on buses and throughout Chinatown and in community centers are best helpful. Also, having large Chinese posters at King St Center would connect riders with the new changes.

335. When the Ride Free Area goes away please work with your fellow transit agency to incentivize riders to use ORCA instead of cash which would hopefully reduce cash fumlbers and make boarding quicker. Also, making it easier to get an ORCA card. In my recent visit to the Bay Area I was surprised how easy it was to obtain and reload the Clipper Card especially when compared to the limited number of places you can get an ORCA. I would also encourage Metro and the other ORCA agencies to examine giving people who load a certain amount of funds to their e-purse (say a minimum of \$25) a "bonus" (say 10%) to help incentivize people to switch from cash to ORCA.
336. Please Do NOT eliminate the Ride Free Zone in Downtown Seattle. I understand and appreciate the need for additional funds to Metro services, but this is not the way to make that happen. Riders in downtown who ride for free due to lack of funds, will simply not pay to ride the bus if there is a cost....so this will not create additional funds for Metro. What I believe will happen is that traffic and congestion will greatly increase in the downtown corridor as buses wait for people to pay to enter the bus. I would rather see increased fairs over increased time to get home. Thank you for your consideration. Christi Beckley christibeckley@hotmail.com 206-817-5791
337. Very happy that the Ride Free area is going away. Almost every day I see some loser get off the bus and just tell the driver - I don't have any money. Well now these idiots won't be allowed on the bus at all - perfect! Every time I see one of these "homeless" punks begging for money in front of Dick's I just tell them, "I already paid your bus fair jerk" - scofflaws will never get my spare change. Everyone paying the second they get on the bus will help fill Metro's coffers, and make it so that those of us who do follow the law, and do buy a pass, that we don't have to pay for all of these fake homeless scofflaws. Thanks you Metro for FINALLY getting rid of the ride free zone - a money-wasting boondoggle if there ever was one. Smart move!
338. Would like to have some ad's on radio, television, in/outside of buses letting the public know of the changes and to educate them on having their fare ready BEFORE boarding (in their hand not their pocket/purse etc.)
339. While I already have an ORCA card, we should be doing everything we can to get everyone else one before the free ride zone goes. Charging for it will not do that. Some people will simply not pay for a card and then spend more to load it.
340. Well just another reason for my family & I not to shop downtown. Just isn't worth it anymore. Just shopping in DT Seattle would cost you \$5 or more an hour. Now \$2.25 or \$2.50 to travel from one store area to another in the downtown area? NO! A 2 hour transfer is not enough time to enjoy yourself especially when the bus is late as it often is. And then the rude drivers. Not all drivers but the small % that are makes the whole system bad and UN-enjoyable. May I suggest a smaller ride free area? Waterfront to 6th Ave? Jackson to Stewart? Although I don't expect anything from King County or Metro, I do appreciate you letting me vent my anger. Yes anger! Thank you, Garry.
341. I am SO not happy about this- I work downtown (paying fare with ORCA) in Pioneer Square area. Since I have some foot problems I use the RFA zone to get to other parts of downtown for shopping or meetings. The expense of driving and parking downtown is unaffordable. I moved here in 1978

because Seattle was special and different. Thanks a lot for taking away another little piece of the 'Great Northwest'. Soon it will be indistinguishable from everywhere else.

342. I am very surprised that Metro would end the free-ride area 1) it will drive down tourism 2) it will drive down bus ridership as a whole 3) it is the most punitive towards the homeless and indigent 4) Why wouldn't Metro be able to fund this? I am paying \$2.50 per ride now. Seems like there should be plenty of funding to cover a free ride area Mostly, I am shocked and saddened at Metro's disregard for the poor and homeless, our most vulnerable population.
343. This is a horrible idea. I commute to work in downtown Seattle on mass transit because I know I can get around downtown quickly and efficiently without a car. I jump on a bus in the front or the rear, and jump off two stops later. If you take away the Ride Free Area, you will: 1. Significantly slow the bus traffic (you can't board at the back and you have to wait for each entrant to pay) 2. Harass the commuters who already pay for transit to downtown by making it difficult for them to get around once they are at work 3. Drive people off of transit at the very time we should be encouraging more mass transit 4. Make the system much less welcoming for tourists 5. Lose the sense of civic shared purpose: All taxpayers contribute to promote a car free, carefree downtown. In short, please do not give in to short-sighted financial panic. The Ride Free Area is a civilizing influence on our community and if you end it, you are contributing to the shredding of our shared social contract.
344. I think the elimination of the RFA will have no major impact on operations. This reminds me of when the tunnel was closed from 2005-2007, also without any major delays. I do not think changing rules systemwide (re: exiting via rear door) is necessary or wise, as it poses an additional safety risk because of how long the coaches are. Perhaps this rule can be a suggested guideline downtown, if that. Outside of the CBD, it will simply slow down service and increase falling incidents.
345. Although I no longer work or live in the Seattle area, I originally started riding Metro when I went to college at the UW and took my first full-time job downtown Seattle. During that time I took advantage of the Ride Free Area as often as I could to run errands during my work hours; this service was important for me to get around affordably. I have observed the Ride Free Area to be a well-used service by many people; I hope that a comparable-cost and easy-to-use alternatives will be made immediately available to any person who requests assistance.
346. As a life-long Seattleite and a bus rider, I think the elimination of the free ride zone is one more example how the City of Seattle lacks long-term strategic planning around transportation. The free ride zone provides incentive for those downtown, either during the week day or on weekends, to frequent a wider array of places (from city center, to 1st Ave, to Pioneer Square) outside of their immediate parking area. It is a resource for tourists to easily expand their horizons, supporting business across the city, not just within walking distance of the major hotels. It helps cut down on grid lock, allowing quick trips up or down town, rather than driving and reparking, especially now that many meters go until 8pm (another great move, by the way). And I have no doubt that the elimination of the free ride zone will continue to push commerce out of downtown, to suburban shopping malls where the parking is free, abundant, and relatively safe. Based on the Seattle PI article, 33% of the rides that originate in the free ride zone are truly "free". I wonder how that \$7 million in perceived "lost revenue" will equate, when twice that is lost for downtown businesses. I am disappointed in the City and in Metro for not seeing the long-term value of the free ride zone. But I'm not surprised.

347. If all fare is paid at entrance, why not have ORCA scanners installed at the back doors? Those with ORCAs would then be able to enter at either door, and those who pay with cash board at the front door.
348. Phasing out downtown Seattle's free ride area is short-sighted. The administrative costs of developing and managing options for low or no-income folks will likely outweigh any increases in revenue, as less downtowners will use the bus for getting around if there is no free ride zone.
349. I think this is a horrible decision and hope you will reconsider it. Many people rely on this service for economic reasons, not to mention the ease that it gives visitors and those working in downtown. Charging for this service will bring congestion and wait times, adding to the frustration of the public.
350. This decision needs to be rescinded, it's a terrible idea to eliminate the ride-free zone. It is what makes it attractive for me to attend events in downtown after riding a ferry from Kitsap County instead of driving over.
351. This is an excellent idea. It removes the confusion as to when to pay: when you get on or is it when you get off? Some bus drivers get upset when the passengers forget to tap the orca card or pay the fare. Have they pause to consider that it may be a honest mistake instead of jumping to conclusion. Having said that I must say that I had observed some who deliberately cheated. There was one time that I had observed a passenger who had a stack of old transfer tickets neatly banded together for use in the future. I am amazed how organized this person is. She knew exactly what color was in use for that particular day, and she had various time span too. She is not the only person that I had observed doing that. This is how we end up in this mess. Is there anyway Metro can prevent that from happening?
352. I am a Metro transit operator. I have made comments to the appropriate management team members, but this is important enough to have an official policy clarification. Many of us, with this upcoming service change, are concerned about an increase in service delays due to arguments about fare, assaults on drivers and delays caused by fare collection. I have long been an advocate of Metro being the first large Metropolitan transit system to have an all free service. I understand why we can't or won't take this step. The fact is 80% of all operator assaults are as a result of a fare dispute. The fact is a bus drivers job is in the top five of the most stressful occupations, so worrying about staying on or making up lost time shortens lives. The fact is there is an expected period of time after this change that service will be slowed, considerably. I hope that there will be increased security and supervisory presence in the field, on the buses, at the bus loading zones and in the DSTT for the first six months of the elimination of the Free Ride Area. Don't misunderstand me; I am strongly in favor of this change even though I would rather see no fares at all. The problem is going to be the complete lack of support the drivers get in fare enforcement. "State the fare once, if you feel safe" does not work. We either have an enforcement policy, or we don't. Metro/King County cannot continue to sit on the fence on this issue. These last few years we have been told there is not man power or money to do what we have repeatedly asked for. There must be a show of force and enforcement, with citations issued and arrests being made on a visible and daily basis to preserve peace of mind and safety for our 3500 + men and women in the driver's seat. I intend to attend several King County and Seattle Council meetings with as many transit operators as I can influence to bring my concerns to light, before September. I intend on notifying other union's members and journalists to enlist their help and support to make our transit system safe for all through public education and legislative action. As a

point of information, I am not a disgruntled employee or trouble maker. I am a proud member of our drivers classification with a 15 year safe driving record, very few complaints on record, fewer accidents and many commendations. I was an active and respected member of Metro's Public Safety Partnership Program, have been a "Driver of the Month" at Atlantic Base, a part of the Operator Support Team in training sessions and support groups at several transit bases, and am currently seeking a position on The Central Base Safety Committee. I have been known as the "Teddy bear Guy" for 13 of 17 years with Metro, giving out over 500 full size teddy bears to anyone needing a smile or a friend. Public relations is a large part of a positive image on the streets and in the seats of our transit system. I believe in our system and have recruited many new drivers over the years and mentor on the job as often as the opportunity presents itself. I have spent countless hours helping drivers find the answers they need to be safe and successful in their jobs and careers with King County. I would appreciate becoming part of the solution rather than part of the problem in implementing this incredibly complex service change. I am hoping that we will also be able to eliminate, eventually, printed schedules when we can provide better headway in service times. I am certain that will help with our budgetary woes and conflicts at the door for our drivers. Please call me on my cell phone if there is anything I can do to help. John Scott "Scotty" McDonell Metro ID # 9165, Central Base Operations 206-290-1594 scottymcdonell@yahoo.com

353. This is a very retrograde policy decision. I understand that it arises because the City of Seattle would not increase their support of the service, which will mean that a lot of the vitality of the downtown will be lost. I am particularly concerned about the mandate that requires passengers to exit via the rear door. I am not visibly handicapped, but getting down from a bus without the driver's ability to see me concerns me.
354. I occasionally use the Ride Free Zone to get from south downtown to north downtown for business. If eliminated, I will not pay a fare but will walk instead -- especially since the proposed load/unload process will slow the transit time to a speed slower than walking. If passengers leave the bus by the back door, how will you avoid people jumping on thru that door? Without rear door exit, the board/de-board process will take an extremely long period of time in peak hours (add some wheelchair board/de-boards and it's even worse). I expect that the buses will clog Third Avenue in peak hours, and further expect the next step to be moving some buses to 2nd or 4th Avenues to spread out the clogging. This will further burden cars that travel these north-south streets -- but maybe that is the ultimate goal here? More buses and fewer cars in the downtown corridor?? BTW -- this new plan will be terrible for bicyclists in downtown, too. This is a very short-sighted plan (no doubt proposed by people who don't commute into downtown regularly on the bus) that won't raise enough extra money to offset the problems created!!
355. Kudos to Metro for making this long overdue change! I have witnessed numerous scofflaws evade paying the fare when exiting the bus. I think Metro will see its operating revenue increase once this rule is enacted.
356. This is a sad, sad day for Seattle and anyone who cares about public transportation (which should be all of this.) The ride-free area has been a great part about the city for decades; why would we destroy something that works well? I well remember my first day in Seattle when my Mom and I were able to get around downtown for free; as newcomers, we appreciated the friendly, hassle-free greeting from

my new city. I truly hope that you reconsider this poor decision and act to keep something very positive in place.

357. I am in favor of removal of the Ride Free Area, as it will simplify fare collection and therefore make transit ridership easier for the uninitiated. However, during the afternoon peak in downtown Seattle "Pay as you Enter" could cause severe transit/traffic delays due to slow boarding. I support one of the following solutions to mitigate delay: - Option 1: Pre-paid tickets replace cash payment at high-volume bus stops, such as the Transit Tunnel and 3rd Ave. Bus boarders would show the ticket to the bus driver when entering (which would be code and stamped to easily display an expiration time). In the Transit Tunnel, the current ORCA vending machines could be modified to print bus tickets in 4 varieties: Metro base, Metro peak, Metro 2-zone peak, ST 2-zone. On downtown streets, ticket vending machines could be installed by modifying parking meters, such as SWIFT uses in Snohomish County. These tickets would also be used for Rapid Ride C and D. - Option 2: Proof-of-payment inspections. Similar to above, but possession of a ticket or tapped-ORCA would be determined by fare inspectors. Riders could board at any door. This solution is easier than it sounds, as Metro already has an expanding fare-inspector group for the Rapid Ride enforcement. In addition, contracts could be re-negotiated so that ST staff in the Transit Tunnel could also enforce Metro bus fares. This option will most reduce the delay associated with removal of the Ride Free Area.
358. I worked for a tourist related business at the 9th and Pine area for 15 years. The free zone allowed me unlimited access to a huge area to have lunch and run errands. I would encourage city visitors to use this service as well, they were all amazed that Seattle offered this. The only concern by my fellow riders was the rainy day (a lot of course) when the street people would use the buses for shelter and ride all day. I was fortunate to have a bus pass to take me out of town to home, but grabbing a tunnel bus from Convention place to the International for lunch at Uwajamya was a treat. I was forced out of my city to Everett do to losing my home to the economic housing fiasco, so losing home, auto I had to leave my city. Having a free bus zone was a wonderful treat for locals and visitors alike. Made us a "cool" city. Price increase elsewhere would be acceptable. Most businesses help employees with that
359. I believe eliminating the free-ride zone will be bad for business, bad for riders, bad for workers, bad for visitors, bad for the city. It is not in alignment with our goals of encouraging use of public transportation, walking, biking to and around downtown. I heard Mr. Obeso speak at a meeting, and I question the accuracy of his numbers. The polling of riders was so small and limited in time -- I would suspect the numbers are statistically invalid. Even with the increase in fares paid, I wonder if you will still be at a net loss considering the loss of contribution from the City if Seattle and the extra expenses you will incur with the changes. Our streets will be more congested and less safe. Has anyone considered a more moderate approach? Perhaps there could be a reduced-fare zone, such as 25 or 50 cents to ride through the downtown core. Perhaps you could add, say, 5 or 10 free downtown rides to ORCA cards each month. I live in the downtown area and commute all over the Puget Sound area for work. I don't have a regular trip, so I pay for my bus fares on a per-trip basis through the use of ORCA. With all of the various parameters in zones, peak, non-peak, Sound Transit, etc., there is no option for purchase of a monthly pass in my situation. I often carry heavy equipment from one end of the city to the other, all within the ride-free area, and I really appreciate being able to hop on the bus for that short ride, especially when it's raining. I participated in the One Less Car Challenge sponsored by the city and gave up my vehicle. I am now rethinking that decision. I am willing to give up convenience if I can save money. Your elimination of the ride-free area will impact significantly on that decision. I did a

quick check on a county salary matrix from 2009. There are more than 50 transit operators earning over \$100,000. That's outrageous! I understand that you are often constrained in your decisions because of the collective bargaining agreement. However, it seems there must be -- absolutely MUST BE -- more you can do to better manage the transit budget before you start increasing fares. Please reconsider this decision. Offer options. Consider the impact your action will have on Seattle businesses, workers, visitors. Thank you, Allison O'Brien

360. I'm glad this is happening! I suspect (based upon experience) that many non-regular riders avoid taking the bus into downtown because they are intimidated by the rules of when to pay and when not to pay. Not to mention how much to pay. My opinion has long been that if everyone pays when they enter, this aspect of confusion would go away. Next, how much to pay. How to determine if a rider is crossing a zone, etc. I'm curious if the Orca system is able to track that and charge accordingly. Personally, if Rapid Ride frequent buses (every 10 minutes) is extended to at least 8pm leaving downtown traveling outbound, I will definitely switch back to commuting by bus. I began driving after over a year of trying to be a bus commuter, but the bus connections after 7pm downtown were sketchy at best. Usually at least a 45 minute wait for a bus, and the last straw was a two hour wait for a #54. Metro seems really geared toward prime time commuters, and anyone else who commutes other hours is unable to depend on buses being anywhere near on time. I appreciate Metro and just wish it was more user-friendly for the hours that I work.
361. I would like to voice a comment for those of us in favor of seeing the Ride Free Area eliminated. I ride out of the Ride Free Area every day, and each of those days I see the Area being abused. Sometimes, people jump on a bus in the Ride Free just to cause a stir because they have nothing else better to do. Other times, people ride the bus for one or two stops out of laziness. In fact, I see this quite a bit with heavier set individuals who would rather waste my time asking for the lift to be operated than to walk two blocks to the next stop. Criticisms of the elimination of the Ride Free include concern over the added time it will take busses to get out of downtown due to everyone having to pay as they enter. If Metro really gets behind ORCA as the preferred method of payment, I don't foresee any increased delay in getting out of downtown as many of the things that currently slow busses won't be allowed to interrupt service (detailed above). Even if bus service out of downtown is slightly slower due to the increased payment times at stops, I welcome that cost to do away with the abuse of the Ride Free Area. I won't miss the Ride Free Area and I am glad to see it go. Thank you very much for making this smart move. -Brent
362. Yet another dumb idea by non-thinking bureaucrats. By eliminating the downtown free ride zone, exactly how much money is going to be saved. Will there be fewer buses? Likely not. Will there be fewer stops? Likely not. Will there be fewer hours paid to drivers? Possibly, but immaterial. Will there be less fuel cost? No, as each stop will likely be longer with small additional amounts of fuel being burned. Will there be changes to the number of trips people take in the area- e.g. at lunch time, bus to Westlake for lunch, go the other way and bus to ID for lunch; ability to run errands at lunch etc. When I was able to ride Metro, I had a monthly pass so it made no difference, but now I have to drive. If I had to do an errand at lunch, rather than taking the bus, I would now likely drive. Please use some common sense and re-think this proposal.
363. I approve of eliminating free zone; approve of pay-as-you-enter; disapprove of exit through the back door policy. I'm able bodied, but don't make me battle my way to the back door of the 358. This

should be common sense- passengers should be allowed to use whatever door is closest. Safety should be a priority over time.

364. I had originally heard comments from Metro a few years ago mentioning that this was likely as ORCA gets implemented, but got the impression it also involved rear door ORCA readers. I really hope you do not approve this measure without installing them. Regardless of if you officially endorse their use for boarding, they can improve boarding flow when the driver wishes to open the rear door to fit more people on. Look towards how SF Muni boards. Officially one door front door boarding, however, they have rear door Clipper readers, and in congested areas people routinely board rear door and use the rear clipper reader to pay.
365. The entire County is, and will remain a "ride free area" unless and until there is some form of fare enforcement for evaders and under-payers. Currently there is none, and no penalty whatsoever for those who refuse to pay, or who pay less than the correct fare.
366. This is a bad idea. How many King County decision makers currently use the bus to get to work? I don't believe you and your researchers understand the logic of outbound rush hour transit. Currently buses have three or five "lanes" for passengers to board. (back doors are often double wide, and some buses have two wide back doors). Reducing boarding to just ONE "lane" will either TRIPLE or QUINTUPLE the time required to board. Yes, that means THREE to FIVE times longer to load passengers during evening rush hour. This fact alone will have a HUGE negative affect on transit service, traffic and congestion, in the downtown core, where every little bit counts to make things more efficient. Eliminating the RFA does not encourage people to ride the bus. This is about inconveniencing dedicated bus commuters. This is about eliminating one of the best "features" of downtown life. This only further disables the system, discouraging use in the end. And, please, swapping a \$20 car tax for the Ride Free Zone is playing politics. Enough. No more playing. Do the right things for the right reasons, not in order to get your way next time. No more attaching unrelated issues to motions. Stick to the issue at hand. KCC works very hard on issues and I hope that eliminating the RFA decision will be reversed. These issues have been examined over and over, so I'll also ask you to please review the research data and arguments which resulted in CREATING the RFA in the first place, some 30 years ago.
367. I strongly disagree with the abolishment of the free ride zone. Now as more and more extremely low income people depend upon the service, why in the world would you end it? Yes, some people may abuse the privilege by not paying when getting off the bus. However how many of the wealthy abuse privileges which are never abolished? Consider the entire financial meltdown and who exactly caused this mass calamity. Have the wealthy been punished as a group? No. However, now, as Washington State throws many of the neediest out in the cold by cutting basic services and support- Metro decides to put the boot in by cutting one real beneficial service that is left. This has helped many more than it has hurt. Many low income people live in or near downtown. It is yet another burden to the poor, and grossly shamefully unfair. With the horrible budget cuts and refusal to tax the super wealthy, the poor are abused by public policy yet again. Shame. This a a grossly unfair decision and should be reversed.
368. I'm a college student who rides not only King Co. Metro but also Sound Transit. About the upcoming change in Ride Free Area, I think that this change would make "how-to-ride" even simpler and be easier for travelers/visitors because "pay-as-you-board" is very straightforward and is not confusing. However, this change might possibly cause delayed bus schedule and traffic during peak-hours,

especially inside downtown area. Riders who have ORCA card are totally okay when they tap the card on a ORCA reader as they board the bus. Some people who have not even prepared the right amount of bus fare until they actually get on the bus. Furthermore, I often see person getting on the bus and putting his/her hand into pocket to see if they have money next to the bus driver while another riders are still waiting, sighing and gazing that person, in front of the bus door. Here is where the problem comes in. Probably, that kind of person should know what he/she is supposed to do prior to using Metro Bus system. They just don't realize it by an oversight. So, When King Co. Metro informs and lets citizens know about this update, it also needs to promote the public campaign together with a catchphrase like "Get Ready for Bus-Fare" to remind that kind of people I mentioned above. It'll be good if there are relevant ads in big sized letters on bus stop signs. Anyways, I support King Co. Metro's decision on the recent update and hope it will save budget as well as receive good response/result from people. Regards,

369. This has been done before as I recall, quite a long time ago, and it didn't work very well, so the ride free area was re-implemented. Bua service servicing downtown will be expensive - say from Pioneer Square to Westlake - \$2.25 to \$2.50, or more, if fares are pushed higher. Service to/from Capitol Hill is being trimmed quite a bit. There's less incentive to ride the bus at all downtown, unless you have mobility issues or you are passing through downtown to outlying areas. This could just add more congestion with auto traffic and slower boarding process. Also could be less incentive for shoppers to go to downtown stores. Sounds like the making of a mess.
370. The end of the Ride Free zone will definitely cut down on my lunchtime shopping in Seattle. I'm not sure how many other people will be affected the same way, so this may or may not impact the downtown business "bottom line". Queueing up to pay will take too much time out of an already short lunch. I'll do my shopping on the weekends in Federal Way.
371. The elimination of the Ride Free Area cannot come soon enough. It is scarcely possible to put into words the frustration that regular commuters feel at the regular disruption to their morning/evening commutes brought about by delays caused by what might be termed "professional free ride riders" who drag bags, boxes, you name it, onto buses without the slightest exhibition of haste, only to travel one or two stops and then slowly, oh so slowly, disembark with their belongings. Two or three of these individuals can easily add five minutes or more to a journey down Third Avenue and it quite clear that they are simply abusing the system as currently configured. The second change being proposed, namely requiring all riders to pay upon entry and only allowing front-door entry, is also another change that should be implemented yesterday. The number of people who will deliberately enter a bus knowing they have no fare to pay for their ride is incredible. And half of these individuals will give the poor drivers an earful of shameful abuse and profanity if they have the temerity to ask for the payment of the fare required by the law. Making it more difficult to enter the bus in the first place without proof of fare cannot but be a positive development. Why KC Metro and the other law-abiding, fare-paying, passengers should subsidize these low-lifes is quite beyond me.
372. I support ending the ride free area. This will lessen confusion and make riding more uniform.
373. Hello, my comment is in reference to the mandatory exit from the rear door of the bus for the majority of riders. My morning bus stops on the hill at 5th & James. I'm not able to easily exit the rear of the bus on the hill because the step down is very long and I'm a short 60 yr old female. I have

almost fallen out of the bus going out the rear door so I've been using the front only over the last several years. I hope you will allow for more exiting out the front door. Thanks.

374. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. As one who is fortunate to have a bus pass provided by my employer, the issue of dropping the 'free ride area' is not much of a problem. My concern is for those who are older, disabled, less fortunate financially ... I believe that they will suffer because of this policy. I believe I read that you will be providing some free bus tickets (?) for those less fortunate, but I wonder if this will really cover all who will need it. I appreciate the reality that Metro (in fact, all bus companies) need more funding. I also believe that you're trying to find reasonable ways to increase your income. I truly believe in public transportation and believe that we should be doing more to encourage the public to board buses. I just hope that there is a lot of creativity going into your planning and a lot of thought for those who less able in our society to speak for themselves. Thanks for providing excellent bus service. I just hope that one day the Ride Free Area may come back!
375. Eliminating the ride-free zone will have a negative effect on businesses in the downtown core. Hopping on a bus to get lunch, to shop or to get to a doctor's appointment will negatively impacted. Those with accessibility or health issues such as old knees will be financially impacted since they will have to pay to ride when they can not walk to do their shopping, lunch or appointments. This move will impact low-income folks in ways that may be discriminatory and are, frankly, offensive. This seems to be an effort to keep those who have less off the busses so they don't "offend" those who have more. What is the goal here? You acknowledge that it will slow traffic downtown which is helpful to no one - adding to congestion and bus travel times - thus impacting the efficiency of the entire transportation system in the core. Additionally, I always let tourists know that the downtown core is free and that information is met with excitement. Flat-landers are quickly winded by our steep hills when walking through downtown and hopping a bus to get from Pioneer Square to SAM is a big plus for the tourism industry. Truly, ~Vicki
376. The new plan for September - where people all board (and pay) through the front door and get out through the back door - is going to be a disaster on the morning 71, 72, and 73 routes. Do you have any idea how crowded these buses are? At the International District, it already takes several minutes to board them, using TWO doors, right now! And, disembarking at the UW, the drivers usually allow people to exit through both doors because of the severe overcrowding - that takes a few minutes as well. The people who made this plan should have been required to ride Metro's busy buses a few times before deciding on these sorts of changes.
377. The pay-on-entry system will further complicate the boarding process in the downtown tunnel, especially during the afternoon commute between 3pm & 6pm. We will be waiting for fellow riders fumbling around for the required fair or ORCA card while a huge line forms down the platform. There will be massive backups in the tunnel because of the inefficiency of this type of boarding. At least with the pay-on-exit system, riders can prepare their payment before their exit from the bus. I've been riding Metro, Sound Transit and Pierce Transit buses for 30 years now and seen many changes over the years. The pay-on-entry system is by far one of the worst ideas yet. Please reconsider these plans.
378. the zone surcharge does not seem to work well with ORCA; please delete it. need fewer cash fares in downtown. how about discounting e-purse fares to induce more riders to shift to ORCA from cash? how about selling script or transfers in tunnel stations and other busy downtown stops to reduce cash fares. maybe ban cash fares in tunnel. how about day passes?

379. My main concern is regarding the backlog of busses downtown. I would suggest that you train your drivers to always pull to the very front of the bus zone to make things more efficient with the expected longer loading times. I catch the bus headed north bound at 3rd and Madison every evening. When a driver doesn't pull forward to the intersection it only leaves room for one bus behind and invariably a 3rd bus is stuck back on the other side of Madison. I am very concerned about the amount of slow-down this will cause. It is already very slow loading the busses when the free-ride zone ends at 7PM, I can only imagine how slow it will be before 7PM with the larger number of people waiting for the bus.
380. I live in a Seattle Housing Authority building in downtown Seattle. I also work in the International District. I live on an extremely low income and there are currently no options for a bus fare subsidy for me. There are many differently -abled people living and working within the ride free area who rely on this transportation to work, shop for groceries, and go to dr. and social service appointments. Also, when the bus tunnel was closed there were a lot of people up on the street and especially at 3rd and Pine. There needs to be a consideration of crowd logistics if the bus is taking payment upon boarding the front door only. thank you Jennifer Jackson
381. I would like to see a circulator bus go north on 4th ave from S Jackson, east on Pike to 8th ave, west on Pine to 2nd ave and south to Jackson. Buses can move much faster on 2nd & 4th than they can on 3rd ave. The 300 guest we can have at the H.I. Hostel on S King can take the circulator bus from the island stop at 4th & Jackson to the convention center, Greyhound bus station & other locations uptown.
382. The ride free area is a real asset in that it allows downtown workers and residents the ability move easily around the downtown core. I believe it is a mistake to totally eliminate this feature. This is particularly a problem in the tunnel. Often my friends and I would take a tunnel bus from Westlake to Pioneer Square for lunch. This won't happen if a full fare is required to take the tunnel from one stop to the next. Right now the tunnel is an extension of the street and people move in and out of it all day long. If every tunnel trip, no matter how short, requires a fare; then the tunnel will only be used for commuting to downtown and NOT used for getting around downtown. The downtown residents, workers and businesses will all suffer.
383. I love the ride-free area because it keeps people moving around downtown easily and conveniently. If there is no going back on the decision to eliminate it, please consider keeping the Pay-as-you-leave system on routes originating downtown. This would expedite loading people in the downtown area, where the most traffic congestion is and when the most delays can happen. Having people pay as they board downtown will greatly lengthen loading times and cause delays and even more unpredictable timetables to the entire route.
384. I am sad to see the Ride Free Area go. However, if it must go, then so be it. Currently, the boarding process is sporadic. On the U-District routes and during peak hours, boarding is often quick because riders use their ORCA. However, when I'm on routes that serve low income areas, like the 358 or the 7, many people are still using cash and there are disputes over transfer legitimacy. I think Metro should take the following actions to speed up the boarding process; especially in the downtown core and during peak hours: 1.) Get rid of paper transfers. If ST and CT got rid of them, then so should Metro to establish a sense of conformity across the region. Also, keeping paper transfers defeats the

purpose of having ORCA. 2.) Make constant announcements about exiting the bus via the rear door. Instead of Metro ads, such as fare information or king county announcements, Metro should have clear and bold signage in multiple languages for riders to leave through the back door.

385. I personally feel this will hurt the city of Seattle, there are many people from outside the city, that will be putt out by this change. all the local sites are accesable by the ride free zone, this will hurt tourism. I cannot bielieve that a city as big as Seattle, cannot afford the ride free zone. I myself have a orca card & use it regularly but when in the city is nice to just be able to jump on a bus go 2 or 3 blocks & jump off. no ? asked. if this happens in the tunnel, the city is going down the wrong path, it will only make things worse. so much for a mass transit system. this change will only push people back in to there cars & trucks making the city of Seattle an even more dangerous place to walk or bike around.
386. Eliminating the ride free area will pose a problem for a lot of people who use the bus in the area. Alot of low income people rely on the ride free area to go get their checks cashed and to go do various appointments, etc... If they don't have the money on the 1st and they are going to get their checked cashed, how are they suppost to have money on their pass, etc... when thats what they are going to do once they get the money... Since alot of people use the ride free area to go to worksource, doctors appointments, to get medicine refills, etc... the ride free area is a blessing to them. When I come to Downtown Seattle with my kids, it helps us out alot. It would pose a problem more than anything by getting rid of the ride free area. More people would be walking, who are able to, and less likely to take the bus if this is eliminated. This is a great service to alot of people. So please KEEP THE RIDE FREE AREA....
387. I'm not sure why the Q&A states that Metro is "switching to a pay on entry system"- Metro is already pay on entry for its entire network, except trips leaving downtown before 7pm. We don't need to change policies about boarding and exiting- look at other transit agencies that do a "exit through the back door" policy- time savings are negligible, and in the case of Metro, would be particularly unnecessary, as the majority of those transit agencies do not have articulateds (or have artics, but with 3 doors instead of 2). Current boarding and exiting policies work well on the rest of Metro's system- there's no reason that it won't work on trips leaving downtown. Thank you.
388. I hope that Transit and SPD have considered monitoring what the elimination of the Free Ride Zone will do to crime rates on 3rd Avenue, and where the chronic inebriates will spend their days when riding the bus is no longer an option. I'm not trying to criticize this change, I am kind of mixed on how I feel about this change, because it might make my bus ride safer and cleaner, but affect a lot of people who cannot afford to ride. I am genuinely interested in seeing what unexpected consequences arise. Less or more fare evasion? Will downtown bus stops continue to be open air drug markets and will fewer people loiter around Benaroya Hall, pretending to wait for a bus? I may just ride and find out for myself. I applaud Metro for getting the word out to community early and seeking input.
389. Riding the bus has become very costly and service it seems has been cut. The bus may still work well for healthy single adults, but it is very costly if you are a single parent paying for yourself and the kids. Costly on a daily basis to and from work ,school, daycare, soccer-etc. Travelling w/ the kids to a Birthday party and other weekend activities is very costly. Many bus stops have been closed -TOO FAR apart for many to walk, especially when no shelter / place to sit once you do arrive at the bus stop. I have ridden Metro all my life-- I find the cost has become outrageous, service has been cut. i see many empty buses on routes with service cuts. I believe this is because people have been forced to find

other means of transportation or forced to opt out- due to lack of transportation. I will be travelling and shopping the downtown area much much less

390. Have you considered adding a single bus that does a loop of the core downtown district for free? Similar to the 99 trolley, but going places that are actually useful? Why not have a bus that makes a loop from the ID, up 3rd Avenue stopping at all stops, not just skip stops, until the edge of Belltown and then looping back on 2nd? It would provide a helpful link to major downtown services and likely many business people would use it, too. Eliminate the 99 trolley, which always looks empty when I see it.
391. A great thing to bring back to life is your Day Pass. Cash users buy once and speed up boarding for the rest of the day. \$6 is a fair price (for weekdays, \$5 for weekends?), and like the pass before it was discontinued, it would be valid on Metro services only. ORCA card users can buy the pass by paying 2X the fare from their e-purse.....or something along those lines. For the month before and after the elimination, offer free ORCA cards, perhaps with the purchase of value (i.e. buy \$10 worth of e-Purse, or a monthly pass, get the card for free).
392. The city continues to put pressure on businesses downtown at a time I think they should be supported. First increased parking fees, the construction and future configuration of the Viaduct and now the elimination of the "ride free" zone. Like many I work downtown but far enough away from the main shopping area that I utilize the ride free zone to get there and back during lunch breaks. I will not pay the fare once the zone is eliminated to do that. If riding Metro was a pleasant and safe experience I might reconsider but for the most part I find the experience poor at best. Unfortunately I do take Metro to work since the Water Taxi does not run early enough for my schedule but I take the Water Taxi home whenever possible to avoid Metro. It is unfortunate that Metro cannot look into their internal processes to reduce costs to allow for the "ride free" zone to remain intact.
393. Overall, I like the consistency this brings to the fare system. I am concerned about increased boarding time for large numbers of people in the evening commute going out of downtown. How are two zone trips going to be handled? In other words if I get on a bus in Seattle, how will the fare be collected if I get off the bus outside the city limits? And if the answer is that a bus going outside the city always collects a two zone fare, how will I only pay a single zone fare if I get off in the city?
394. No more shopping downtown...Makes you wonder if this wasn't supported by the idiots that wasted our tax money at Northgate which is still a creepy place to shop. Also guess we have to expect total gridlock during big stadium games again. Why don't they cut out all the waste and stop spending OBVIOUSLY frivolous new gadgets?.The horrible FAKEY bus announcements all through downtown are particularly galling. They annoy all regular passengers and the tourists still ask the same questions after they are over. This is all to protect service for the suburbs with their low ridership - isn't it? They need and CAN PAY for their own bus service.
395. I think it's a great idea. It simplifies the payment system and makes riding the bus easier. It's amazing how many thousands of passengers still attempt to pay as you enter even though the free zone has been in effect for decades- this'll make it easier for those guys. I hope the idea of reinstating the free zone will be considered if the economy picks up and the incentives are in place some time in the future- for now, this will hurt the homeless, tourists, and businesses. But it's a good idea that unfortunately has to happen because of economic circumstances and I think people understand that.

My only issue is the proposed back-door to exit rule- I know other cities do this, but it's not feasible here, simply because of safety and the fact that the articulated buses only have 2 doors. You'll have more falling accidents to deal with, and it'll slow down the boarding process just as much as using both doors to exit would. I don't think pay as you enter will slow things down much- remember when the tunnel closed, and everyone thought there'd be chaos on the streets, and everything would take forever, and then- nothing happened, and everything was fine?

396. Overall, I'm very pleased that the Ride Free Area is being eliminated. It has only made the entire process of riding the bus, especially in Downtown Seattle, an unpleasant and often disgusting experience. I hope that as a part of the transition away from the Ride Free Area there will be some provision for enforcement of fare payment. There are going to be those, either by ignorance of the change or willful disregard, that will attempt to get a free ride anyway, and without a suitable authority (like city or county police) managing the situation, it could get very out of hand very quickly. Given this predictable problem, I hope that the idea of a free circulator bus in Downtown Seattle can be nipped in the bud. The new pay-as-you-board policy MUST be consistent if it is to be enforced properly, and having even one bus route remain free will only serve to exacerbate what will already be a difficult transition period. Of the remaining proposals to serve low/no income people, the preferred alternative is donating vehicles to agencies to run their own transportation programs. Though this will put more vehicles on already crowded Downtown Seattle streets, this solution is preferable as it will be a one-time cost to Metro Transit. Increasing the number of "human service" tickets will be an ongoing drain on already limited resources. Passenger fares currently cover just one-third of the costs of Metro's operations; further discounting of fares to a larger group of low/no income people will only put a further burden on Metro's financing streams, which are already weakened by the ongoing recession.
397. I am glad you are finally making people pay. Lets hope people will actually have to pay to ride the bus. Instead of all the people now who get on and walk right past the driver after 13 other people just got on and paid.
398. "Metro is working with the city of Seattle and local human service agencies to develop transportation options that would help low or no-income people continue to get to essential support services in the downtown area." Great, first put those in place. THEN, end the free ride area. This is an attack on the most vulnerable, and it has NO valid reason, as it will not significantly affect quality of service, or the revenue picture. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves.
399. I am a transit operator,. I have a love/hate relationship w/ the ride free area. I was wondering if perhaps this might be workable. Having 2 buses for the ride free area, one NB, and one SB and ONLY circling to CBD. Just a thought, Thanks for your time, Nita Baker
400. When you eliminate the Ride-Free zone, you MUST extend the time on transfer tickets! Most of your buses take more than 1 1/2 hours to reach a connecting bus - in rush hour, buses often take an hour just to get from Pioneer Square to Denny Way. (Other than the transfer pass problem, I think it is fine to eliminate the confusing Ride-Free zone. But you should make it easier for elderly, handicapped, and TEMPORARILY disable people to catch a ride on the bus - they should not have to trek downtown and wait in a secondary line for a reduced-fare pass. You should also still have a monthly one-time-payment pass to go anywhere in the City of Seattle.If people think they have to pay separately for each ride, they will NEVER want to take the bus.

401. Ending the ride-free area downtown will bring hardship on those who cannot afford the fare. I also think the downtown businesses will feel it economically. Having the option of a ride-free area is draw for shoppers and those who might have opted for downtown may choose the malls instead. I have used Metro for nearly 40 years and have always found it easy and convenient; I worked at Metro for 35 years and was fortunate to know many good people there. However, eliminating of many bus stops downtown and ending the ride-free area make me think that the future may mean that public transportation will only be for those with jobs and the healthy. Sincerely, Lynn Wright-von Scheele
402. Hi, Please reconsider completely eliminating the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle. **Please consider keeping it during the middle of the day for diners.** Its elimination would have a big and negative impact on my life. I am on a small income. I frequently use it for shopping, using the library, paying utility bills, and dining. Without it I wouldn't be able to afford to do that downtown, and would probably wouldn't go out as often and would shift my shopping and dining to the malls. Thanks you, Mr. Beaton Brown
403. It's about time!! Minneapolis has had a paid downtown zone for years (was "The Dime Zone", now the "50 Cent Zone". You do too much for free, and people expect more, then you fail. (Just for the reord, I stopped using Metro almost 3 years ago. The service in my area is crap. It went from great to crap in less than a year. Never fixing any of the issues, just pushing up the arrival time for the bus, which had a dominoe effect on getting where I needed to go on time. I know this is all about the almighty dollar, not really about fixing anything, but existing...) Welcome to the 21st Century!
404. I work in the Washington Mutual Tower and due to the convenience of the Ride Free Area, particularly for the bus tunnel, choose to run many personal errands and complete various personal business transactions during my work day, in my case particularly at businesses near the Westlake Station and the International District Station and particularly during inclement weather. If I must pay to ride within the present Ride Free Area, it's unlikely that I would use the bus for those errands and transactions and so would likely shift toward patronizing businesses nearer my home instead of near my work. My thought is that this would be true for many downtown workers, decreasing revenue for downtown businesses and also decreasing the pleasure of exploring downtown for workers.
405. **For riders who get on a bus in DT Seattle that travels through 2-zones (DT Seattle to Shoreline), but exit the bus before 145th (so ride the bus only 1 zone), how does the rider ensure that their Orca card is only charged for a 1 zone trip, and not a 2 zone trip?**
406. **Let me use either door to exit! Buses are too long!** Thank you
407. With budget shortfalls, it is understandable that KC Metro wishes to eliminate the Ride Free Area. However, the service that public Metro provides in the downtown core of Seattle has ridership rates that far exceed those in the vast majority of other areas. While this is a revenue source that can be tapped, it should be greatly noted of the amount of pedestrians that utilize the Ride Free Area to commute between areas in Downtown Seattle, and thereby prevents the unnecessary commutes of thousands each day in cars that would have clogged downtown streets. As a rider, and also as someone who wishes to not see an infiltration of cars into downtown Seattle streets, **I would propose scaling down the Ride Free Area, or at a worst case scenario, keep the Metro Tunnel a fare-exempt passage. Most riders in the Metro Tunnel utilize it for short trips within downtown; forcing riders to pay for short trips would greatly reduce the ridership and usage of the tunnel, as well as cause delays**

because of people paying fares. If the bus tunnel itself is also forced into collecting fares, I would expect a drastic increase in riders who board the Light Rail trains without paying the fare.

408. I commute to/from my Pioneer Square office with my car. Riding the bus to take care of downtown errands or to just shop during my lunch break has been handy...shortening my commute time without requiring me to drive my car to accomplish either. And of course, my wallet has enjoyed the "free" bus rides. Once the Ride Free Zone is eliminated, will there be a newly established low fare for downtown only/in-city only travel? Or will a person travelling from Pioneer Square to Belltown (for example) be required to pay the base fare of \$2.25? It would be great if an in-city-only fare of 75 cents or so was established. I'm not strongly opposed to the Ride Free Zone being eliminated, especially considering Metro's budget woes. But I am disappointed. I might occasionally find a lunchtime errand that's worth \$2.25 and the time spent waiting for a bus. But I would probably omit some of my downtown lunch time trips and run them after work in the neighborhood where I live instead (to avoid transportation costs of parking my car downtown or paying for the bus downtown).
409. Would like to know what will be discussed at tonight's open house at union station from 4pm-6:30pm.
410. I've heard that the free Route 99 bus may also be eliminated or modified as part of the RFA elimination, but I do not see any mention of it in the current online communications. Since this free route serves a unique tourist function within the city core, are there any plans to preserve it in some form?
411. I don't mind at all that the Ride Free Area is being eliminated. The current system of sometimes paying when you enter, sometimes paying when you leave, or not paying at all is too confusing. Furthermore, it seems that most people either ride the bus to or from downtown, but not strictly within downtown. If the ride free area were to be preserved in some fashion, I would recommend having designated buses (perhaps a different color?) that only travel within downtown that are free, rather than having every bus free in downtown. If Metro operated a single "free route" that, for example, went up 3rd Avenue and back 4th Avenue (or back and forth in the transit tunnel) and arrived every 5-10 minutes, it could serve those people who want or need the ride free area, while cutting costs overall and allowing for every other normal bus to simply be "pay when you enter".
412. I don't think that this will save you any additional money and poor people will have no way to travel, as you have no accommodations for the poor (only elderly and disabled). Every week, there are a bunch of people on the 3 line that get off on the last free stop to get their food at the food bank. I am pretty sure this will not save you any more money, nor make any, because the people who are using the ride free zone don't have any. And the others already have a pass (like me). Tourists will continue to use the Link light rail.
413. No one likes to make a city a place for cars, but with ride free eliminated and the city proposing to eliminate parking requirements for certain types of development, people have fewer and fewer options for moving around. AT THE VERY LEAST, Metro should consult with the Seattle City Council on how the two entities can minimize impacts of these two proposals because together they are bad news.
414. All I can see is this causing the worst congestion imaginable and a huge loss in tourist revenue. The ride free zone allows tourists to go about easier to more businesses. Thus spending more money,

seeing more and brings more money into the state. Removing the ride free zone is going to be a disaster not only for people who visit Seattle, but the folks who live here. With the Ride-Free Zone going on during the work hours, people can easily just walk onto the bus. No line to wait for paying, no huge delays, and if they go beyond the free-ride zone they pay as they leave. However, if a person has to pay as they get on, in the tunnel - which is extremely busy - the lines will get long as people wait for others to pay, buses will no longer be as on time and the delays will result in folks finding other means to get home and a loss of revenue to Metro. Removing the free-ride zone will result in not only lost business revenue, but more congestion both on and off the buses and on our streets as people decide to use their cars rather than deal with the hassle the tunnel will turn in to. I am extremely disappointed in this decision to eliminate this service that benefits the entire community and state. This will hurt everyone here and make tourists less likely to partake in visiting all the sites and sounds Seattle has to offer. Businesses will go under, worsening the already terrible economic situation we are in. Please do not hurt the community by removing the Free-Rise Zone. Continue the free ride zone as it provides so much revenue for the state via tourists - and currently provides quick excellent service without delays or worsening money situations on already struggling people.

415. All these cuts are killing Downtown Seattle! Tourists are not going to want to pay to ride the bus downtown. They will just go elsewhere! Think about what you are doing to our tourism trade!
416. Please do not take away the ride free area. It is wonderful for people who live and work downtown and tourists alike.
417. If you want to kill more businesses downtown, start charging for what was once the Ride Free Zone. Many workers rely on this service to zip through town on a limited lunch hour break. Things like shoe repair, meetings in restaurants, returns to Macy's or Nordstroms as well as many money transactions will be cut down. Why would I pay to ride there when I am already paying to and from work? Why would I waste my money when I could do it after work or on weekends (NOT downtown) using my car? Many companies, including mine, are no longer subsidizing our bus passes and it's already more out of pocket. If this is allowed to happen, I will NOT be shopping, returning, lunching, going to the salon or doing anything downtown any more. I will save it for the car trip.
418. I understand the cost increase to run the Metro system. Eliminating free ridership will help relieve the pain. However, **will you please leave the bus route #99 stay free?** It helps the tourist to move around the town and get to the shops and attractions easier, since downtown Seattle has so many hills to deal with and rain often during the winter and spring. Leave this route for free or charge a quarter per ride will help the shops and attractions and the tourists. It'll encourage them come to visit Seattle and businesses will stay alive. The tourists are from everywhere, even from Bellevue for a theater or a ball game event; since there is nothing much out there around the Seattle Metropolitan area. Also, once you eliminated the FRA, there will be much less ridership. Metro buses will run empty or with very few paid riders. It will increase your cost for running the Metro system in downtown area, because Metro will still need to pay for the cost of fuel, repair and people to run the system. So, you might want to reconsider and make some compromises to help yourself and the riders. Thank you! ~Lin
419. How is eliminated the ride free area going to help the riders? I see that it is all about the almighty dollar. **If you are so concerned about the fares raise the fee by a quarter to 75 cents.** There is a lot of convenience being able to come from Federal Way and get off at 4th and University and catch another bus to go to 8th and olive. It was really nice during the winter when I did that, but eliminating the ride

free area means that I will walk from 4th all the way to 8th, because I won't give you any more damn money than I already do!!! This is such a scam! I can't believe that you will inconvenience the riders!

420. We, as a community need to find a way to make transit free for the poor and school age children. We need to make our transit better, so we don't need cars. This has got to be a priority. Thank you for taking comments.
421. So, yes, what will you do for low income or homeless elderly that depend on this area to get to and fro, from the stores for groceries or meds, or get home to their already hard to pay for housing or shelters??? I ride the bus daily and luckily enough I can afford the fare, but lots of people I see can't. It's sad how we will now make it even harder to get around our city that is already not convenient. Not everyone has a bike Mayor McSchwinn! And if you didn't notice...it rains here ALL THE TIME! Not fun walking or biking when you are soaked. The buses are the best suggestion. Matter of fact, I usually will bus to go around town to go out at lunch or after work to various areas of the city. Run errands, meet friends, shop or go to restaurants. That will now change. The convenience is just that. So the free ride disappearing will alter my spending habits in the city. I will say, it will curb the so called "troubled" riders a little. But filling the budget gap. Questionable?
422. I would prefer that fares be increased, and part-time drivers be hired (thus ending your expensive overtime policy) rather than ending the ride-free area. You could also raise the fees you charge for the advertisements on the busses. You could also start enforcing the payment of fares - whenever I ride the 358 MANY riders do not pay. The ride-free area is a big draw, both to visitors and residents. I know that when I work in the downtown area, I will use the ride-free area when assessing my lunch options. If the area were not available to me (and if I were using the e-purse option only), I would likely either skip lunch or bring my own food.
423. Obviously, moving people around the downtown Seattle core efficiently is no longer a priority for Metro and other transit partners. This should be a boon for downtown taxi service, producing more congested street traffic and pollution. While I personally use the Ride Free area every day to shuttle between my company's offices in the downtown core, I will not pay the proposed fares to go from the downtown tunnel in the International District to University Station. My hope is we are still able to maintain a vibrant, growing and active downtown Seattle, although, I for one, will now limit my shopping to other areas due to the costs of transit, parking & time efficiencies. Good luck with the changes - This should go a long way to making sure that everyone pays their share when riding transit, even for a few blocks, along with contributory gas and vehicle taxes that ALL citizens must pay to support a transit system that is out of touch and out of control. At least I'll be getting more exercise by waking a few additional miles every day - There's always a positive!
424. 1 this is a poor idea 2 this is a poor idea 3 the RFA is one of our regions best features --- an extremely effective way to get around the downtown area. 4 this will generate more car trips more parking hassles more pollution and more bother for everyone. 4 this seems to have been planned by people who never ride a bus 5 trying to change the exiting behavior is a major task requiring both a lot of effort and a lot of communication...and probably needs a reward system too. Trying to do it this way is a dead end. 5 it RAINS in Seattle. I would much prefer to be on the bus, dry, while waiting to pay. Pay as you exit is much much more enjoyable 6 I cannot even begin to express how unhappy I anti think of all the anger grief ugliness and plain bother that will result from trying to change (and charge) the many less-functional folks who ride the bus every day. Hope that top management has been

volunteering to do extra hours as "customer service assistants" out in the field to help soak up the misery that both drivers and passengers will experience from this. 7 still a poor idea 8 failing to prominently feature WHY this is happening says a lot -- all negative

425. Employers pay for that ride free area and always have--savings would be marginal at best--and it could be a volatile situation! It will not save the transit orgs no money whatsoever and will backfire--as they will continue to decimate the transit program-- Transit must find other ways to dump low ridership routes and consolidate routes-- Transit must be allowed a significant discount on their fuels-- Transit must gear up for a large advertising on buses and trains for additional revenue--- Transit must implement one fare for all counties and none of this incremental increases between counties--- Transit must seek a bailout if all else fails-- Transit might seek an increase in violence on the buses--or confrontations Think twice about eliminating the ride free areas---
426. Ending the RFA (nee: Magic Carpet Service) is a bad idea. Downtown bus stops will be horribly crowded as riders jostle to get to the single entry door. Service and schedules will degrade significantly. Most riders will have passes, so Metro will get very little additional revenue. People without passes will not pay \$2.50 or more for short hop-on/hop-off trips within downtown. In fact the degraded service may REDUCE revenue to Metro. The suburban members of the County Council are simply jealous of their perceived subsidy of downtown riders. In fact, Metro has known for decades that collecting fares downtown will hurt operations without raising revenue. The City of Seattle paid Metro over \$1,000 per day for four decades for operating the County bus system more intelligently. This short-sighted change should be thoroughly analyzed, so that policy-makers can see the effect on net revenue and service. It is unfortunate that only downtown Seattle has the rider density to warrant a Ride Free Area. I understand the friction this causes within the county. In the end, Metro staff has the duty to document the costs and benefits of this change so that the system operates most efficiently and effectively. Even if it means collecting fares downtown is more trouble than it it worth.
427. I am concerned about eliminating the Ride Free area for low and no income people who depend on it. I don't want to see the zone eliminated before other workable options are in place. Thank you.
428. Dear Metro, I am very concerned about the proposal to eliminate the RFA. Not only will it be a lot harder for low-income people to get around downtown, but it also eliminates one of the more tourist-friendly aspects of downtown (which is a long strip geographically). There should have been much more discussion on the central question of whether to eliminate the RFA rather than seeking public comment of how best to cope with the aftermath. I commute 4-5 times a week on Metro and have for nearly 20 years. I am opposed to the elimination of the RFA and will boycott all further efforts for public comment unless you invite public comment on the fundamental issue. Sincerely, Jim Thomas
429. Although I only pay \$0.75 per trip and can do round trips if my visit is quick at my initial destination, I really like the concept of a ride free zone. I know my wife enjoys jumping on a Metro bus to get some shopping done over her lunch hour which would not be financially feasible if she had to pay a fare. The downtown stores may be missing some business with the end of this program. Also, I have heard many tourists who ride the buses downtown really enjoy this feature. I can understand the difficulties the drivers must have collecting fares as people get off the buses and the elimination of the RFZ would eliminate that problem. One other thing that bothers me is that you cannot get or use transfers with Sound Transit or the SLUT. I think that transfers should be interchangeable. As a benefit to people who

like to ride the entire public transportation system, I think transfers should be broadened. Thanks,  
Rick Hunt 1107 1st Ave #907 Seattle, WA 98101

430. I cannot go to The Open house, because I, am going to go sing karaoke with my friend his name is Malcolm, But I would Like too Learn more About FREE Ride Area? Here is my E-mail It is jennieweiner@myspace.com, please please Send me A E-mail About The Next Meeting.
431. Have you considered keeping free inbound trips on buses which terminate in the former RFA? For example, once a route 16 bus turns onto 3rd Ave in Belltown, it could change its headsign to "FREE RIDE via 3RD AVE", and stop charging. Obviously, this only works for buses whose terminus is downtown, but it might still relieve some capacity.
432. To generate more revenue for the County, eliminate the paper transfers as did Sound Transit did. I hear many riders 'save and reuse' there old transfers for use the next time the color and letter matches, avoiding paying a fare. "It's not illegal to re-use a transfer" quoting a passenger in the back to other people in the back of the bus. This will also ensure that 'all' pay a fare to ride since it's not fair to see many riding for 'free'/scaming the driver, while I work hard and have to 'pay' my fare. Fair is fare.
433. Everyone paying on entering the bus and exiting by the rear door makes good sense to me. Sorry, though, to lose the downtown ride-free area. Friends visiting from Sweden were blown away by this complimentary service. Ah, well; the times they are a changin' ! One other thought: I ride the #15 and #18 bus downtown from Ballard to go to the Central Library, to SAM, to Westlake, and to Benaroya. I sure miss the route being on 1st Avenue. Waiting for the bus to get home on 3rd Ave. can be downright creepy in the daytime, and I sure won't do it after dark.
434. I am glad to see this change, even if it makes boarding the bus take a little longer. I have seen too many riders (usually youths) who simply exit the bus, throwing over their shoulder a comment such as "I lost my pass". These riders know that the driver is not going to chase them down, and they likely never had a pass. It's just another way to scoff at the law. I assume this change will keep these non-payers from boarding the bus in the first place. Thank you for making this change. Daily rider of route 120
435. For those of us living and working downtown, ride free area proves to be indispensable. Some workplaces downtown don't provide a paid bus pass especially if an employee happens to live in the city. Paying nearly \$3 a ride to get through downtown is painful, and I'd rather not do it, however if this is what it takes to help eliminate criminal element from riding the bus (especially at 3rd and pike/pine corridor) then I would agree with the decision to eliminate ride free.
436. I think the elimination of the ride free area in downtown Seattle is a mistake. I believe many of the indigent people of Seattle need and rely on this service.
437. This sounds great in theory. If your ridership were robots it would work perfectly. I am interested to see how easy it really is for riders on a crowded bus to exit out of only one door. I hope drivers are prepared to wait until all riders are able to exit during peak commuter times.

438. When Metro transit gets rid of the ride free area they need to get tough on the people that never have fare and still think they are going ride these people are criminals?
439. I really hope data was collected and projections made from real studies. To me, this is the opposite to what needs to happen. We need to promote bus/rail/bicycle/pedestrian traffic to downtown. We need to expand the use outward, too. Right now, I am so impressed with the Metro and transit. I lived in Los Angeles all my life and the bus and Metro is avoided, everyone stays away from downtown. How do you prevent that from happening? Luxury tax. Don't take away vital services and deter riders in downtown; you need to make buses in downtown second only to cycling and walking. This can't be stressed enough. Luxury tax. I visited Shanghai where annual car registration fees are more than the purchase price of the car. Even with this enormous tax, the roads are jammed. Why? The elite will pay the cost to buy their Mercedes and their BMWs. The corporations will pay or work out deals to purchase their fleets of vehicles. They get plenty of funding this way to build-out their highways and they still can't keep up with the pace -- they can't build fast enough to keep up with the number of vehicles getting bought and driven. Luxury tax. Hike up the price of parking in downtown. Increase parking enforcement. Increase parking fines. Increase the car registration/tag fee. Increase the price of gasoline. Require some costly registration to provide taxi/cab service in downtown which should increase cab fare. You need to collect money from the people driving and riding single passenger vehicles! Allowing single-passenger driving will lead to what we have in Los Angeles, guaranteed. Give cyclists free parking. Promote walking/cycling-only streets which makes driving very inconvenient. Shut down the traffic lights and only allow walking/cycling during certain hours (evenings?) You want more pedestrians. More pedestrians will grow the store fronts, markets, cafes. You want this more hours. You want to attract more people to stay more hours in downtown. Not to leave at the end of the work day. You need more luxury taxes to pay for increased safety and security, too. You need more security to make people feel safe to stay longer hours in downtown. At the very least, wait until the light rail is finished and will begin bringing in the commuters from the high traffic routes. If you don't have an alternative, you will be training people to not ride the buses. More cars will appear to fill the void, then you'll be just like Los Angeles. Believe me, you don't want Los Angeles traffic. Finally, you have to approach buses with customer service in mind. Just like all consumer goods, it's all about the service. There is so much you can do in positive reinforcement. Train the bus drivers/operators and treat them as highly valued respected employees. Keep the vehicles clean. The light rail looks like a great model: lots of security guards and clean trains. I know it's hard, but you eventually want train fare to be free. Really, everyone will ride because it's so nice and convenient (no traffic jams). There are other ways to pay for the cost other than the fare.
440. This makes me want to cry, even though I pay a reduced fare it is going to cost me more than twice the amount to get around. I usually try to stay Downtown for important things or walk as possible. But I moved to Downtown for many benefits, one being the Free Ride Zone.
441. If you're going to change the policy so that riders pay as they enter the bus (and I think that's something that's long overdue), then you should really consider making the lanes for bus pickups exclusive for buses during the afternoon rush commute hours (3:00 to 6:30 p.m.). In other words, during the rush commute hours buses ONLY would be allowed to use the curb lanes where riders enter the bus. Otherwise, the buses will not move in a fast and efficient manner and there will be numerous bus/traffic backups. Don't go with half a plan (just changing when you pay), but develop a full traffic plan that will ensure success of this change.

442. I understand eliminating the Free Zone, but you should lower the fare if you eliminate transfers. If typical bus rides continue to be priced at \$2.25-\$2.50, then without transfers, on September 29 a round trip bus ride will essentially double and suddenly cost as much as \$5.00 without any improvements in service. In fact, you say the new system will likely result in slower stops as everyone pays at boarding. A more reasonable per-ride price would better serve the public and deliver, to quote your mission statement, a "socially equitable transportation system." I know you have concessions for low-income families, but you should also consider that a 200 percent price hike is not a fair price for the public. The added revenue is good for the budget, but I believe more people will stop riding altogether. I am able to afford bus rides, but I will definitely choose to walk more often rather than pay \$4.50-\$5 round-trip. Two round trips and I'm out ten bucks? I'm a smarter consumer than that, and I'm sure I'm not alone. Thank you for your consideration.
443. I strongly oppose the recommended termination of the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle. That program has been in place for such a long time that the downtown working community has developed around it. Many employees have shared rides or taken bicycles in part because they know that during the day they can get around from one end of downtown to another without needing a car and without paying for a bus. This is particularly helpful when it rains (which does occur from time to time in Seattle). The City's restoration of bus fares is a reflection of its inability to control other costs. Other administrative programs should be cut before this highly visible and popular program. While many workers have been struggling during the recent recession, the City has been raising fees (e.g., parking meters) and is apparently unable to make significant cuts in its own bureaucracy. If Metro persists in ending the Ride Free Area, which has been a model for the nation, I predict that incumbent politicians will face an angry group of voters. Please rethink this latest effort to increase costs on city workers!
444. I should think that for the elimination of the free ride system to work, the most important change will have to be the simultaneous elimination of the unwritten "everybody can ride for free if they refuse to pay" rule. Will you now require drivers to refuse entry to those that refuse to pay?
445. Would it be possible to allow 2-zone riders (and for routes that are entirely 1-zone, all riders) boarding in the tunnel downtown to use an Orca card to pay at the rear door to speed up boarding and minimize the number of buses that need to shift outside of the tunnel? I've seen this work well in Norway, and with RapidRide and light rail, we're already offering some alternatives in the region. I can think of a few different ways that might work, although I'm not sure what would work best in King County. One is to have readers at the rear door, and have it be on the honor system and/or have occasional security sweeps, typically at the last downtown stop. One is to make Orca smarter, so tunnel customers swipe their cards as they enter the tunnel whether they're taking bus or light rail, so fare enforcement can be done on the tunnel platforms by some combination of Metro and Sound Transit. They might have to swipe their card again on the bus to make that work? Or, only at selected stops during the evening rush hour, there could be employees with handheld readers; the employee signals the driver or has a special remote control to open the rear door and then stands by it, scanning cards as people enter. If this works well, it could even be extended to busy surface stops. If an employee with a handheld reader is not available, people enter only by the front door.
446. The best option for low or no-income people for using public transportation is to keep it free. Anything else is a huge burden for that population and for the taxpayers who will be cleaning up the mess this will create with folks unable to access support services in the Ride Free Area (everything from public

health to food banks to the library). This is an idea whose time has NOT come. The Ride Free area is also the best option for folks who may be able to afford the fare but do not want the aggravation of using a car in that area and so utilize public transportation, significantly decreasing vehicular congestion. Do NOT do this. It is short-sighted and foolish and places more burdens on the citizens of Seattle.

447. Working downtown Seattle, the Ride Free Area gives me the option to go to my appointments in a timely manner and not have to pay again. I don't think it's fair to take this away. Thanks!
448. I understand why the Ride Free zone is being eliminated, but I am concerned that it will really slow down buses during rush hour at the end of the day if everyone needs to board through the front door. My buses (306, 312, 522) are typically very crowded (often standing room only) during rush hour, both morning and afternoon. We already board in the front in the morning, but there are way more stops for people to board in the morning coming into town, than there are at the end of the day going outbound. What steps is Metro taking to keep these buses on schedule? Thank you for considering my comments. Sandra Perkins 13226 42nd Avenue NE Seattle, WA 98125 sandraperkins@seanet.com
449. This is one of worse ideas Transit & Seattle City has ever made. It hurts the folks that work downtown, it'll hurt businesses and tourism. For what a couple bucks for a couple blocks? I for one would never pay to use the downtown core buses and I hope more folks feel like I do. I feel sorry for those that have a problem walking because it's them that this is going to hurt the most. Sad that the city of Seattle & Transit has sunk to a new low for the almighty dollar.
450. It seems like a good idea. The issue you're going to have with this will be when passengers are exiting the rear doors and while the driver is concentrating on the passengers entering some will sneak on. I've seen this all the time. If passengers are leaving the bus maybe have them leave first, then close the back door and then start the boarding of on coming passengers.
451. My fellow bus riders are asking about 2 things : How will transfers work if you don't have an Orca card? Will there be community meetings or open houses outside the downtown corridor?
452. Seattle is my home and I'm pushing 50. It seems like eliminating the Ride Free Area is going to cause an upset in downtown travel, the tourist industry, and also folks heading back and forth to the ferry dock and as the site has mentioned, people traveling to and from appointments that lean on these services. This service has always been utilized and is part of Seattle's charm - a money saving, money gaining plan just isn't a good idea. In the long run it will pay for itself but it's also going to cost the City money and time to implement it. I'd toss the idea in the round file. It would be nice if something, just one thing, could remain steadfast. Thank you!
453. I would like to know how the payment for the ride would work if you are paying as you enter. How is the driver going to know if the meter should read one zone or two?
454. It is going to be a nightmare. People, who work in downtown, use buses to go to get a lunch; it won't be possible for most now. However, if they will not have to pay at the front, it will be much easier.

455. Overall a deplorable idea, but I guess it's a sign of the times. Free circulators sound like a good idea- how about expanding the 99? Or resuscitating the old 98? This could help reduce abuse of RapidRide downtown. The back-door to exit is unnecessary and has safety and customer service drawbacks- not even able-bodied people should be expected to fight their way to the back door every day, and keeping people away from the driver, a valuable customer service resource, is bad for obvious reasons. Policy for doors should continue as is- use whatever door is safest and most convenient in the particular circumstance.
456. This is an awful idea. Commuters turn to the bus system for reasons of convenience, cost, and environmental consciousness. We have tolerated price hikes but this is something that just cannot be negotiated. I'm sure the transit companies are strapped just like the rest of us are but this change would only expedite the loss of faith in our public transit system. And having a plan to help low/no-income people in the pipeline is NOT GOOD ENOUGH. That needs to be figured out BEFORE this change is implemented. Those holding Orca cards will most likely not be effected but it's also not fair to exploit the increased mechanization of the transit transaction by assuming this will come to pass with the most minor of glitches. Other cities have gotten this right, why can't we? If you need to pull strings or bend the ears of the higher ups, or REALLY think about more creative ways to set out the community tip jar, do it. What I'm saying is this is a symptom of a greater sickness, and if the circulatory system fails, the city wilts. Thanks for pretending to care what riders think.
457. This is a terrible decision. It impacts the poor and homeless especially, most of whom are disabled. This at a time when disabled bus pass rates have risen sharply in the past few years. Once again, saving money on the backs of the poor above all. It is also bad for commerce and retail sales in the downtown area. This ends an outstanding and sensible public accommodation that has existed for many years. I won't be voting for county councilmembers who support this, and executive Constantine's lack of support is a huge disappointment. Ron Sims would never have allowed something like this to occur.
458. I object to this change in our transit. The ride free is a great opportunity for tourism to use transit to see some of Seattle's biggest downtown attractions. The streets are already congested and taking the ride free area away means more people will be driving around downtown, instead of leaving their cars at work and using transit. I would have been open to a hotel tax or something similar to off set the expense. Thank you Kirk
459. How will Metro save money by eliminating the Ride Free Area? I doubt this claim. Secondly, I suspect that the people who create the most problems for Metro in the Ride Free Area are not the people who cannot afford to pay.
460. Please preserve a free bus service for poor people. Maybe a designated Free Bus could operate along a large meandering route twice daily?
461. business will be hurt by eliminating the free ride...it is not fair...Seattle is a raining city..if it was weather like miami I donot care to walk...but in Seattle... Asians students from UW are paying 1.25.. I asked a driver why I pay 2.25 and they 1.25 ...drivers say there is not way to know the real age of asians...no fair..
462. Other cities have fares for downtown areas at discount price. Do this here! It could be a rev producer.

463. i feel that you should still have the free ride people that can not go up hills such as spring and also would be better for people only needing to go a few blocks if you take away the free ride area would not be fair for a lot of people such as the people who are homeless and need to go to the shelters that are within the free ride area and it would not be fair for the elderly who need to get home and live within the ride free area. Metro implemented the increase in car tabs and now they want people to pay and get rid of the ride free area. I live in downtown and have osetoarthritis and can not go up hills such as spring street do it would not be fair to people to get rid of the ride free area makes not sense the bus drivers do not inforce the pay policy and getting rid of the ride free area would just make alot of people mad this is my opinion from someone who is disabled and lives with in the ride free area and i am also 53 years old so **i feel you should just cut back with the hours of the ride free area and brodcast it better like announcements on the buses because some people may not know about this** or have people at the bus stops and have people fill out a survey about cutting out the ride free area .
464. **This is going to result in massive delays unless a cash surcharge is instituted and/or elimination of all paper transfers. Other than wheelchairs, multiple people paying with cash is the biggest slowdown and with payment required 24/7 in the city center this will help to mitigate the rush hour delays.**
465. Ending the Free Ride zone is not going to save any money and will certainly not increase revenue. This is really a selfish and short-sighted move on the part of Metro who continues to disenfranchise lower income and disabled people, while further reducing Seattle's ranking as a livable city. I will be less inclined to support Metro than ever before if this change goes into effect.
466. Transit should not be a monopoly, especially a government run monopoly because this practice removes competitive options for people. I commute daily from Seattle the Redmond. Excessive taxes, road tolls and expensive and time consuming bus rides have drastically reduced our work and life quality in this area. Why not let a truly free market take over transportation?
467. Although I'm sorry that low income people will be affected, the silver lining is that it will eliminate people who ride the bus and are rowdy or unkempt. I know this sounds elitist, but I have had a few trips ruined by groups of people who take the pleasure of riding a bus for granted and don't behave themselves. Since I live in Snohomish County, I end up paying in the Ride Free Area anyway.
468. My only mode of transportation is the bus system, which I use quite often to go to Northgate, University District, South Seattle, etc. However, I live and work downtown and use the free ride area every day. I'm not quite sure how eliminating the ride free zone will help with anything, as the buses are already taking these routes, so offering the ride free zone is a great benefit to the people who live downtown. It is also a nice benefit for visitors to quickly get from one end of town to the other. Our visitors/tourists support our economy by shopping and eating at downtown establishments, but might not do so readily, if they have to pay for the bus to get to their designated restaurant. I have lived in downtown Seattle for over 8 years and just don't see the point of eliminating the ride free zone. I will definitely be re-evaluating my mode of transportation, because it will be ridiculous to pay \$2.50 to go 13 blocks twice a day. I might end up purchasing a vehicle, which will only add to the congestion downtown, but at least I won't have to take the bus to Northgate, U District, etc.
469. .." increasing the number of discounted bus tickets available to human service agencies for distribution to their clients"... One great failure of Metro is in defining its mission. The city of Seattle, and Metro, would like more people to ride the bus in and out of town. Two problems: 1 - many

people want to ride the bus within the city limits with no intentions of leaving their zone. 2 - many people at work laugh at their coworkers who are Metro riders as being poor losers. If you want middle class to embrace the bus system, then one you must make it useable for 'around town', not just in and out of the suburbs. And two, you'll have to choose between the middle class and the street people. Furthermore, **the buses should be cleaned EVERY DAY!** Enough with urine & alcohol smelly busses in town. I support the free ride zone. **I support subsidized tickets for commuters and real people running errands. I do not support Metro as a home for the homeless or a comfortable place to sit merely get from point A to point B with no agenda.** This may not be politically correct to say, but it's the truth.

470. As a long time resident of Capital Hill, I am very pleased at the elimination of the ride free area. It has fostered misuse of the Metro service and it makes boarding and exiting less convenient. I support the move to eliminate the ride free area. Thank you!
471. This is a terrible idea. The Seattle bus service is not that great to begin with, particularly when you compare it with similar sized or smaller cities. Take Portland, for example, which has a great transit system and is smaller than Seattle. **If Seattle provided excellent bus service, with buses running frequently to all areas of the city, with good Night Owl service, then maybe I could see it. As it is, I've scaled down my bus riding and drive more because the buses don't meet my needs, and with this added on, I'm likely to use the buses even less.**
472. What a huge burden to put on the low income/no income folks!
473. Thank you for making this change. **Ultimately, as long as Metro and the city can work out ways to accommodate low and no-income folks with their transportation needs, I think this change is best for all. I'm especially looking forward to not having to remember which door I can enter/leave, or when I need to pay each time I ride the bus, which is often.** Thanks, Metro!
474. I just received the email announcement noting the end of the Ride Free Area service. I feel it is quite unfortunate that the Ride Free Area will be eliminated. While I do not often get the opportunity to utilize it since I no longer work in downtown, I did have the chance on March 23 & 24. I remember thinking what a valuable asset this service was to the Seattle community -- both for those low-income riders who truly depend on the free service as well as for tourists as a friendly way to easily get around our downtown areas that are not always within easy walking distance (e.g. Pioneer Square to Belltown). I saw one family with two youngsters and elderly grandparents that were able to use the ride-free service to go from Belltown to Westlake -- not a long walking distance for most but certainly not easy for the young and elderly patronizing our town and seeing our many sites in a day. More than my concern for a friendly tourist destination is **my concern for the low-income riders that rely on the free service area. I recognize that a plan will be discussed to address their needs; however, the city programs already have a difficult time getting adherence to new implementations or requirements. Even if something "free" is offered that this demographic must sign up for, I feel it will be underutilized and those most needing it will be overlooked and not served.** I ask that Metro reconsider eliminating this service that is a true asset to the city. It's understandable that costs rise but surely there are other ways to fund costs. Note, it did not go unnoticed that new electronic talking devices were installed on buses right at the end of the tax/car tab debate. While this implementation may have been planned for some time prior, the execution was quite poor in timing. I supported the car-tab tax but was disappointed when I noticed the timing of this modification. I hope Metro will truly

reflect on the community and the services offered that benefit its constituents. Please feel free to contact me should there be any questions or clarification needed about my comments. Regards, Tonia Brown PS. The email announcement's link, unfortunately, did not direct to the proper section of Metro's website but instead went to "How to Ride": Other ways to comment are: Online: [www.kingcounty.gov/Metro/howtoride](http://www.kingcounty.gov/Metro/howtoride)

475. First of all I total disagree in eliminating the ride free area. I would like to see it in phases. In Sept eliminate weekends. then during the bring it in only from 9 am to 3pm (mid day) then during the winter or spring of 2013 shake up total elimination. I also suggest that from June through September that you fare break because that when school out more tourist are in town sport season ect. Thanks that it for now
476. I am totally in favor of the elimination of the Ride Free Area. This is something I feel should have been addressed many years ago, but better late than never. Why do I feel this way? For many years now Metro has increased the cost of riding the bus on an annual basis. To help offset some of the money problems, making everyone pay would increase revenue. Also, it will stop many of the people who get on in the Ride Free Area but get off in a Pay Zone but tell the driver they don't have any money or outright refuse to pay. I am in favor of finding a solution to help low or no-income people who rely on the bus in the ride free area. Proof of need has to be closely evaluated and renewing a pass or whatever is provided be done at least every 3 months. And the pass most definitely should only be valid in what is currently the ride free area. Another suggestion that has nothing to do with the changes taking place September 29th would be to take a look at how many children under 5 can ride free with a paying fare. Instead of 4, why not make it 2? And any number over 2 per adult could be charged 25 cents. With the funds problem, each 25 cent will help. Maybe it's not a lot, but something is better than nothing. The elimination of the Sunday Family fare certainly reduced the number of 18 and under who rode for free with their family on Sunday.
477. I am very concerned about losing the free ride zone. I am disabled and live in low income housing. Because of my medical problems, I have a certain amount of "down time" where I cannot walk & must take a few hours off my feet. I would go insane if it were not for having quick, easy, FREE access to the library to pick up books, videos, audio books etc. to occupy my mind while I am waiting to be able to walk again. The library is too far for me to walk and I cannot walk up hills. I have a disabled pass, and a \$1.50 round trip means I would have to decide whether to do a load of laundry or have access to my requested materials. I have heard in the media that efforts are being made to accommodate homeless people by giving out bus chits, vouchers, etc. through various social services. I am not homeless and these social services are not available to me. Please take people like me into account when making your decisions.
478. I am strongly in favor of eliminating the ride free zones if it will help keep the buses on their current routes and time schedules. I don't want to see KC Metro buses eliminated or staggered too far between stops and times they stop. I live in Lynnwood and commute twice daily, 5x per week on CT to downtown Seattle (2nd/Stewart) where I connect with #12 to get to Seattle University. I've already been shafted by the recent CT changes and am dreading the changes KC Metro will make. I commend you for the time, effort and thought KC Metro puts into any changes that need to happen. You have done a fantastic job on keeping us posted on bus changes, route changes/delays, etc through the email notification which proves KC Metro wants to make using Metro a pleasant experience. I can tell

you ridership is definitely higher this year than it was last year, seats are harder to get during peak commuting times. Keep up the great work.

479. This change will not affect me since I only ride routes that go outside of the Seattle area (not currently free). However, this could result in huge impacts to those with little/no income, and they are the people who are likely to not have the opportunity to comment. The removal of this essential resource could be devastating to these people, who already have difficult lives.
480. So ... we have this terrible weather downtown and downtown is large - can't you have something that "ferries" riders around downtown? **or extend the "transfer window" to 2 1/2 hours?** I mean - this sucks for people who want to get around downtown and not get wet ... so we sit in our offices all day cause we don't want to keep paying \$2.25 to ride four blocks? Come on Metro - get a clue!
481. Please DO NOT eliminate the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle. It is so convenient and a wonder bonus for tourists. I URGE you to re-evaluate eliminating the Ride Free Area.
482. The ride free area downtown is a great way to eliminate traffic from folks going from one part of downtown to another. Does this really make sense to eliminate this?
483. While I can understand the appeal of eliminating the ride-free area due to loss of revenue, this is extremely inconvenient for people who live and/or work in Seattle. **I work in Pioneer Square and often use a tunnel bus to run errands on my lunch break. This would mean I would have to pay 3 fares in one day because I wouldn't be eligible for a transfer.** I love the convenience of being able to visit the Central Library, or go to the grocery store or to Westlake Center and then back to work in Pioneer Square. My employer does not pay for my Orca pass - this money comes out of my pocket! Again, I understand that Metro is losing money due to people "forgetting" their bus fares, but I am a responsible patron and this is an extreme inconvenience to my daily life.
484. **There must be a firm "no pay...no ride" policy.** Once the lowlife get on they can do whatever they please with no intervention from the driver or police. It's time for that to stop. Keeping them from boarding may even increase ridership since that's a very big negative thing that keeps some people from riding.
485. This is a good idea and I support it! Michelle from Burien
486. **I'm sorry to see the free downtown zone go, but if it means ditching the confusion of sometimes paying when you get on the bus other times paying when you get off, I'm all for it!** I moved here from Minneapolis, and I couldn't understand how it would make any sense to pay for the bus AFTER you ride it. Would you pay for a movie when you're leaving the theater? Also, I have rides that I take where I incidentally have to pay when I get on and get off. I dislike the system. **One way we got around the downtown zone problem in Minneapolis was by charging only 50 cents for the downtown zone. The rider just told the driver when he got on the bus, and the driver adjusted the person's fare. While I'm at this commenting, I don't understand why buses turn into different buses. Why isn't the 28 just the 28, instead of the 28 turning into the 23?** Thanks for listening!
487. I am adamantly opposed to the elimination of the ride free area. I am homeless, and I depend on it very much. I need to go from one end of downtown to another in order to access basic services such

as meal sites and laundry. Without the ride free zone I will have much greater difficulty surviving. The ride free zone has been a beautiful thing for many years. Downtown office workers and others also take advantage of it to go to lunch, or run errands. It is one of the unique features that has made King County Metro, one of the best transit systems in the country. You are attempting to balance your budget on the backs of poor people. Last I heard Metro is 2/3 subsidized by the tax payers. Penny pinching fares will not make much difference. On the other hand freezing wages and salaries of Metro employees would go a long way towards balancing the budget. Shame on you King County Metro! You won't make the smallest sacrifices to balance the budget, but instead you cause hardship for the poor. Shame on you!!!

488. I would like to applaud King County Metro for finally eliminating the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle. Following is an excerpt that I sent to SeattlePI.com in 2006 in response to an article titled: "What would it take to get you out of your car and into the bus." This was one of the points I made at that time. "Eliminate the Ride Free area: \*One of the unpleasant realities of transiting the downtown core is the use of the ride free zone by passengers who are inebriated and/or under the influence of illegal drugs. This is most prevalent on 3rd Ave. It slows filling and emptying of the bus at each stop, increases the crowded conditions on the buses and es the travel experience highly unpleasant for the fare paying commuters and other riders. If the downtown merchants wish to extend free rides to encourage tourism or store patronage, they could alternatively issue bus vouchers or tokens at stores and hotels for shoppers and visitors. " Recently, I read an article written in 1976 by prominent Seattle architect and community activist, Fred Bassetti in which he maintained that the ride free area did not contribute to economic vibrancy of the downtown area because it encouraged people to bypass stores and restaurants which they otherwise may have wandered into if they were transiting the neighborhood on foot. I had not considered this idea before and thought it is well worth noting. Lastly, I appreciate that Metro is simplifying the way fares are collected. This has long been a point of frustration for many, especially those unfamiliar with bus travel.
489. I do not like the proposed changes, as much as tax payers pay, the least King County Metro could do is continue the ride free zone. This is absolute greed! I should be able to get off the bus at any door available, really who thought of this? Also the fact that you want to bottleneck customers by making customers pay upon entrance is absurd. Proposed changes stink!
490. Please increase the fare for cash-paying customers and use the profit to lower the price and/or increase the availability of ORCA cards. Offer an ORCA Day Pass for tourists. Then phase out cash payments totally as ORCA becomes ubiquitous. Thanks!
491. its about time the free ride area was eliminated....my husband and i who commute to work daily by Metro refer to the free ride area as the freeloader area. We ride the number 2 express routes to queen anne and every single day we have some freeloader who thinks the bus stops at bell street and we refer to them as hostages because the driver will not let them off. and it is often the same people over and over. the elimination of the free ride will also help to reduce crime on buses...in the past four months i have seen a group of three people get on the 2 express at pike/pine st, go to the back of the bus, make their drug trasaction and then get off at the next stop, virginia street. i work in the courts and this is the last kind of activity i want to see on my way home. i say its time to return the buses to the paying riders. let those with money enough to buy drugs on the bus drive their feet. there are

many programs out there that subsidize bus rides for the indigent who really need to get around. its time to start making money on the transit system thanks

492. I have three comments related to the RFA and boarding changes planned for this fall: 1--ORCA usage needs to be encouraged more since it will speed boarding. Most cities (Minneapolis, Chicago, New York, etc.) provide a cash incentive (~10%) for every trip, not just transfers. Also, a cheaper ORCA pass for visitors would be great since that population represents a noticeable share of downtown transit riders. 2--On inbound express buses, could passengers still exit through both doors? Those buses are typically quite full and very few (if any) boardings occur downtown on those routes. 3--To improve transit speeds along Third Avenue, better enforcement of bus-only restrictions would be appreciated, especially with increased boarding times at stops. It feels unfair whenever an illegal left-turning car can makes a bus miss a traffic light and be delayed.
493. I'm a Seattle resident and would support paying to keep the Ride Free Area going. If that doesn't happen then the number one issue that needs to be a focused on is efficiently boarding and unloading downtown. This is a major deal for many daily METRO commuters. Your best thinking, and necessary resources, need to drive toward the goal of making commuting by bus not anymore inconvenient. Slowing my commute by any amount of time may well tip the balance for me to decide it is worth the cost of driving and parking downtown rather than slogging ever so slowing through downtown. How about having ORCA card readers on the back doors as well? Implement other Rapid Ride improvements for express bus service? Reduce the number of downtown stops that routes stop at? Please do all you can to not let this change make commuting to and from downtown Seattle on METRO anymore inconvenient!
494. I honestly think it is a great idea to eliminate the Ride Free Area from the buses here in downtown seattle! it might have been costly for Metro but i really thought a lot of people took advantage of it too much. There are a lot of "bums" and "homeless" folks who have nothing better to do except sleep on the bus or ride from point A to point B. Don't get me wrong though, i have no grudge against them but they do stench up the bus with their odor. I feel for them but at the same time consider myself a rider not just someone who aimlessly stays on the bus.
495. To Whom It May Concern: I am a monthly pass buyer who lives in West Seattle & works Downtown during typical business hours. I have been a daily bus rider for 3 years, do not own a car (at this time), therefore, I rely on the bus for getting around (& when weather permits, the Water Taxi & Shuttle for my commute home in the afternoon). I do not have physical mobility issues, & I never leave anywhere without making sure my ORCA card is readily at-hand when I need to pay my fare. I do realize the need for increased revenue, as well as the need to tackle the issue that many transients often treat buses (especially downtown) as rolling shelters. However, as a regular bus rider to & from downtown, I am acutely aware of the realities of ridership unrelated to traffic which cause delays (& sometimes, gridlock) related to bus transportation in the downtown corridor. It would be nice if people would have their fare ready when they board (or leave), but frequently, people do not. Often this results in buses missing a cycle or two of green lights. The buses I take most often (the 54 & 55) often are standing-room only at peak commuting times, where people can't, don't, or won't move to accomodate someone trying to disembark. Forcing people to board at the front & disembark at the rear causes delays, especially if someone with a bicycle tries to leave by the front but collides with a current of passengers trying to leave by the rear. Your proposal mentions "operational changes" to

make bus travel along surface streets in downtown Seattle more favorable to buses. And, granted, for my purposes, I have a future RapidRide route to look forward to. Having lived in other cities which have implemented dedicated busways (Boston), my optimism is tempered somewhat that buses, regardless of improvements to transit corridors or access points, still share the same roadway as other vehicles & are subject to many of the delays & inattentiveness which come with vehicular travel. But for those lines which serve the downtown corridor, I believe doing away with the Ride Free area may create more problems than it intends to solve, especially if King County wishes to increase ridership to, from, & within downtown. Call me a pessimist, but I believe people are far too oblivious & self-absorbed these days to care whether or not their lack of preparedness for helping to make bus travel more efficient for all. Frankly, keeping the Ride Free area downtown has been a practical & necessary work-around for those of us who, as your poster campaigns say, "Ride Right". Thank you.

496. Expand route 99 and make/keep a free circulator downtown for tourists, residents, and low no-income people - no need for "special options", keep it simple, and don't make me pay \$2.50 to go a few blocks.
497. Thank you for terminating the ride free zone. We really do not have that big of a core retail area downtown to warrant such a program. But more importantly, I hope that these free rides greatly reduce the dredge of the city on our buses through the downtown core as well as keeping them off of our downtown core shopping area. This is just another example of this city enabling people not to get their acts together and victimize our tourists and working population. Furthermore with the ridiculous parking rates in this city, people are encouraged to take public transportation. But with the city's dirtiest street people getting their free rides all day through downtown many of us would much rather seek alternatives than the public transportation the city wants us to utilize.
498. What a crime shame. I feel so sorry for those who are homeless or low income who have to get to their services within the downtown area. The poor are always the ones that suffer the most first. I found it quite interesting that KC in the same breath according to your website, " is reviewing the proposal for a self-funded NBA arena from a group of private investors. The panel, appointed by King County Executive Dow Constantine and Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn." What a joke!!!!...
499. Just wanted to chime in and say that the only thing I don't like about the proposal is the rule where we have to get off the back door. Aside from simply being a pain if you're in a double-length bus, why don't I get to say thank you to my driver anymore? I understand the reasoning behind the idea, but it's only going to make a difference downtown- the rest of the county is pay as you enter already. I'd prefer that the rule wasn't used at all, but if it has to be, maybe the rule could only apply downtown.
500. I'm not a Seattle resident, but was a tourist to your city last summer we experienced the ride free area. We're from Chicago and as avid transit users we found your bus system to be utterly confusing. The ride free area was ok until exiting the free zone. It's very confusing to pay when exiting, no other system does this. Exiting customers in the front conflicted with boarding customers. Then there's the issue of exiting from the rear door in the free zone, it's mysteriously disallowed after hours, yet I read Metro policy has erased this rule. I noticed some routes have surcharges, I didn't even want to know if you had to pay those when boarding or leaving. I'm so happy Metro will be getting rid of this silly free zone policy. Operations should be much easier for tourists to understand who never experienced paying when exiting. Chicago has people paying when you enter and with the advent of touch cards (ORCA) things have never been quicker. Hope my input is useful.

501. Many buses in other cities have signs on the Windows which have an arrow pointing back with text saying "exit to the rear." They also have signs on the rear doors saying exit door and signs on the front door saying entrance door. I think we need to help create a culture where people allways exit to the rear, even when they are closer to the front. Also, having muni style faregates and all door boarding in the tunnel could help. Just like on muni, they would deal with link fare evation, and allow tunnel busses to continue with normal fare payment outside the tunnel.
502. This is a very welcome change. The board at the front exit at the rear will help move busy busses more efficiently. It will also ensure that everyone pays the correct fair. I have been waitin for this change since moving here a year and a half ago.
503. I use a bus each evening on either 2nd Ave, 3rd Ave, or in the tunnel, to get to my Sounder train for the ride home. A LOT of other people do the same. How can you get on at the front door to pay, and push through a loaded bus to get out the back door in a 5-8 block trip? Especially if you have mobility issues. Will we have to leave via the back door in the tunnel too?
504. Just make the cash fare more than the ORCA fare like almost every other system and all the slow pokes with cash will get cards asap, problem solved. The RFA is a huge pain
505. How about a third fare zone of \$1.50 for the current free ride zone? i am car-free, and chose to live downtown to be close to my work. Having to pay \$2+ to get from Belltown to Pioneer Square is a penalty on those of us who live responsibly by not tearing up the roads and polluting the air. Give us a break.
506. I am very thankful the ride free zone is being eliminated. The paying customer is often in danger from the non paying customers. My kids have had their cell phones and books stollen on the way to school. Last week my step son was threatened with brass knuckles to give up his cell phone. I sat in a chair someone had urinated on last year and have experience many intoxicated free bus riders that made me very very uncomfortable. I trully appreciate that people have to pay the fare so they do not use the bus to drink alcohol, do their drugs or hassle and rob from paying customers. I know that I am glad to pay to go to work or shop it is more reasonable than paying for gas and parking. If I was a tourist I would rather ride a safe bus I had to pay for, than a dangerous bus that was free.
507. I ride the Metro bus daily. I live near 3rd & Blanchard in Belltown. For me to use the "free ride zone" is convenient if I am just going to a destination in the downtown area. For me to pay a fare to just go so many blocks would be quite an expense for myself and others. In addition, Seattle is known for it's tourism from people all over the world. Why charge them just to get to certain destinations within the "ride free zone" that's available now? It would be appreciated that these changes do not occur. It's understandable that Metro needs monies to stay above water, but is it necessary to make this change? The only other way is for me to think not to charge the same fare when leaving the "ride free zone". What's wrong with only charging 50 cents? Metro will benefit and so will the public. (As a note, I take the #2 six days a week and out the ride free zone.)
508. Getting rid of the free ride zone would be a big mistake. Riders would not pay full fare to get from one end of First Avenue to the other. Why would they? It's a short ride. The best thing about the free ride zone is a person doesn't have to get in their car to make such a short trip. Stores and restaurants would suffer as they would not be able to count on patrons from other parts of downtown to make a

trip that was once easy and free. Sports fans, business people, and tourists would lose a service that makes moving around downtown, the stadiums and other attractions easy and enjoyable.

509. Please work with Sound Transit to reverse the fare policy of the downtown tunnel. In the downtown tunnel, riders are currently given an incentive to ride buses, since Link is free. This has the effect of shifting a large number of riders from Link to buses. Once buses charge downtown, this will be leveled out and short distance riders will just take whatever transit arrives first. However, if we made Link free downtown\*, this could have the opposite incentive. This is advantageous because it's quick and easy to load a large number of people onto Link, whereas it's slow and difficult to load a large number of people onto buses - especially if they have to pay. \* all the way to the stadiums, so that game day ridership doesn't swamp the buses
510. I understand the concept and reasoning behind paying on the front, deboarding on the back especially in the tunnel and at busy stops. Except . . .for buses that travel into suburban King County, ie., the 150, 140. If there is no one at a stop and someone needs to get off the bus to go to work, why could they not get off via the front door. You will have delay times for someone trying to deboard who is sitting near the front of the bus and they have to walk all the way to the back door. Especially if no one is waiting to board the bus at the stop, let them off the front. Sometimes it might just make common sense to let folks off the front when no one is waiting to board.
511. I appreciate the efforts to simplify fare-paying, but am very concerned about the low and no-income people's ability to get to the services they need. Public agencies have a long history of promising to continue to support certain services at a survival level, and then later the funding is cut back to the vanishing point. The most egregious example is Aid to Families with Dependent Children, but there are many others. From a systems point of view, it's much more effective to provide a certain level of free service to everyone than to target services at the "deserving" poor. Instead of the current fare structure, fares should be eliminated. Transit and other environment-conserving services should be funded by a carbon tax, collected at the national level and distributed on a per-capita basis to state and local agencies.
512. I would like to suggest that a free shuttle be provided to regularly transport people free through at least some of the current ride free area. It would run most frequently during the peak of the business day 9 to 3, and not so much during the commute times. I also thought that it would be handy if another free shuttle could traverse from one end of the bus tunnel to the other in a similar fashion. I know that special funding might be required to support this. Perhaps one source could be that if this bus were all-Electric, then some eco-based funding sources could be utilized. Other sources could include human service agencies or private charities or local businesses.
513. I have been on Metro bus for over 20 years now . it's about time Metro finally start stop it's free ride zone in downtown Seattle . I do go with Metro's way of paying in downtown fare . I like it 1 RFM
514. There should be a surcharge for using cash. If there was a surcharge on cash, more people would move to ORCA and the process of paying while loading would be increased. As long as ORCA and cash are the same price, too many people have no motivation to make the switch.
515. I feel this is a terrible policy that makes public transportation less accessible for the general public. Expect your ridership within the downtown area to decrease rapidly. I do hope you choose to use the

extra money you collect off the unemployed and underemployed is at least used to provided more dependable service with less busses completely skipping areas of their route or scheduled route times. I was on a bus when you were testing this and i was trapped on a standing room only bus for 35 minutes in the downtown transit tunnel due to how much slower the boarding process is. Although my employer subsidizes my ORCA card I am considering driving to and from work daily to avoid the backups and constant risk of being late, I hope my fellow commuters choose to do the same.

516. So lemme get this str8 first you're hiking prices to people with no money second your taking away essential tools from the very the people that may be able to better their lives and communities with these tools and w/o them are forced into a compromising position wich will lead an eruption of crime and financial based deaths due to your employees / drivers of buses relentless refusals to enable the particular people whom are indeed the working class citizenz that are working to stay poor and can barely afford to write this one comment/statement. I understand inflations and economis but there is no sound reasoning for u to take a neccessity away from the very people you rely on to pay your wages are also the ones that are going to be coming to you for employment here in the very near future due to your greed. This implementation your businesss is doing is wrong and wrong is wrong. However, u did not give the people fair warning and.or question answer periods, you've kept it under the radar until the final date. Now u offer a moment of unfair disadvantage to the ones that the world relys upon for such things as taxes benefits politics, occupations, and education which are the most important in this world but it seems that your business endorses prisons and customs that you say are not good.
517. Thank goodness! I have lived in Seattle since 1962 and have ridden the bus since I was a child. They used to be clean and well maintained. Now when I get on they are smelly and dirty. I have had drunks flop over on me and fall asleep. I pay for my bus tickets and DESERVE to have a clean bus. This did not happen before the free zone came along. Please get rid of it forever. Thank you, Carol Goodrich
518. Eliminating the RFA will have no effect on monthly pass holders, but will potentially have a great effect on riders paying by cash or ORCA ePurse, including King County residents who only occasionally have a need to come to downtown Seattle as well as tourists and visitors. KC Metro should provide a cost-effective daypass for such cash/ePurse riders so that they are not unduly penalized and can more conveniently use Metro while conducting business in downtown Seattle, including use of buses to get around downtown. In addition, in order to speed up boarding, KC Metro should provide an incentive for riders to use an ORCA ePurse, instead of paying with cash and receiving a paper transfer. Paper transfers are almost always more generous than the strict ORCA 2-hour window.
519. As a newly arrived resident of Seattle (6mos. -- From Las Vegas, NV), let me first say that this city should be proud of it Metro/transit system. And, as a low income resident, I have been grateful for the downtown core "Ride Free" Zone. My concern is not the loss of a ride-free zone but the over abundance of buses that a city this size has. Not a day goes by that I don't witness a convoy of buses (5-8) roll by, many of which are duplicates of the same bus. I think any critical, forward thinking, green city, should at least consider the efficiency of their current system before making changes that will most definitely affect rider-ship. Money is tight right now, nobody is arguing that. However, does this city really need diesel, natural gas, and electrically powered buses that require a large array of specially trained skilled workers to maintain? Leave the tunnel as is. Leave the light rail as is (with an eye toward expansion), and go with one type of power plant for your buses (preferably natural gas). I

for one would love to see the historic downtown without all of the clutter, confusion, and unsightliness of those ugly power/transit lines. The monies saved by not having to maintain and service them should, in the very least, be cause for serious consideration and analysis. After all is said and done the object is to get people downtown. But, might I add, keep them coming back. Considering the billions being spent and planned for the revitalization of the waterfront core, providing efficient, memorable (good), transit is critical. In closing let me ask why it's not possible to have a "Ride free" downtown bus? I think it would be nice to see a northbound 3rd Ave and southbound Alaskan Way express line stopping at select points on a half-hour basis. Again, get people downtown and keep them coming back.

520. I think it is great that Metro is getting rid of the Ride Free area. I think that it causes a lot of people to abuse the bus system by utilizing it for longer free rides and taking advantage of the bus drivers. I hope that the drivers are going to have an easier time of getting fares from EVERYONE who rides the bus. Thanks for providing this service in the past, but it is time for it to go.
521. I can tell this is really going to slow down buses in downtown Seattle if people have to pay as they get on the bus. Why not go to the European style- of bus/trian and make people pay before they get on the bus and require them to show their pass to the fare enforcers either on the bus or as they exit the bus. Or perhaps you have a system like the one in D.C. where you purchase your pass and scan it before entering into the tunnel and then scan it again as exiting the tunnel and it will charge you the correct fee based upon your locations.
522. Best changes ever.
523. I am incredibly saddened to learn of the end of the ride-free area - not for myself but for the hundreds of poor residents who rely heavily on it just to get by day to day. Expanding discount ticket programs is not enough and will not fill the massive need that will be created by this cut. Struggling social service agencies still need to pay something for the discounted tickets. Because most agencies can't afford very many tickets, most only give out a couple tickets at a time - just enough to get to their agency and back - and nowhere near enough to meet consumers true transportation needs. In addition, there are many vulnerable and needy residents who fall between the eligibility cracks and are not being served by agencies that would be eligible for discount tickets. In my experience, even many disabled clients don't qualify for a Regional Reduced Fare Permit because many can't afford to see a doctor who can sign the paperwork. Even with an RRF, the cost of riding is unaffordable for many. Monthly \$0.75 PugetPasses are \$28 whereas they were only \$5 a few years ago. At the same time as the fares have risen astronomically, the economy has tanked, making jobs unavailable and massive cuts have occurred to benefits with GAU/Disability Lifeline's cash benefit being eliminated entirely. So, many poor residents are literally living off of zero income. Rather than simply expanding the discount ticket program, there needs to be a flashcard system verifying no or extremely low income that allows residents to ride the bus for free or at the very least for the disabled rate. It is not right that there is no safety net system for this essential service. Transportation is needed to get to social services, apply for jobs, attend medical and mental health appointments. If bus service becomes unaffordable, these important errands will occur less often, resulting in many residents being sicker, less connected with mental health and other services, less able to access food banks, apply for jobs, etc. That is not the type of city I want to live in. Please, please consider exempting people who provide verification of no/low income from the end of the ride-free area. Let the rest of us pay but give those who are most

vulnerable and in need a flashcard to allow them to continue to ride-free. Sincerely, Christina Mason  
518 N 87th St. Seattle, WA 98103 Ph: 206-390-0115 Email: masonchristina@hotmail.com

524. It's about time! This will get the money from those rich bastards downtown and cut down on the smelly homeless on the buses.
525. Will the price change?
526. Keep going and no one will continue to shop or eat downtown. With expensive pay parking until eight pm, people chose the malls which is a shame. I guess if this keeps some bus routes operating, such as the 28, (which is usually always full), it is a good idea. It just seems it is getting more and more expensive to shop and eat downtown.
527. So glad this is finally happening! Hopefully getting rid of the Ride Free Area will eliminate some of the questionable riders in the downtown area who are disruptive to regular commuters. Thank you!
528. I think this is a great idea! However, has Metro thought about having one route that stays downtown on a loop that is still ride free. Maybe something that goes along 3rd ave so people can still get around downtown during lunches, etc on the cheap? Just my 2 cents =)
529. Excellent! Am looking forward to the end of the very confusing free ride policy. Thank you for going ahead with the change this September. From a daily rider of Metro and Community Transit via downtown Seattle. Now if only 3rd Avenue/Pine Street bus stop could get cleaned up; this is my forced transfer point and a daily safety concern!
530. Question: I get on in a one zone and can get off in the same zone prior to the bus continuing on into the next zone. I use an orca card. How will it be known if I should be charged for one or two zone travel?
531. That keep poor people off. Not! Well you can have free ride from 6am-6pm M-F. Sat, Sun & Hol there be no free rides.
532. You should board first the customers with a bus pass, and then those who pay cash. This will speed up the process and encourage others to get a pass so that they get a seat. Your good customers who have passes should get on first anyway.
533. I have two concerns about the proposed changes to King County Metro bus service beginning in September 2012: (1) I live along a North Seattle bus route that crosses from one fare zone to another. Usually, my trip does require a two-zone fare payment when I leave. However, currently, you need pay only a one-zone fare if you depart before reaching the Seattle boundary. Will the proposed "pay-upon-entry" change require payment of a two-zone fare for all trips, regardless of whether you're traveling within or outside of Seattle city limits? (2) I'm a senior citizen who travels by bus to return home with bags of groceries. Departing from the bus through the back door can be an issue---when the bus draws to the curb, it's easier to negotiate the lowest step from the front door when one's arms are full. Will bus operators have the option to allow travelers to leave by the front door if they're obviously burdened?

534. I'm not sure why such a big deal is being made of this issue. Most Metro trips are already "pay as you enter" trips- the only exception is daytime trips leaving downtown. Everything else- going towards downtown, suburban routes, service after 7pm- is already pay as you enter. Why the policy changes over door usage? This is a minor issue. Delays downtown will be mitigated by how fast the trips are once they leave town, and I assume there will still be some sort of free bus for speedy travel inside the CBD. Aside from the unnecessary hubbub, I approve of the changes except for the exit-through-the-back idea, which is a needless hassle in a system that is already almost entirely pay-as-you-enter. Thank you for providing excellent service and for soliciting feedback. Best, Yared
535. I do have mobility issues, and it's already inconvenient to get to and from my office and the Sounder station. With the addition of the extra time to have everyone pay on each trip, and being expected to exit the rear doors, this basically means that I'll no longer be riding the train as I won't be able to get convenient, timely transportation to the station. However, since many of the buses are standing room only, especially at evening commute hours, and bus drivers do not want to accommodate people with mobility issues who are not officially handicapped (I've been told to wait for the next bus), I can no longer ride the buses either. Is there another option? Many major Metropolitan areas are adding or improving ride-free zones with free shuttle buses, trolleys or other options for downtown shoppers and businesses. Seattle seems to be the only city that's taking away this option.
536. It is about time! The ride free area is so confusing, and creates an unfriendly environment on the buses when people ride around just because they have nowhere else to go.
537. I want to know if Metro has under consideration a special rate for downtown residents who only use the current free zone. It is a bit steep for downtown residents going from Belltown to Pioneer Square or Capitol Hill to Belltown or Pioneer Square to be paying \$5.50 to go shopping or to a game or out to eat or to/from work? At that rate, we can pool a taxi....
538. Please continue the Free Ride Zone. I am a retired social services worker.
539. Please continue the Free Ride Zone.
540. The Ride Free area in downtown is great for businesses on so many levels: people use the bus during their lunch breaks to go shopping or to get to-from meetings during the day (this is better than using a car). The Ride Free is great for tourists who can just hop on and off to explore and SHOP. Instead of eliminating it completely, why not change the distance it covers? Instead of Chinatown and Belltown being the last free ride stops, change it to Pioneer Square and Pike's Market. At least this will give people access to the main parts of downtown Seattle.
541. It will be too bad to see the ride free area go. If there was a way to work out a lower-cost fare in the ride-free area (\$1.00!!), that would preserve the purpose of ride free and make it a fair fare!
542. If Community Transit and Sound Transit opt to keep their downtown service free (vs Metro asking for a fare) folks will learn to hop on the ST and CT buses. Instead of looking for a green/maroon bus/METRO they will let the METRO buses roll by and hop on ST and CT's blue buses to travel the downtown area for free. If CT and ST don't side with you word will spread fast that ST and CT provide FREE downtown service vs. METRO charging. So I hope they (ST and CT) hop on board with your idea

because when you do start charging fares downtown won't it be a non-issue/no big deal if CT and ST still let the public ride free?

543. I applaud the decision to eliminate the Ride Free area and feel it is long overdue. As a commuter who pays for an ORCA pass, it infuriates me to see so many people taking advantage of the Ride Free zones and riding free everywhere. I know that a portion of what I pay every month is compensating for these freeloaders. I do not mind paying well for a great transit system, but I do mind paying the fares of riders who are stealing free rides every day. I would like to see a free shuttle running only through and around the downtown area for tourists, hotels, businesses and critical social services.
544. I would be disappointed, and sickened, to see the ride-free zone eliminated from Seattle. This is an invaluable service for more people than you may realize- with bus fare constantly raised, our Orca cards don't go as far as they used to, and the ride free zone allows us some little respite from never ending costs of transportation inside the downtown area. We rely on this break to save a little, and while I understand clearly that Metro and the City are facing budget deficits, it concerns me that those of us who do what we can to live inside a budget must retool our own budgets yet again to make up for this deficit. Please, allow Us all to come together and find another way.
545. Eliminating the Ride Free Area will hurt business everywhere between the ride free zone. People will not come to downtown for shopping or entertainment because of the already expensive parking and now everyone have to pay to ride for a few stops in downtown. Also, for sure it will slow down the process of moving people out of the downtown area during rush hours. Please DO NOT eliminates the ride free zone. It will hurt the city business / economies.
546. These changes are very short-sited. Have you considered the impact of many people getting on the bus in what is now the Ride Free zone and how much time that will take for each of these people (many who will not use an Orca card because they are not regular bus riders or they are tourists) to fumble in their wallet for money and then get on the bus? This will delay bus schedules going outward from the downtown area. The Ride-Free Zone also encourages people to experiment by taking the bus---people who would otherwise not ride the bus. You are going to lose many potential bus riders because of this. People are not going to pay to ride the bus six to eight blocks. You are also discriminating against handicapped people who rely on the bus to get around downtown by making them pay. People will not use restaurants in Pioneer Square if they are working in the Belltown neighborhood if they have to pay full fare to go that short distance. Tourists love Seattle because it's easy to get around downtown free on the bus. Portland does not charge people to ride the bus/transit within their downtown core. Take a lesson from them.
547. Two things- Downtown still needs a free bus running all day- perhaps like the old 98, which you may recall ran up and down 2nd and 4th as far north as Wall. Exiting only through the rear door is an unnecessary hassle- that only works in countries that don't have artics.
548. have people riding in the DSTT pay before they go down to the trains/buses in the tunnel. This will still allow the buses and trains to use all doors to board, having fares collected prior to boarding.
549. In the transit tunnel, make everyone pay before they go down into the tunnel before they board the buses. This will speed up the train and the buses boarding in the DSTT and the Link Train who then can use all the doors to board, assuming all fares have been paid/collected.

550. 1. The tunnel needs to be moved to an off-board Proof of Payment system for all buses, full stop. Four ticket machines per tunnel stop will be more than sufficient for selling fares. a. Tunnel speed: boarding is already too slow through the tunnel. PoP moves customers much faster. b. Tunnel safety: Though I don't like the "safety" concern troll, the tunnel has distinct safety issues which will become worse when the loitering/small drug sales problem downtown moves off buses in the Ride Free Area. The tunnel needs to not become a new loiter spot; as much as I know that these are poverty issues, I am a poor person trying to get to work and school safely, too. c. Revenue: Income from tickets will rapidly eclipse the cost of installing 4 new ticket machines per tunnel stop. Additionally, Metro's severe fare evasion issues, which have only worsened in the recent past, will be slightly less intractable in terms of the tunnel buses. It's worth noting that other transit systems which serve a large cross-section of customers in mid-sized cities do not openly permit fare evasion to the degree Metro does, which is disheartening since most incidents on buses happen with, you guessed it, people evading fare. d. ORCA, Anyways: Most paying customers on the buses in the tunnel are ORCA users anyway. e. It helps surface routes, too: Some people will buy tickets at stations due to convenience, so they can do that and then board surface-street buses. 2. The move to no RFA, board front all the time needs to be publicized significantly. Make sure there is constant notice that the RFA is going away from here out; similarly, 60 day notice about board in front is going to be needed. It needs to be in multiple language advisories on the bus, there need to be radio and TV commercials, etc. 3. There needs to be some reasonable allocation of single-ride, NO TRANSFER tickets to human services agencies which need the RFA to move people. Transfer sales/hoarding are, again, major issues on Metro that don't occur in Portland, Spokane, or Vancouver. However, there's no way that there will be a lack of impact. These single-ride tickets need to be allocated carefully and responsibly and the issuing agencies need to be responsible for not giving out too many of them. 4. Once again, lower tolerance for fare evasion. I'm not saying don't take Grandma home to Bothell if she's made an honest mistake, but I am saying that the people who just walk onto the bus without paying need to be disciplined, as they're not only riding on my low-income dime but they're generally causing trouble on the bus. Getting rid of the RFA is an excellent opportunity to clamp down on the perception that you don't have to pay your fare on Metro, and this cannot be underestimated in terms of improving the bus system. There are three barriers that people report to taking the bus: crowding, safety, and schedules. You can fix two of them right here. As much as "safety" is often a coded wild-card, I am a low-income person of color, generally who "safety" is used as a code word about; I still can directly correlate fare evasion with people who behave inappropriately on a bus, especially at night. Similarly, crowding would be alleviated by actually making people pay their fares; the 2 and 3/4 alone would probably have 15-20% more available space on any given run, something Metro desperately needs. So, in short: make the tunnel a fare-paid zone, like Link and the same way it works in Vancouver, stop tolerating repeat fare evaders and \*start giving tickets\*, and get cracking on the publicity as soon as you can. Thank you for your time and attention, ladies and gentlemen. Kia ora, Gwen Cadogan
551. I've got a bus pass so it doesn't really affect me but I think this is a disappointment for the city and it's tourists. It was a nice way for folks to get up and down the core part of the city. bummed about that value we brought for tourists.
552. I think that getting rid of the ride free area is not a good idea because it will make it extremely difficult especially when boarding and de boarding buses in that area. For example if I am getting off of the 71 in the ride free area the line of people boarding the bus will could potentially become quite long and crowd the platform which would make it difficult for those not only trying to board the buses, but it

will also be difficult for those who are trying to walk to a different loading bay. Another potential problem could be that buses have the potential of being late due to the heavy volume of people trying to board the buses especially the lines.

553. Don't bother showing up for the meeting. If it's anything like the "outreach" Metro did for their September proposed changes don't waste your time or your breath. Metro has made up its' mind what they are going and they are going to do it no matter what the public thinks or wants. Many people will be screwed up and many will not be able to reach a bus to travel on but one of the King Councilwomen said "a few will have to sacrifice for the good of the many." Guess what part of the county she represents?
554. I've used Metro almost every day since I moved here in 2004 and I am fully in support of Metro making this change. Most major cities have a system where everyone pays as they enter through the front door, and exits through the rear door. Once everyone is accustomed to the change it won't take long for riders to board the bus, plus oncoming riders will not have to wait for other passengers to disembark. Mostly I am in favor of this because it will make it much less confusing to know when to pay (and if anyone holds up the line it is often confused tourists). Also, you will not have to worry about your transfer expiring while still on the bus, or a driver that didn't know you paid when you entered because the drivers switched shifts and it is now pay as you leave. And hopefully it will reduce the number of people that get on downtown and have no intention of paying as they exit. I hope this change can increase the revenue for Metro and thus help to improve and maintain service. Thank you!!!
555. As a King County Driver, I will continue to do as I have done in the past 15 years, I will not challenge anyone on fares, nor will I open my mouth and state a fare to anyone unless I am asked, The majority of the passengers are over medicated, under medicated or need to be medicated, Some times just stating the fare to them, will set off a fare dispute, I am paid to drive, assist with all ADA customers, and get passengers to there designated bus stop reasonably on time and safe. I will continue to give out transfers to anyone and anybody who ask me for one. I will never, challenge anyone over a fare dispute, lack of fare, either real money, or insufficient funds on the orca card. My goal is to keep the bus moving, getting passengers to there designated locations with a transfer and a smile. And to provide the best customer service that King County Metro Transit can offer to the traveling public at large.
556. This is a little sad but I understand why it's necessary. It will actually probably be more efficient in the end because people won't always be confused about when to pay. And you won't have freeloaders getting off outside the free ride zone and refusing to pay.
557. Good idea. In addition to the confusion of whether to pay when entering or leaving the bus, derelicts who ride the buses in the Free Ride Area will be prevented from being a burden to paying customers.
558. Sometimes I use a shopping cart for my groceries and need the lift. I am a small woman and cannot lift a heavy cart filled with groceries including large bottles (2 liter) and six packs of liquids and canned goods, so I ask for the lift. Many drivers are accommodating, others not (one cited a back problem). Will I be able to exit through the front door with my shopping cart? It would be too difficult to exit the back with stairs or a high platform. Will transfers still be implemented? Low income riders (such as myself) cannot pay for multiple buses going to one

direction. If I have to go downtown to catch another bus would I have to pay for another going the same direction (north or south). This too is difficult because it would eliminate going shopping, to work for many working poor, doctor's appointments, and much more. Many people have things to do; errands to run, and if they need the bus system it should be accommodating and convenient. Elimination of the free ride zone could also affect the businesses downtown. It's understandable that costs of business do go up, however, the system should accommodate the poor. The added costs would hinder the poor, lower income people (and some middle class as well) and is also discriminatory. Could Metro find ways to raise money to fund the system, perhaps apply for federal grants to fund low income poor riders? I think the Metro Bus Transit services has gotten worse: raising fares, now eliminating the free ride routes. Paying \$2.50 for each bus is too prohibitive for many riders. And many people do not have family and friends to give them rides to wherever they need to go (the ride givers also have their own lives to lead, too); they may be alone in this city. I am one of these riders. And taxicabs? Forget it! Too cost prohibitive and some cab drivers are unscrupulous. I work the graveyard shift and cannot attend your open house, so I am writing this letter to voice my opinion. THANK YOU.

559. why not pay as you leave the bus? paying when you get on holds up the exiting of the masses.
560. Although I have an unlimited ORCA card that I receive from my employer, I do not agree with eliminating the ride free area downtown. I think the ride free area is essential for tourists and low income individuals. It's an easy and efficient manner for them to get around the core downtown area without having to pay. I think it puts an extreme burden on lower income individuals who NEED to utilize the bus system.
561. Tho' I'm not a low-income person, I have concern for them and their ability to get to needed services with no cost. You say in announcement: "Will address providing transportation assistance for low or no-income people who have used the Ride Free Area to get to essential services in the downtown area. " How will you address this? I suggest some kind of card for those proving they are low income so they can scan a "free ride" card when needed to Dr or appointment, or other need. The dept that determines now who gets low-income housing, for ex, could tell bus service how to determine who will get these cards and ability to use when needed. If such cards are issued, and you don't make them look that different from other's cards, it will help the self-esteem of those who must use such also. Thanks for listening, as I can't make the meeting date.
562. I do not use the bus in the downtown Ride Free Area. My comments have to do with all riders entering through the front door of the bus in the Tunnel. Having all riders enter through the front door of the bus will add a substantial amount of time. Also, in the Tunnel, the mob of people will be a bigger mess than it is already -- there is hardly room to move around on the Tunnel platform now. Will the busses still stop at their posted stops in the Tunnel? or just stop anywhere so that the riders will be running the length of the platform trying to get to their bus? Obviously those that are making these changes do not depend on the busses for transportation. I've been a loyal bus rider for 36 years and this is the worst change to come along.
563. I welcome ending the RFA. Everyone should be expected to pay when they use the bus. Too many people are cheating the system by getting on free and not paying as they get off outside of downtown. Also, I suggest ending the paper transfers as well. Should do as CT has done. If you pay with cash, you get no transfer, but with ORCA you get electronic transfer. There's a guy at my bus stop that he stored

all his transfers and when the bus comes up to the stop, he peers from outside the bus to the paper transfer area by the driver and quickly searches for the matching transfer for the day and uses that for his commute. This is on the University Ave southbound in U-district near 42nd St around 8:30am. He gets on one of the 70-74 buses.

564. It will be nice to no longer ride the bus with people that use the to simply stay warm or sleep or be a nuisance and try to start fights because they are drunk or high. It will also help reduce the number of drug dealing dealings or pushers that ride the bus to their next drop off. This will also make your new slogan for keeping children safe a true statement as i would never let my children ride a Metro bus with all the things i have seen.
565. Yes! Please do away with the Ride Free zone. It's confusing.
566. I do not think you should eliminate the Ride Free Area. For downtown workers, this makes shopping at the retail core easier during the lunch hour. If I have to factor in an extra 15 minutes to walk to the stores, I won't do it. It's easier to go to the Mall after work. I think this move is going to hurt downtown businesses.
567. I am a frequent rider in the downtown area and have become tired of the drug dealing that happens on these buses. I appreciate this step as a way to help cut down on the drug traffic in the area. I agree that there needs to be a low / no income solution for people to get around to services in the area, but the prevalence of the drug trade to me takes priority.
568. As a daily Metro rider, I just wanted to say that I commend these changes and fully support your initiative and I hope the inevitable cries and hollers of people at your open house will not slow down this change. I believe that the free ride zone has long put your drivers in an awkward position, trying to handle people who do not pay when they exit the bus and also the confused new riders and tourists as to when they are supposed to pay. Seattle transit fares are very generous compared to most cities and I hope the elimination of the free ride zone will allow that generosity to continue. Thank you so much for making this come to fruition. I resent the overcrowded buses that I experience most every day on my way to and from work which become filled with people who seem to have no need to be on the bus other than to socialize and ride up the street.
569. this is a great service, to get around downtown where folks live and work. will the fare be the same as traveling to south seattle when you only need to go 3 blocks? i didnt see fare change anything on website. this city and surrounding areas is getting worse and worse for public transit....no wonder so many people drive in this puget sound area, take a cue from Portland
570. Smart move. The low/no-income riders are the ones who will be greatly inconvenienced. Using the smart-card technology now available (Orca), a similar type card could be developed that would allow low/no-income riders access to public transportation within what was the ride-free area. A qualification criteria would need to be established for these riders and updated (perhaps annually). This qualification criteria might also be in conjunction with any state-assisted program they might be in such as food stamps, welfare, etc. Since Metro is working with the City of Seattle and Human Services agencies, a list of assistance recipients is already available so those in need of a "transportation pass" are already identified. I'm sure the details would be ironed out. I've noticed there are no signs on the bus stops to notify passengers. Having bus drivers make the announcement

is pointless because riders (particularly commuters) are absorbed in other matters (reading, listening to music, talking on the phone, to each other, etc.) to actually pay attention. Having signs posted everywhere now may avoid any confusion later. This should be your first priority in order to allow particularly those who do not utilize electronic technology an opportunity to make any budgetary adjustments and allow a general public "venting" period so when the change is actually implemented, it will be a smoother transition. It is also a good idea to have signs prominently displayed on the bus during the first quarter of the implementation period - again to avoid confusion by people who do not get their news electronically (including television and radio).

571. I understand the need to have people pay when they enter the bus but now the two hour transfer time is eliminated ... the ridership of buses will be effected and the income will decrease for the bus lines. I believe the transfer time needs to be increased. I shouldn't have to pay \$5.25 to travel one way to work ... it would be cheaper to drive and park downtown.
572. The change from free-ride area to pay first is going to cause traffic to freeze up if all the drivers have to collect the fare at each stop. That means that first, the bus has to let everybody off, then, they have to let everybody on and collect the fare. That means that each bus will be in the loading area much longer than it already is. At rush hour, this will be a NIGHTMARE. Once again, decisions are being made by pencil pushers, not thinking people who actually USE public transportation. Cathy Evans  
15124 Burn Rd Arlington WA 98223 cathy@lubegard.com (206)762-5343
573. I understand that eventually this was going to happen, but I think if you are going to get rid off the free ride zone then lower the bloody fare amount. This is unfair to people who can barely afford to ride the bus in these hard times. I know I depend off the free ride zone to be able to commute around in downtown to make errands or see friends and family. I already spend \$82 every two weeks to get to down town. And now I have to pay more when I want relax in downtown. I see no point on traveling to downtown anymore.
574. I am so happy the ride free area is going to be discontinued. What a waste of money and time! I have ridden the bus two times a day, five times a week for the past 5 years. I have lived in multiple neighborhoods and have taken over 5 different routes on a very regular basis. Most have ridden through the ride free area extensively. Many, many times I've seen people get off the bus without paying the bus fare. The bus driver has no option but to just let them off the bus. At least when people are getting on and they don't have the correct fare, the driver has some recourse - they can tell the rider to get off the bus. The only people who take advantage of the ride free area are "non destinational riders" and they take up valuable seats from those who pay for the service. The budget of Metro is too tight to provide such a HUGE free ride area any more. I applaud Metro for taking such a bold and necessary step. Thank you.
575. It seems to me that the best option for helping low/no income riders get to essential services would be to RETAIN the ride-free area. You could reduce the hours it's available, for instance 0730 to 1800, which would cover getting to service organizations. Giving these people yet another hassle does nothing to improve downtown. The service organizations that try to ameliorate their problems are ill-equipped financially to pay for bus transit for them. My employer provides me with a pass for my commute, and I have no problem with pay as you enter. I don't see this as presenting any problems other than slowing down boarding.

576. Having human service agencies work out transportation options is the right way to deal with transportation for those on low incomes. It should not be up to Metro to deal with this alone. The downtown ride-free sections of bus runs I use have become a collector for drug deals and other such activities that are handy to carry out on a moving bus. Get on when convenient and get off when things get hot. It's hard for the police to keep track of things when Metro can keep you on the move for free. By all means, end the ride-free zone! Please! This should make bus service safer and more available for those who really need it. Pay as you board is a great improvement. No more questions about whether it is before or after 7:00PM, heading to or from downtown, etc. Simpler is better!
577. I like the free ride zone. It is an easy way to get around town and helps when seeing the city or meeting a friend for lunch. I think it is a mistake to do away with the free ride zone.
578. It's about time the ride free was eliminated, the only free transportation is called, walking. I am a long time transit rider and supporter, and tired of seeing drivers getting an 'ear-full' or delayed due to someone that has nothing better to do but make working people late for work with the time taken to be Metro Moving Company on third ave, or crack head transit system...helping the truly needy isn't just giving free rides at the expense of others.
579. The loss of this service will not only negatively impact low-income people, but working people that do business on a daily basis within the downtown core that do not currently have a bus pass. The Ride Free Zone supports local businesses and it's a shame this service will be disappearing. It makes it easier to jump on a bus to get across town for business meetings and enables people to take care of business without worrying about additional costs, since it's already extremely expensive to drive into downtown Seattle. It's unfortunate that this great service is expiring...it seems that the emerald city is becoming less friendly, which is too bad.
580. I think the pay as you board in downtown Seattle is a horrible idea - there isn't a convenient way for people to line up on the sidewalks to wait to board the buses, especially during the heavy commute times. It becomes a mad rush to get to the ONE door that will open. In the city the buses don't always stop at their designated stops because multiple buses can be in line, this will cause bus riders to run, shove others in order to get their way quickly to their own bus. Riders can be walking running in different directions as there isn't a correct orderly place to stand and line up as there are at park & rides or other stops not in the congested downtown city streets. Also, there can be 3 buses moving along one city block at a given time, hopeful riders trying to determine where their bus will stop and how to get to the front of the line. You are asking for bad accidents to happen. I urge you to rethink this decision. It is already stressful enough trying to find a seat on a crowded bus coming home - now you want to force us into a dangerous free for all frenzy to board through one door. People exiting the front door only make things worse as the crowd wanting to enter the bus is pushing forward. PLEASE don't make this change! I can imagine that any savings you think you'll see will be dwarfed by the customer complaints, potential injury lawsuits and poor PR.
581. I have taken the bus in different US cities and other countries. Customers pay when you board the bus. Other countries have doors specifically for exiting only, entering only. Changing the current system will be a challenge. The overall positives far outweigh the negatives.
582. This certainly is a big step BACKWARDS in proving a good quality of community for downtown residents, workers and tourists. I work on 1st street and often walk down to 1st and Pine from Summit

and Olive, and take the free bus to my Pioneer Square office. I cannot imagine a worse decision for our tourism trade, downtown workers and residents. By the way I saw the notice in the Spare Change paper. Please do not eliminate this amazing service - free rides through downtown. I have always been proud of our city for having the forethought to provide a service that so much for so many. In a city known for it's lack of cohesive public transit, this is the wrong way to go.

583. please..... expecting everyone to exit thru the back door makes no sense. I'm not sure what you hope to gain but please consider allow people to leave via the door closest to where they are seated. If you think time will be saved by exiting the back door, think again! If I am seated up front on a crowded bus time will be lost as I weave my way thru a crunch of bodies to get to the front. Currently on crowded buses many drivers open the back door outside the ride area and allow passengers to exit the back door and come to the front to pay. You might be mortified by this thinking it gives some an opportunity to not pay. However, I have observed that most people come to the front door and pay. I'll bet that those who do not ( and they seem to be in the minority) were not going to pay anyway. Please do not add one more obstacle to riding the bus by restricting passengers to exit the closet door. There is no value added to this strategy
584. I second the idea of a free circulator shuttle connecting Int'l Dist, Westlake, and Belltown. I do not like being asked to exit the back door all the time- making everyone walk to the back isn't going to save time. It's not like Metro hasn't been doing paying when entering on all its suburban trips for decades; there's never been a problem with people exiting from either door. Maybe that policy could apply downtown only? Also, I think this would need more than just Metro Police focusing on downtown for a while, in terms of enforcement- Metro needs regular fare enforcement on all routes, like RapidRide and Link.
585. Well, isn't this one of the stupidest things I've ever heard. On the one hand, eliminating the Ride Free Area may eliminate some of the low-life that ride only in the free zone. This may be a good thing. On the other hand, I don't know how anyone could possibly think paying as you enter is anything but inconvenient and time-consuming. It's also dangerous for the passengers. Who wants to take out their wallet at a downtown bus stop? Before this began, passengers were regularly robbed. Of course, we could wait until we board and incur the wrath of the already crabby drivers. Those of you who make these brilliant suggestions should be required to wait for a bus almost anywhere on 3rd Avenue, especially, at Union, Pike, Pine or Virginia stops. And another thing, could the Orca readers be placed at the same location on each bus?
586. I am in favor of eliminating the free ride zone downtown. When to pay has always been confusing to new riders, who don't need any more excuses to not try using busses. People faking looking for money (who expect a free ride) take far too much time when exiting, paying before entry gives the driver better options. It's nice downtown, but not worth the cost in time and confusion.
587. Please consider to have a short-term (3 day or a week) buspass (may be just cover the to-be-eliminated ride free zone) for out-of-town tourists. Many visitors that stay close to downtown hotels can stay around and just hop on and off these buses. Other visitors can drive in and just find a parking garage to park for the day and then use this buspass to stay in downtown area. If this benefits City of Seattle's economy, may be they should be involved in supplementing this cost. By the way, does this ride free elimination include the waterfront bus? The short term buspass should include that if needed.

588. Ride Free Area was a great idea. I take the bus, have a pass, but find the idea of movement downtown for free helps the city. I think what the city gains in dollars will be lost in a community feeling and interaction and movement downtown.
589. Please don't ask riders to exit through the rear doors. On paper this sounds good, but asking passengers of all shapes and sizes to walk all the way to the back of a articulated bus- or a very full bus of any length- is inconvenient in the real world. Artics are 60 feet long, roads have bumps, etc. It would be easier to simply continue the practice Metro has had for years on all pay-as-you-enter trips- simply leave using whichever door is most convenient. Aside from safety, I should point out that as an outsider and traveler of many cities, Seattle has a reputation abroad for having a tradition of saying "Thank you!" to the driver; this new rule would destroy that. Aside from these points, I think it's a great idea.
590. This is the dumbest thing ever. So now I have to pay FULL FARE to go from Columbia to Pike Street just to go shopping on my lunch?? You are doing downtown office workers and shoppers a serious disservice. This is a horrible idea, it will not streamline things, and will actually discourage riders from taking the bus while in downtown. King County, please stop making downtown inaccessible to those who do not live here. I know many people on the "Eastside" who are refusing to come downtown anymore because of policies such as this (and the terrible, new "extended" parking hours adopted by the City.) Leave the RFA alone.
591. Thank you for holding the open house on the Ride Free Area. Due to my work schedule, I regret I cannot attend. I strongly support the elimination of the Ride Free Area and the Pay After You Shove to the Exit system. I am hoping some of these suggestions for smooth implementation are already in the works: 1. Deploy all the budgeted ORVA vending machines around the Central Business District, at outbound Metro stops. This will serve riders from all over the county better than placing the vending machines all over the county would. 2. Station uniformed expeditors at all tunnel bays and major bus stops, especially during evening peak hours, to tap ORCA at back doors, assist with mobility device loading, and answer questions that would otherwise tie up operators. Perhaps these expeditors could even sell ORCAs. 3. Reduce the value of paper transfers to one hour, if transfers are to be kept at all. (I have yet to hear the cost of a transfer be cited as a reason for keeping any underutilized one-seat rides.) 4. Increase cash fares by 25 cents, so as to universally reward ORCA use, and make the cost of getting a card pay for itself (from the rider's point of view) in 20 trips. 5. Institute a low-income ORCA, available to riders who are on various government assistance programs, such as food stamps, unemployment, etc. Require use of loaded ORCA product to get the low-income rebate. Also, require use of loaded ORCA product to get the youth and senior discounts. I believe there are ways to do this without violating the Reduced Regional Fare Permit contract. 6. Designate the inbound portion of a couple bus routes as free within the Ride Free Area, lengthen the free area for those inbound buses to cover the distance to major social service providers, and make it 24/7, so that free riders come out winners from this transition. Choose inbound-only routes for this purpose. Please do not create a free circulator bus that only travels in downtown, as we need less congestion, not more. 7. Consolidate the bays in the tunnel, so that all debarking buses pull to the front. 8. Stick with the plan for the proposed route 50. Routes routed so as to avoid further congestion on 3rd Ave are a good thing. 9. Provide lots of signage and pamphlets showing riders how to find the ORCA VMs, as well as the free inbound buses. Change the labelling on the "Ticket Vending Machine"s to the more accurate "ORCA

Vending Machine". Thanks again for taking input on this transition. Best, Brent White 800 S. Donovan St. #210 Seattle, WA 98108 206-551-5144

592. I for one will be glad to see it go, since I routinely witness drivers not enforcing the fare now. My stop is 3rd and Cedar, and 1/3 of the time the driver doesn't bother to charge at that stop. I've also witnessed the same thing at Stewart and 9th, and also in the morning before 6 I've not been charged. Having a consistent fare policy will make things much easier. Now if only you could give some incentive for people to get an ORCA, like having a cash surcharge, this would work a lot better.
593. I see no genuine reason for this change - the poor will be the most severely affected and making them ride a "special bust only further brands them as poor. Moreover, since the bus is supposed to be a publicly subsidized service funded by our tax dollars you'd think there'd be a little room for fairness - My job pays for my bus fare so it won't matter to me - but, it will matter to my clients and to all poor people who now have to beg for another special service - a service that is outwardly visible and brands them as "poor" just so they can get around - all to what purpose?
594. I completely understand why the "Ride Free Zone" is very helpful to both riders and businesses in downtown Seattle, but I sure would like to stop the "riffraff, homeless and less desirable unpaying riders" to stop using the buses as housing for not only themselves, but all of the large dirty bags of stuff they carry with them (which takes up space for the paying riders). I work on Pill Hill and I'm forced to take a Metro bus # 3 or 4 up the hill from downtown, as the economy has caused us to lose our shuttle service. I would really like to see Metro put in a busline for the Pill Hill workers, other than the overcrowded, smelly, dirty and sometimes dangerous Metro bus # 3 and/or # 4. For myself, I find it difficult to walk up/down the steep hills of Seattle, as I am perm. disabled. Please consider the above comments and views for the upcoming Ride Free Area discussions. Thanks! Loyal rider of buses for several years.
595. I am 100% in favor of elimination of the ride free zone. I believe that everyone who rides the bus should pay for their ride. I ride the bus to and from West Seattle - South Lake Union daily. The ride free zone appears to me to be where troublemakers use the buses to get around and leave an area quickly. I am sure that public agencies that support the poor can work out some kind of bus ticket system so that people who actually need to use a bus may. In addition to elimination of the ride free zone I suggest that paper transfers be eliminated. Daily I see people ride for free with a stack of transfers that they have collected. This is lost revenue for Metro. I also suggest that the cash fares be raised. In London for example it costs more to ride the tube for a single cash trip than it does to use the prepaid Oyster card ( Orca card here ). London has a large percentage of Oyster users. This helps speed up the process of boarding as the card is good on the tube or bus. Once people know that it will cost more if they do not use the Orca card they will quickly get one.
596. 1) One thing I love about living in Seattle is the free ride area. It's such a great service for people who are making short trips, for tourists visiting the area, and for people who can't afford to pay for the bus or for other transportation. I understand the need to generate revenue, but I'm worried about how eliminating the ride free area will affect people with low or no incomes. I would feel more confident about the elimination and supportive of generating revenue if I had an idea of what other transportation options would be available. My fear is that the ride free area will be eliminated and that the transportation options developed will not close the gap in service. I wonder what the ramifications will be for social service agencies who are also working with limited budgets - what

might they have to cut or take money from to provide transportation? 2) Has Metro considered reducing the ride free area hours? Would it be possible to keep the service for business hours? E.g. 8-5 or 9-5. 3) I appreciate King County Metro wanting to simplify service for riders. I don't, however, like the idea of almost all passengers exiting the back of the bus. I don't think this is practical or wise. For example, buses can get really full and it's almost impossible to move forward or backwards so you have to pick the exit you can most likely reach. Buses also get really slippery when it rains. I can't imagine having to walk all the way to the back from the front and risk slipping. I've seen many people fall on the way to their seats after they've boarded - most people sit in the nearest seat they can find to avoid falling. Sometimes for safety reasons, I feel more comfortable walking to the front when it's late or when I'm uncomfortable with another passenger. I like knowing that the bus driver has seen me exit safely. I'm also unclear why this method was chosen. In the cities I've visited, people exit from both doors and it doesn't seem to be a problem. Thanks for your time.

597. Why not provide monthly vouchers for low or no-income people who have used the Ride Free Area to get to essential services in the downtown area. I am a little concerned about the added time to enter the bus, will the schedules be updated/changed to reflect any delays?

598. The ONLY issue I have is the fact that passengers will have to leave from the back door of the bus. Traditionally drivers get as close as they can, but 90% of the time the bus is far from the curb so it is a rather large leap off that last step. I have a bad knee and back. Not so bad that I need the bus lowered/ramp utilized but having to "jump" out of the bus to try and make it to the sidewalk or "fall" down to street level is not my idea of safe or convenient travel.

599. I think getting rid of the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle is a great idea. Also the other ideas to help keep the buses running more efficiently. Keep up the good work! :)

600. Sounds like a good plan overall. I'd like to see the timetable moved up even.

601. I'm all for this, I've seen too many people not pay their bus fare

602. thank you for proposing to end the ride free area in downtown seattle. i have been advocating this change for years. the ride free area has a very negative impact on the whole system, on riders, and on businesses. eliminating the ride free area will reduce many unpleasant problems with the bus system throughout seattle. this proposal will reduce waiting time, reduce transit time, reduce on/off time, reduce confusion, and increase revenues to support and improve the system. i wholeheartedly support the elimination of the ride free area in downtown seattle. thank you!

603. The ride free zone provides a needed mode of transportation for the city's poor. It works--why remove it. It allows low income people to have reasonable access to needed services. Why would anyone want to eliminate a vital service such as this.

604. I approve eliminating the ride-free area. People will tend to walk for short trips, thereby reducing boarding times.

605. I am extremely disappointed that we will be losing the ride free area. It was an excellent way to promote business and tourist activity in the downtown area, in addition to being a reliable mode of

transportation for the homeless and low income residents in Seattle. I sincerely hope the city will reconsider this change.

606. Yay! I've been wishing for this for 15 years. The pay as you enter or leave system doesn't make sense to riders outside of Seattle. I think we've been losing potential suburban riders because riding the bus is already overwhelming, adding the confusion of when to pay is just too much for some people.
607. This is to express my opinion that the Ride Free Area in Downtown Seattle is a community asset and should be preserved. I, and many people I ride with, frequently ride buses downtown to run errands that are too spread out to do by foot, and too spread out chronologically to interface with the 2 hour transfer automatically recorded on my ORCA card. I could drive my car, and perhaps I will now, since it will cost more to take the bus for my errands, and driving a car may be faster anyway. Help us keep extra cars off of our streets by maintaining the Ride Free Area. Thank you. Kevin Haag
608. I support the elimination of the free ride area, and paying as you enter. The current confusion about when to pay on certain routes, is compounded by drivers who don't enforce the rule, or care. However, the RapidRide lines should not be an exception. One policy for all routes is the only way to be truly consistent. Everyone pays when they get on, for all routes, all the time. Don't plan on people exiting through the rear door only, they will likely use whatever door is closest, even if it means the front door. People waiting to get on the bus can simply wait for those getting off first to do so. This is the current system, and it works well when people are paying attention.
609. I hate to see the ride-free area eliminated -- it makes downtown so much more to tourists and people here for conferences and conventions.
610. Please consider going cashless and requiring Orca or other passes for all. Cash takes too long and will really slow down boarding especially downtown. There is no reason for a King County resident to NOT have a pass, and there needs to be a similar daily/weekly/etc pass offering for tourists with merchants throughout the county to sell/validate them (in addition to the TVMs).
611. Eliminating the Ride Free area is NOT a good idea. The only result will be delays, fewer riders, and therefore even less revenue. As compensation, riders should be given a 4-hour window for transfers and return trips. Boarding downtown is already a slow process, especially when riders are leaving a coach through all doors and when the ramp is down for wheelchairs. If everyone has to wait for one or more wheelchairs or other ramp users -- or if the disabled have to wait in the rain while everyone else boards, the result will be massive delays for all traffic. As for debarking via rear doors, forget it! The bus is never close enough to the curb for this to be safe, and the doors slam shut too fast for those carrying packages, luggage, children or strollers. I am a senior citizen in reasonably good health but I rely on the Ride Free area. I pay cash because I can't afford the so-called senior pass -- \$27 a month is outrageous when paying cash is much less. Without the Ride Free area, I'll have to walk even more than I do now. So don't count on any extra revenue from me!
612. How about the opportunity to have ride-free only available between Convention Place Station and International District/Chinatown Station?

613. I agree that the "ride free area" should be eliminated. This would keep the homeless from riding the buses all of the time. It would make me as a resident and our tourists feel better about riding the bus. I currently walk in the ride free area because I don't feel safe riding on the bus in downtown. I also agree that you should pay as you enter the bus so that no one gets a free ride.
614. To avoid further congestion downtown and to encourage ridership, I think eliminating the Ride Free Area is a step backwards. Why does Seattle struggle w/ mass transit systems while other cities handle it better? We just seem to continue to cut back on routes and increase the price. Not sure if that's the best way to increase ridership.
615. I am very glad to see the Ride Free Zone finally eliminated. In theory it is a good idea, but it is abused. As a commuter who rides the bus daily downtown - I can always identify the riders that will be getting off before the bus leaves the RFZ....usually because they are intoxicated. The RFZ is not so large that the low/no income folks who have to utilize services downtown cannot walk from one place to the other. Using the Pay as you Enter process will most likely delay the loading of buses - but in the long run it will make for a safer experience in the downtown area. (including Bus Stops which are a whole other story!) Thank you for taking this step - hopefully it will help balance the budget as well.
616. I think eliminating the Ride Free Area is a GREAT idea. I believe it will eliminate a lot of drug dealing that goes on because the drug dealers just hop on a free bus and ride down a few blocks if they see the police coming their way. Now they will either have to pay to get away or stop dealing. I think it will improve the number of people who might take Metro downtown to shop now if the buses are not full of drug dealers, homeless people and the mentally ill. Thank you for possibly eliminating the free rides. I might return to taking the bus if this is done and I know a lot of paying people will return to riding Metro!
617. Eliminating the ride free area for riders in the downtown area will suppress business in downtown. I even believe in extending the ride free area until the SODO district through the Seattle Center area to encourage business. The lack of free parking in downtown area, ease of transporting from one place through the downtown area, and if implemented will increase of rider time will be a great inconvenience and suppress business in the downtown area.
618. It is about time! I ride a bus to Federal Way each weekday and I can't count the number of times that I have seen people get off the bus either without paying or without paying the full fare.
619. HI - I am against eliminating the "Ride Free Area" in Downtown Seattle. This is a valuable and convenient service to Visitors, Tourists, and Business people who travel around in the Downtown Core throughout the day. If you truly want to get rid of the ride free area, then I suggest you have a "reduced" fare all-day pass for tourists, shoppers and business people that travel in the downtown core. I suggest you have something to replace it.....
620. I hope Metro reconsiders its decision to eliminate the Free Ride Area. This feature is very convenient for Metro riders and businesspeople alike who are trying to get from one side of downtown to the other to conduct business or errands, and also those who are traveling through the downtown corridor to get to get closer to Stadium events, restaurants, or shopping. Thank you.

621. I have an ORCA card so I am not affected, but I am concerned that ending the Ride Free program will negatively impact our low income population, and I am opposed to this change. To help pay for this program, I recommend a toll on all vehicles in the downtown area, similar to the 520 bridge toll system.
622. How will you enforce against riders entering through the rear door (to avoid fare payment) in the (former) Ride Free Area (or in any situation where boarding is supposed to take place through the front door, for fare payment, and especially in the former Ride Free Area or in other high-traffic, busy situations)?
623. Good morning, It is vital that boarding times are considered when eliminating the ride free zone. After 7pm it takes longer to board the bus than at rush hour. Now extrapolate this to include rush hour commuters. I would implore the city to study the time it takes to board at Macy's 3rd and Pine stop after 7pm and calculate the extra time, for each bus, at rush hour. This decision should be fully investigated and the public informed of the additional time needed to board. We should be encouraging people to use public transit, not making it more painful that it already is. Kind regards, John Linehan
624. Suggestions for faster-boarding within the CBD: 1. Pushing for ORCA more aggressively Metro ought to have a promotional period where ORCA cards are free. This would encourage cash-paying riders to make the switch. Also, Metro should eliminate paper transfers; providing another reason to switch to ORCA. The more ORCA riders there are, the faster boarding time is. 2. Clear and loud advertising for enter-front/exit-back in multiple languages. Metro wants riders to exit the back. So do I. But this must be made LOUD and CLEAR to all riders in every possible way: on-board announcements, bilingual posters, flyers, onboard ads, banners in the tunnel, etc. 3. Eliminating the Front-Door-Only-after-7p-Policy. Ridership is still recognizably high within the CBD after 7p; especially on popular routes. This would allow riders who travel within the CBD to exit via the rear and maintain a smooth flow of riders entering via front. Also, the original motive for this policy was for safety. Most of Metro's incidents occur without having anything to do with the back door. And other agencies in larger cities do not have this policy. Please allow riders to exit the back at all times.

**FROM COMMENTS RECEIVED BY PHONE, EMAIL, OR MAIL (without the comment form)**

625. I was unable to attend the ride free zone elimination open house on March 29th. I am very supportive of eliminating the ride free zone. Thank you for taking this step. However, I am concerned about the speed of loading Sound Transit express buses during the afternoon rush hour. There are a limited number of Sound Transit stops in downtown Seattle where riders are loaded.\* (Probably barely 2 dozen total.) It would seem to be pretty straight forward and relatively easy for Sound Transit to imitate what it does with Sounder and LINK and put those yellow fare card scan machines at these stops (what – maybe 2 at each location?). This would obviously speed up loading – and then we could load through both doors. I can understand fare violation could be a concern under this scenario. But ST seems willing to trust this method with very minimal enforcement on Sounder and LINK. I'd love to hear what the rationale would be for treating ST Express any differently. This also has the virtue of not even having to maintain the illusion or pretense of the driver being the gatekeeper for fare payment on the bus. IF it is just a pretense or illusion in the first place, please don't string us along – just eliminate it, or just foster or reinforce the cynicism that many of us who do honestly pay the fare have for the current system where drivers aren't allowed to stop non-fare paying riders. However, if

you insist on not using the same system that is used for Sounder or LINK, then FINALLY do something to enforce fares with some reliability and integrity. In the first month or so, I'd ask that the various transit agencies operating in downtown Seattle station large numbers of security at each stop to help drivers enforce the requirement that fares MUST be paid on boarding the bus. Then, after the first month, I'd ask that there be regularly and reliable random enforcement (maybe hit each stop randomly once or twice a month.) If you don't opt for one of these suggested option, I don't see how you'll do anything but increase the cynicism that honest riders have for the transit agencies. The integrity and public image of the transit agencies is dependent on it. Otherwise you'll be widely perceived to have done away with an official ride free area and replaced it with an unofficial "wink-wink, nod-nod" ride free zone for the unsavory folks who fail to follow the law. Thank you for considering my comments. Scott Bader 3020 Leonard Drive Everett, WA 98201

626. As a member of the Board of Directors for Compass Housing Alliance, and a daily bus commuter, I am very concerned about the loss of the RFA impacting the people who live, work, visit, shop, and access services in downtown Seattle. I strongly hope that King County Metro will provide a successful solution will be comprehensive, and will include a free, public option for navigating downtown. Secondary elements should include: \* making it easier for people who are elderly or have disabilities to obtain reduced fare permits, and \*securing more bus tickets for human service providers. Our public transit system can and must be accessible to and inclusive of people who are homeless, low income, disabled, elderly. The whole community benefits when the system works for all people. I strongly encourage the King County Council and Executive and the Seattle City Council and Mayor work together to preserve the most valuable elements of this vital public good, and improve on the public transit access for vulnerable community members. I support the work that SKCCH is also advocating for the following elements: A free, public loop service that operates daily and is available to everyone and can accommodate the passengers who need it. A predictable schedule with service frequency at least every 20 minutes. Hours should ensure that people who rely on overnight-only shelters can get to and from those locations without excessive waits or walks very late at night or very early in the morning. A route or routes that maintain access within the broad downtown area, and helps people get to key locations (including Harborview Medical Center and other hospitals, the International District, and key resources not currently in the RFA). Thank you very much for you consideration. Dana R. Visse
627. Hello again— "Customers will need to be proactive..." ? I'm sorry, but if you are seeking efficiencies in the new system, whatever rigmarole passengers will have to go through explaining their destination is simply going to slow the system right down again. Good grief. So the passenger states "one zone" and what happens? The driver has to make some sort of adjustment??? Seriously, I would like to know how this is going to work. You are encouraging everyone to have an ORCA card. How will one- and two-zone trips actually be handled that won't bog down the system? Randy McDougall [In response to staff email] For trips that will conclude outside of the zone, a two zone fare will be charged upon boarding . Customers will need to be proactive in stating their destination upon payment if only one zone fare is to be charged.
628. I am strongly in favor of the proposed changes to the Seattle Downtown free ride area. Smaller special busses should be used for this purpose. The normal Metro routes are slowed down by handling the "special" needs riders downtown. Metro also need to always collect the fare when boarding the bus. I see a lot of people not pay when they get off on buses heading out of town outside the free ride area.

Many times because they exit by the back door due to crowding during the afternoon rush hour.

David Yarno 10739 Linden Ave N Seattle, WA 206-604-6115

629. 206-794-2549 Kenneth Howe. My question is about the comments for the RFA. Decision regarding Pay-on-entry (federal regs. Related th yellow standee line. May be issues)
630. If you're going to cancel the RFA you should restore the \$99 transit pass.
631. I think it's absolutely vile that the RFA will be eliminated. It especially affects the elderly, young adults and businesses. It's extraordinary that someone will be so greedy. It's prejudiced against the poor. The person who decided this should feel disgraced.
632. Live in downtown Belltown--lot of bus drivers complain about this thing but you can't listen to the bus drivers. I'm 71 years old and I use the RFA to get to appts. The businesses are also going to suffer.
633. You should not eliminate the ride free zone. This is a money grab at the tax payers expense. Do not do this. I am writing this in full knowledge that it will not directly affect me. Government needs to begin to do the right thing. Best Regards, Todd Christenson
634. While it may take busses more time to load at each stop I think it is the right thing to do; for the agencies and the paying patrons. Mark W. Vinson, PE Supervising Bridge/Project Engineer Parsons Brinckerhoff 999 Third Avenue, Suite 3200 Seattle, WA 98104 (direct) 206-382-6323 (fax) 206-382-5291 vinson@pbworld.com www.pbworld.com
635. I will not be able to attend the open house and the discussion on the elimination of the ride free zone. I am an everyday bus rider (M-F) and would hate to see the elimination of the ride free zone. The poor and homeless in the Seattle area have very few amenities available to them. Please don't take away one of the few they have. Thanks for your consideration!!!
636. Dear Metro: Since I won't be able to attend the open house on the 29th, I wanted to send you my comments directly. I ride Metro bus service nearly every day during the week, commuting from the Train Station to my office in Fremont. While the commute in miles from the Train Station is not very far, it takes an extremely long amount of time - adding an additional 30-45minutes to my daily commute. The reason for this, I believe, is due largely to the number of people that get off/on the bus in the Ride Free area - specifically down 3rd avenue. In many cases, I will see people get on the bus only to go one stop and then get off again (roughly 4-5 blocks). I also see a lot of people that get onto the buses in the free ride zone, as a way to get out of the elements (rain, bad weather), and in most cases they people look or act to be homeless. While I do believe we need to find a solution to them, public transportation is not it. Since many of us take these buses to commute to paying jobs in downtown Seattle, that also bring revenue to the City - I feel we should take priority. I strongly urge you to remove the Ride Free area, and implement some kind of fee in those locations. I do believe this will cut down on the commute for many of us overall, as well as provide some additional revenue to the Metro system itself. Thank you for your time - Sincerely, John Bailey
637. "As an occasional rider of Sounder it would be nice if: Those north-south buses would be tied with the arrival and departure of Sounder; There were more or consistent buses available at those times that run north-south from King Street to the Seattle Center without turning off somewhere east or west

requiring a rider to wait for a second bus to continue a northward journey; Those buses would wait for the train to unload and allow people to get up to the surface streets and load on the buses. I have seen the #1 or the #13 pulling away as the crowd reaches the top of the stairs. About 50% of the time a bus rider end up switching buses to get to the north end. Mark

638. We will be unable to attend the meeting March 29 but as downtown residents for the past 20 years I am disconcerted and alarmed at how much more dangerous our streets have gotten. We used to love to walk to events and restaurants but no longer. It doesn't feel safe after 9:30 p.m. any longer. The idea of an active and fulfilling lifestyle downtown is not living up to the promise. I know this is a small step but I think stopping free Metro bus rides in the downtown corridor is a very positive more. I ride the bus to north Ballard on occasion and my Metro bus stop is on 3rd and Pike. It never feels safe there. We are just the type of people you are trying to attract, we have one car and we try to shop, eat, and be entertained downtown but increasingly it's become a hostile place and we find ourselves driving to Ballard or other parts of the city instead. Thank you, Denise Gaffney Neu 206-790-0907 deniseneu@q.com
639. I think it is a great idea that Metro is adopting the idea to eliminate the Ride Free Area. However, there are some points to address to ensure that the homeless population, and low-income populations as a whole, do not get over-burdened with the inconvenience of having free transportation eliminated-when it is obviously their only method of travel.
640. Hello, I cannot make the public meetings next week, but wanted to voice my support for the elimination of the ride free area. As a daily bus rider both to and from work and on the weekends, I find the ride free area adds confusion of when to pay and slows down the trip based on people's uncertainty. I look forward to there being one way in and one way out so simplify things and keep things moving. Moreover, the no cost ride is often exploited by drunk people or other somewhat undesirables who come on the bus and then leave after a few blocks, making the bus ride unpleasant for others. Thank you very much, Cheryl Jacobs
641. Hi I support eliminating the Ride free area for buses in downtown Seattle. The main reason is that this tax-subsidized benefit is exploited by the homeless. I used to ride Metro to commute to work. Every day, once the bus arrived in the "Ride-free zone," homeless people overcrowded the bus and caused untold nuisance to the paying commuters. Thanks, Dale Kloefkorn
642. I see no genuine reason for this change - the poor will be the most severely affected and making them ride a "special bus only further brands them as poor. Moreover, since the bus is supposed to be a publicly subsidized service funded by our tax dollars you'd think there'd be a little room for fairness - My job pays for my bus fare so it won't matter to me - but, it will matter to my clients and to all poor people who now have to beg for another special service - a service that is outwardly visible and brands them as "poor" just so they can get around - all to what purpose?
643. Hi, I was just wonder how are they handling the 1 zone and 2 zone fare situation with everyone paying as they get on??? (i.e. what if a 2 zone person only pays for 1 zone)...I live up in Snohomish Cty and ride CT, but I know there are 2 zone fares for Metro also, or at least there used to be... Linda Nomellini

644. For many years I worked downtown and took the free buses all over during my lunch hour. It helped me get my Christmas shopping done, got me to art galleries, got me to the Market for fresh flowers and grocery shopping (I put the groceries in the fridge at work until time to get the bus home. All kinds of people did the same thing. It got them used to riding the bus, and as more service became available, got them to use it more and more in the pay zones. The free bus gets poor people to their appointments at social service agencies. The free bus gets tourists around town. The free bus gets people to places on their lunch hour, where they spend money at local merchants. The free bus encourages people to use the bus, and use it from further away. The free bus is an important part of our infrastructure. WE NEED THE FREE BUS! Rena Langille
645. "A couple of suggestions 1. There has to be some way to allow homeless people access to the bus so they can go from one end of town to another. 2. Everyone exiting the bus through the back door is not effective. Just let people off at the closest door – no problem because they already paid. Many people sit at the front of the bus because it is easier for people with limited disabilities and they should be able to go out any door they want. We have already learned how to stand nicely in line at the bus stop. Thank you Jaci Oseguera. M.S., LMHC Project/Program Manager II King County Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division CNK-HS-0400 401 Fifth Ave., Suite 0400 Seattle, WA 98104 Phone: 206-263-8986 Fax: 206-296-0583 Email: jacilyn.oseguera@kingcounty.gov"
646. Eliminating the ride free area is not the way to welcome visitors to our city. Tourists use the ride free area all the time. They come here and SPEND MONEY! You say you are going to help the low income with passes, but there is not a program you can make that will reach all these people. It is another government idea that will heap another burden on the ones who have the hardest load to carry, created by people who have no clue how the lower classes live and struggle. You are now giving less to the ones who have less to begin with. Surely there is another way. Does the Council and Executive staff still get free parking? Maybe it's time to make them start paying and put the burden where it belongs. NO MORE FREE RIDE FOR ANYONE!! One way to get people used to riding the bus is to offer them a chance to do it free in a small area downtown where they get used to the idea and then start using the bus in a broader area where they pay. You eliminating the free ride zone, and eliminating an incentive to get people to start using transit.
647. This is lousy. When will the greed stop?
648. I urge the staff to address the unintended effects of eliminating the ride free zone in downtown Seattle. 1. This will not increase fares as people will walk rather than pay \$2 to go four blocks 2. Elderly slow walkers, disabled, moms with children and others who rely on a bus to deal with their limited ability to walk greater distances will be underserved and will go elsewhere to shop and do other day to day activities. 3. It will encourage individual drivers to get back in their cars. Once you have walked 6 blocks in Seattle rain you are likely to be so wet you will never make that job in Seattle your top priority. 4. Amazon, and Microsoft will pick up the slack with their own Microsoft Connect bus system and motorpool operations. (When Metro cannot serve their needs larger corporate customers don't contribute to the fare box what they do is opt out instead) 5. Projections for cost savings are zero this move will actually cost Metro to in reduced headway times in the downtown area and more idling time and fuel used while riders go thru the fare box process 6. Projections of fare box increases are going to be 75% lower than the staff has up to now calculation due to various effects

649. Dear Sir or Madam, I am writing about the planned elimination of the Ride Free Area. One only need board a bus just after 7 p.m. to see that this will cause big delays in buses leaving downtown. This will result in delayed passengers such as myself, poorer on-time performance, and wasted service hours. It is essential to increase ORCA adoption in the implementation process, and King County Metro's plans for this are frankly inadequate. There is very little incentive for a cash passenger to switch to ORCA, and some disincentives (larger outlay of cash, non-refundable \$5 card, transfers valid for less time). I would suggest taking the following steps to get more people on ORCA so that the elimination of pay-as-you-leave doesn't turn 3rd Ave into a rush hour parking lot. 1. Provide financial incentives to switch to ORCA. Paper transfers should be eliminated. There should be a discount for paying with ORCA. 2. ORCA cards should be refundable. This will make it easier to convince tourists or infrequent users that they should switch to ORCA, because they can leave the system and get the \$5 for their card back. In practice, few people will do it. It's worth noting that Transport for London's Oyster Card, one of the most successful RFID transit card systems, does both of these things, and they helped it achieve high levels of RFID card adoption. It is essential that King County Metro does the same. Best regards,  
Michael Hoffman 4011 Whitman Ave N Apt 202 Seattle, WA 98103-7800
650. Please, as Metro is winding down the RFA, consider policies that encourage a higher adoption rate for the ORCA Card. My experience is that the ORCA greatly speeds the movement of passengers on and off transit and the fewer riders that use cash benefits the system as a whole. Charging more for cash fares would be preferred and is a system (e.g. London) that has been effectively used elsewhere. If that 'stick' approach isn't possible then offer a meaningful fare discount for the ORCA card, say by taking 5% off the posted fares for ePurse users. Either (or both) ideas would go a long way in improving KCM services for all users. Thank you.
651. Hi, I can't make it to the open house meeting on March 29, but just wanted to make a comment regarding the elimination of the ride free zone in downtown Seattle. I think it's important to preserve service for low-income people who need transit downtown. I'm a little disappointed that you haven't posted any details about your plans for this online. It's difficult to comment on something I haven't seen! Please make sure there is some free service available for those who need it. I would prefer that you have a downtown free shuttle that runs up and down through downtown, to provide free service for all who need it, regardless of income. I have seen many users who get on and off downtown and need the lift or for other reasons can greatly slow down the speed of service at downtown stops. I think that just providing some kind of pass so that those users can continue to use any buses downtown for free would continue to exacerbate the service delays downtown (which may get worse as everyone has to pay as they board), so I would prefer to see a separate shuttle bus of some kind. Also as a worker downtown I would like to see a continued free option to get south or north between near the current ends of the ride free zone (International District to Belltown). The price of a monthly pass is too expensive for me (since I bike commute for some trips, and my company doesn't provide a pass), but I would avoid downtown bus trips if I have to pay a full fare just to go 2 stops. Again, I think a free shuttle bus downtown would be the best option. I think it would benefit downtown businesses, and would be good for tourists, convention attendees, etc. Perhaps the City of Seattle would help to fund such a service. Thank you, Justin Martin Seattle, WA
652. I won't be able to attend the open house, and would like to offer the following comments by email instead. Eliminating the RFA will have little or no effect on monthly pass holders, but will potentially have a great effect on riders paying by cash or ORCA ePurse, including King County residents who only

occasionally have a need to come to downtown Seattle as well as tourists and visitors. KC Metro should provide a cost-effective daypass for such cash/ePurse riders so that they are not unduly penalized and can more conveniently use Metro while conducting business in downtown Seattle, including use of buses to get around downtown. In order to speed up boarding, KC Metro should provide an incentive for riders to use an ORCA ePurse, instead of paying with cash and receiving a paper transfer. Paper transfers are almost always more generous than the strict ORCA 2-hour window, so riders have little incentive to use ORCA and in fact have some incentive to instead pay by cash. If there is a cost-effective daypass, perhaps paper transfers can be eliminated. Even if this is not done, there should either be a surcharge for cash fares or a discount for ORCA ePurse use.

653. Greetings, As a Bainbridge ferry commuter, I regularly take a Metro bus in the ride free area from Colman Dock to my place of employment in Belltown. I reverse the route from Belltown to Colman Dock in the afternoon. I have an Orca card loaded with a monthly Kitsap Transit pass. Will I need to buy a separate Metro pass on my Orca card, or load the e-purse, for travel from Colman Dock to Belltown after disembarking the ferry? Same question for my afternoon travel from Belltown. Thank you for answering my question. Laura Carroll Silverdale, WA.
654. Hi planners, I think it's throwing the baby out with the bathwater to end the directional fare collection when the RFA goes away. Collecting fares on exit will make it very easier for operators to collect the proper fare--once the bus crosses the city line, they can change the orca reader to collect a two-zone fare, just as they do in reverse on inbound trips. And my non-professional opinion is that collecting fares at downtown zones will slow boarding so much as to create delays. All the best. Matt Koltnow Sounding Board alumnus (Central Eastside, Transit Connections)
655. I am hopeful that the free area transit will continue because there is a real need by many. I would be willing to pay an annual fee to keep it.
656. I have always favored removing the ride free area. It is unnecessary since most people can walk within its boundaries and paying one way when you enter and paying when you exit in the other direction is confusing and leads to people being able to ride without paying their fare. Dan Turner 206.235.6369 pulpfact@comcast.net
657. I may not need assistance in riding the bus with funding, but when I come downtown I use the ride free system to get around to different areas downtown. I don't mind paying the first time I get on, but bringing back full day/longer hour transfers would keep me coming downtown on a regular basis and using the bus system for my errands/entertainment purposes. I like to use th bus but if i have to pay EVERYTIME i get on, it will be cheaper for me and others like me to just drive or go elsewhere. My suggestion is to bring back transfers and make them valid on all bus lines that come downtown.
658. I don't think it's a good decision to do away with the ride free zone. I ride the bus or bike to work. If I have to visit somewhere at lunchtime, it's a nice freebie to be able to jump on the bus rather than walk to do shopping, etc. We are already paying for our trips to the office on a daily basis. It's ridiculous to pay the high price for a quick trip. I don't know what you are trying to accomplish by getting rid of the ride free zone, except get more income to the detriment of those working downtown and paying taxes. Carol A. Ravano, P.E.

659. I ride the bus daily from Renton to downtown Seattle and rarely have need to take advantage of the ride free area. However, I think it should be kept. Out of town visitors have been impressed when I have taken them into the bus tunnel to get from downtown to Chinatown or Pioneer Square and they didn't have to pay. If it is not kept free and since the busses usually have to stop at every stop downtown anyway, maybe charge a minimum like 25 cents or something for the downtown area. Although I am not sure how the driver could keep track of who paid what and for what distance. I think it is good PR for out of town visitors to be able to get around downtown at no charge. If the ride free area is kept, I would suggest extending it to the Royal Brougham. I see lots of out of towners get on the bus in the tunnel to go to a game and thinking it is free to the stadium and either get off at the ID after holding up the bus to get walking instructions or trying to find some cash to pay the driver at Royal Brougham (the drivers are usually very nice and let the visitors get off without paying). If the ride free area is to remain, I think the light rail to the airport should be free in the same area. It is too confusing to have two different sets of rules for everyone. I do agree, that the bus fares need to be standardized...the paying sometime when you get off and other times when you get on is also too confusing. I think there should be one price no matter what time of day you travel. My goal is to provide you with excellent customer service. Please let me know if you have any further questions  
Larry Eppens Service Delivery Coordinator CenturyLink Business Markets Group 1600 7th Avenue, Room 908 Seattle, WA 98191 larry.eppens@centurylink.com 800.510.2142; option 1; extension 130.4091 206.345.4570 (fax)
660. Greetings Representative, I have the following feedback on the Ride Free Area. I think Ride Free should stay for the following reasons: 1. Ride Free helps relieve traffic downtown as it gives a convenient fast way for employees to move around the city without driving. Also, any retail or restaurant businesses may be negatively impacted if employees now feel it's too costly to shop during breaks or do lunch beyond the small radius of their office. 2. Ride Free is a very appealing option for tourists who visit. This allows them to move between hot spots like the SAM park, Pike's Market and Westlake area, and Pioneer Square without incurring more expense. The money saved can be used to purchase souvenirs' or lunch, driving more business because most people on vacation will spend that money instead of seeing it as a savings. 3. Ride Free reduces hassles for moving foot traffic to and from stadiums during events, relieving traffic. 4. Ride Free gives people who plan to attend an event at the stadiums an opportunity to take a break at any local business downtown either before or after a game, as they do not need to worry about their bus transfers expiring. 5. Ride Free makes it simple for locals who bussed downtown during holidays to shop between Westlake/Pacific Place, Pioneer Square, and the International District. I know this isn't free, and it would be good to figure out a tax initiative to help offset the cost. Thank you for your time! M.W. Rader (Registered voter in King County and bus rider)
661. I am unable to attend but would like to submit this comment. I think it is essential to keep the ride-free area in operation for the homeless and those who have no income or transportation. If the service has to be downsized, perhaps it can still operate on certain main streets where people can be assured of a ride. We need to be a city with heart and provide transportation for the homeless and those with little or no income. In this down economy, there are so many that are strapped financially and yet the bridge tolls, parking charges continue to be imposed and raised. The underprivileged without a vehicle need to have a way to get to medical appts, find shelter, etc. Amy Hanssen

662. Hi There, I won't be able to make the meeting, but I did want to comment. I hope that Metro will continue to be able to offer its program of bus vouchers for those who are traveling for essential services. Having the vouchers are really invaluable and help a lot of folks out. However, there are quite a few folks that often don't have vouchers or funds that are let on the bus. I know this, because I've been one of those people. When I was between jobs, I had no money to top up my ORCA card and had no other way to get around. Luckily, a lot of kind bus drivers let me on or were generous when I could only pay a little or for one leg of my journey. For that I am grateful. I hope eliminating the ride free area speeds up things downtown, and generates some more cash for Metro. If you are taking suggestions along with comments, it would be as following: 1.) Have a way for people to donate money to Metro to repay for times they couldn't pay. 2.) Work with tourist hot spots (hotels and attractions) to make getting passes or riding the bus easy for new folks. Kindest regards, Grace Willard
663. Good afternoon, I feel that the ride free area in downtown Seattle should remain because homeless and low income people would suffer. Please come up with another way to raise revenue and/or offset other costs. Sincerely, Allanda Christenson Ocean Beauty Seafoods
664. I ride the 218 bus from Pioneer Square stop in the bus tunnel to Highlands Park & Ride located in Issaquah AM & PM. Ever since the 520 bridge started charging toll this bus has been over crowded to point of it being dangerous to the passengers. The buses are supposed to hold 63 people they are now holding 103 people, believe me when I say this I count on a regular basis the number of people that are on this bus. All buses heading East/West on I- 90 stop at the 142 pl (BCC campus). You really need to have the 218 bus become an Express bus going directly to Highland P & R (and reverse back to Seattle) due to the fact that this bus is full with just the people that need to go to Issaquah Highland P & R. Plus you need to add two more 218 buses at the 5pm hour because that is when everyone is trying to get home. This time last year there was usually a place to sit but now you are lucky if you can even get on it. You can ask anyone who rides this bus and they will all say the same thing. Please take this into consideration. I want to thank you for your time. Sincerely, Rachel Sennewald
665. I have been commuting to Seattle on King County Metro Buses for almost 40 years. The bus I take now travels through the Bus Tunnel. I understand the need to have all riders pay as we enter the bus. My concern is about safety -- "who is going to police" the mob? Right now, there is barely enough room when my bus stops in the tunnel to enter through front and back doors (not to mention how rude and pushy some riders are). We are going to have many problems as last minute folks push and shove their way to get in front of the line to enter through the front door. The security guards in the tunnel do not assist with unruly riders. We are on our own -- it is a "every man for himself" situation. I think it would be a good idea for Metro Police or security? to be standing by and watch how the crowds act when this change takes place. I've been literally pushed off the bus steps by riders that come running at the last minute and want to get to the front of the line to enter the bus. Patricia Holman | Davis Wright Tremaine LLP
666. Hi, I will not be able to attend the open house. However, I wanted to express my views of the scheduled end to the Ride Free Area. I am new to Seattle; however, I use the Ride Free Area often. I think it is great that anyone can ride for free in the downtown area. There are a lot of public services downtown that people should be able to access for free and providing the Ride Free Area enables this... especially since parking in downtown is so expensive. If anything, the Ride Free Area should be

advertised more so that tourists will be more aware of the opportunity to travel around downtown without a car. Thanks, Jesse Bennett

667. Eliminating the free-ride zone, as planned on September 29 of this year, will have a significantly detrimental impact on downtown merchant's revenue. As it stands today many who work in the downtown core depends on having a quick, low-cost trip for a lunchtime meal or after work shopping trip. Once the free ride zone is eliminated there will be a detrimental impact on restaurants and retailers throughout the zone. Forcing riders to enter only through the front door will make the evening rush hour very difficult. Buses will take longer to load and passengers will not move quickly to the back of the articulated buses, resulting in less efficient use of Metro bus resources and schedules. Imagining that the bus driver will be able to verbally command the passengers to move back or use the announcement system to encourage full use of the space on the bus is not practical. People do not enjoy being yelled at by a real person or an anonymous voice. Overall the public transit experience will be more difficult and will do a poorer job of serving its customers and its customer base will dwindle. And then there are the tourists who have not had to worry about paying the right fare (with U.S. dollars) to get around to the major sites. Is it wise to penalize tourists? Will we increase the number of locations where Metro trip ticket books are sold to offset this inconvenience? This notion of ending the free ride zone is an attempt to make people who do not use the Metro system feel like the rest of us (who do use it) are behaving with fiscal responsibility. It is a "feel good" solution to the problem of lower tax revenue. Ultimately the bottom line may improve but it will do so at the cost of total ridership in the system, which will equate to lower employment throughout the region. How can that improve the economy? Isn't the timing of this operation exactly wrong? If our region were flying high on full employment perhaps a suggestion that well-off population could afford the extra dollars to ride Metro in the downtown core would be more reasonable. Yours truly, Ira Worden - daily commuter from Kirkland to International District tunnel station via Metro 255 13011 104th PL NE Kirkland, WA 98034 i.worden@hotmail.com
668. Yes, please do provide transportation for poor people in the downtown area. I am a bit concerned about the "pay as you enter" decision. I think it will delay bus boarding downtown. It's easy to do when one gets on the bus on the suburbs but with the large number of people boarding buses downtown it will create delay. Sometimes I catch the bus at 7pm going home and there's a delay when people have to pay as they enter, and 7pm is not rush hour. I can't imagine the delay during rush hours. I would encourage Metro to leave it the way it is now or if you change it monitor the bus delays and be willing to change it back. Thank you. Yvonne Rodriguez
669. To King County Metro Transit Staff: Just wanted to comment and say that I support elimination of the RFA. I regularly ride the 150, 545, 550, 70s, Link, and Lower Queen Anne-bound routes through Downtown. I am however certain that simple elimination of RFA without some sort of compensatory solution will cause excess delay and possible malfunction of the bus tunnel and 3rd Avenue. Elimination of the RFA would be wise only with operational improvements such as POP or fare penalty to those utilizing cash or non-ORCA fare product media. The Seattle Transit Blog, as I am sure you know, has suggested a number of options to evaluate. I endorse a thorough review of the options to minimize disruption to the reliability and peak-capacity of Downtown transit corridors. Thank you. Kind regards, Stephen A. Fesler

670. I think this is terrible the free ride zone is going away for all those who cannot afford it...especially in Seattle, having to walk in the rain most months of the year. Laurel Mercury Administrative Specialist Seattle Parks & Recreation 206-684-7055

671. While I appreciate the necessity to end the ride free area in downtown Seattle, I also have concerns about paying for all rides when you get on the bus. I was in in the tunnel when Metro had a test run of paying for the bus when you entered. It was a disaster and a big time delay. While the loading in the morning at the park n ride is orderly and everyone waits their turn, for some reason going home it is a free for all and many of the busses are overcrowded. I would hope there has been some thought given to how to get riders to orderly enter the bus and the time it takes on any given night when there are twice as many riders as there are spaces on the bus. Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely, Sharon Campbell

672. Resending feedback submitted online to ensure it reaches the proper channels: I just received the email announcement noting the end of the Ride Free Area service. I feel it is quite unfortunate that the Ride Free Area will be eliminated. While I do not often get the opportunity to utilize it since I no longer work in downtown, I did have the chance on March 23 & 24. I remember thinking what a valuable asset this service was to the Seattle community -- both for those low-income riders who truly depend on the free service as well as for tourists as a friendly way to easily get around our downtown areas that are not always within easy walking distance (e.g. Pioneer Square to Belltown). I saw one family with two youngsters and elderly grandparents that were able to use the ride-free service to go from Belltown to Westlake -- not a long walking distance for most but certainly not easy for the young and elderly patronizing our town and seeing our many sites in a day. More than my concern for a friendly tourist destination is my concern for the low-income riders that rely on the free service area. I recognize that a plan will be discussed to address their needs; however, the city programs already have a difficult time getting adherence to new implementations or requirements. Even if something "free" is offered that this demographic must sign up for, I feel it will be underutilized and those most needing it will be overlooked and not served. I ask that Metro reconsider eliminating this service that is a true asset to the city. It's understandable that costs rise but surely there are other ways to fund costs. Note, it did not go unnoticed that new electronic talking devices were installed on buses right at the end of the tax/car tab debate. While this implementation may have been planned for some time prior, the execution was quite poor in timing. I supported the car-tab tax but was disappointed when I noticed the timing of this modification. I hope Metro will truly reflect on the community and the services offered that benefit its constituents. Please feel free to contact me should there be any questions or clarification needed about my comments. Regards, Tonia Brown PS. The email announcement's link, unfortunately, did not direct to the proper section of Metro's website but instead went to "How to Ride": Other ways to comment are: Online: [www.kingcounty.gov/Metro/howtoride](http://www.kingcounty.gov/Metro/howtoride)

673. This is a bad compromise made by the County Council. The Ride Free zone supports business and pedestrian travel. At a time when business and tax revenue is in the dumps, the Council has helped cut tax revenues further. People will stop riding the bus, get in their cars, or just not shop-none of which is good for the City or the County. The County gets more than its fair share of unproductive transit routes—and this is the response to save money? I would rescind this provision.

674. My recommendation is that there is Proof of Payment fare system implemented for buses, especially in the tunnel. Just like Link, which works great. Thanks, Mike Birmingham Kenmore, WA
675. In regards to low-income, families or individuals, or disabled individuals, I think that they should be able to fill out a reduced fare application through a primary care doctor, or physician, or through a state funded program such as DSHS, or a community service center such as the Salvation Army, or online at the Metro website. When I had a nervous breakdown in 2009, I was able to get an application through my primary care doctor for a reduced fare pass and I took it to the Metro office on 2nd & Jackson to get my bus card. As far as homeless individuals I believe that they should be able to pay for their bus ride with whatever change they have on hand, because at least that's something so they can get where they need to go, or charge them .50 cents, i don't know those are some ideas I have, I'm sure that most of these programs have already been implemented.
676. Why has it taken so long to figure this out? I thought about this years ago. I used to ride the 106 & so many people would get on downtown & ride all the way out to Rainier Valley without paying. No wonder you're losing money. Did it really take you this long to figure this out? You've kept raising fares over the past year or so. Cutting out the Free Ride Zone "AND" making people pay "when" they get on should have been done years ago. It's about time.
677. As a senior who lives downtown, I, and all my friends appreciate the present ride free Metro which encourages us to be active and involved. The tunnel part especially is helpful since it allows us to move through town and make many stops without worrying about how much it is costing us. I think the ridefree area could maybe be shortened by a few blocks but should NOT be discontinued. I think it also encourages more ridership in the long run It also impresses and pleases our sightseeing tourists. I hope you can see fit to keep it! Henry Kuharic.
678. I'm looking forward to the clarity of riding the bus without the ride free zone. If there is a need for free transit in the downtown zone, establish a free route that loops the required zone. Aaron Swain Tiscareno Associates
679. I'm at a loss to understand the logic of eliminating the ride free area in downtown Seattle It can't be the added convenience of simplifying boarding. It can't be the encouragement to leave you car in the garage and hop the bus across town It can't be an attempt to keep up with the future of fare collection – an honor system So what is it that is taking King County Metro backwards? Mark Spitzer, Architect 2106 Fifth Avenue West Seattle WA 98119 206 283 8397
680. I am concerned that if the ride free area is terminated but low income homeless people continue to ride for free throughout that area the percentage of paying riders will decline, the percentage of nonpaying riders will increase, and overall the downtown bus system will be less safe. How will you address this?
681. Hello, I saw the poster on the bus about the public open house for the ride free area's disappearance. The language on the poster makes me think you are already FOR SURE taking away the ride free area. Is this what is happening, or is the forum to gather public input and possibly keep the ride free area beyond September? Thanks, Kara Sweidel

682. I heard about this last fall and am appalled. I find it disturbing that King County Metro and Seattle are so money grubbing that we now intend to close the door on a free ride area. This Free ride zone is said to unintentionally serve the indigent and mentally ill people that live in this area. Now Seattle wants to clean it all up and end the free ride area. This is said to help improve the area from Belltown to Columbia. I think that this is insane and going to really hurt the poor. Since moving here I have noticed that both Sound Transit and Metro are busy making their systems more efficient for the server and not so much for the customer. An example is the new Orca card that allows people like myself with good credit and a bank account to save a little, however if I forget my Orca Card and must pay cash it will cost me 5.75 to travel the same distance from work in Bellevue to West Seattle. The point is that our transit system is giving a discount to travelers that have the money to pay and the savings comes from the poor people who must pay cash. This is classism and is disgraceful. I realize that Seattle will push through and do this anyway and this idea to let the public speak is simply a formality. Good luck Seattle. - Don.
683. The elimination of the FREE zone once again goes against the thinking and the vision that Seattle governments pretends to subscribe to. We are told we need to recycle (and to separate our garbage 3 ways), build green (to a ridiculous extreme), give up our cars or pay the toll (literally) BUT when it comes to REAL service to the citizens of Seattle, an excuse to tax our pockets even more, you eliminate exactly those things you promote! By eliminating the FREE zone, you tax the working class (once again) by making it harder to utilize those things that WE pay for. Everyone is so up in arms about "how will the poor people get around town?" WHAT!?? I work 10 hour days to make end meet! I just started taking the bus to work, and find it expensive for my budget; but surprisingly easier than finding parking where I work. When I need to go to the downtown area, I would walk two blocks and catch the FREE bus on rainy or cold days. The "free zone" gave me a good feeling about Metro Transit. Now, I will walk the full distance before I pay to hop the bus for 12 blocks. You are not going to make more money, as those that hopped the FREE bus will now walk it. So, with that, I would suggest you not spend the profits you expect to make before you earn them....which also is so typically, Seattle. Linda Tippens
684. I advocate that a free shuttle service be instituted in the Fall -- along First and/or Third Avenues. One on First would link Pioneer Square with Pike Market. One on Third would link Union Station (and Intern'l Dist) with Westlake Ctr, the monorail, SLUT. Make them small buses that look different. for tourists and downtown workers who need to get around a bit at lunch. Don't make these part of longer runs to the suburbs. Ever since the streetcar left, and the 15/18 moved off of First, there has been no easy way for tourists to get from Pike Market to Pioneer Square. The current 99 is not frequent enough. Michael R. Huber 206.782.7909 home 206.696.2245 cell
685. Great idea for our beautiful city. Make it even harder for tourists and other visitors to enjoy the Market, Pioneer Square and the areas in between. Keep it up. Chuck Kinney... (425) 965-7880
686. With regard to eliminating the ride free area. Great idea for our beautiful city. Make it even harder for tourists and other visitors to enjoy the Market, Pioneer Square and the areas in between. Keep it up.
687. I love it! I hear there are problems, but it is heaven to get from one end of downtown to the other on a stormy day without having to dig around for money to do so. Please keep the free ride. thanks. Linda Andersson

688. Hello. I am so dismayed that the city of Seattle is insisting on getting rid of the ride free area downtown. It will be devastating for the poor and homeless, bad for tourism, and rush hour traffic holdups will be insane with buses loading passengers from only the front door. I truly do not understand why anyone would want to do this. Thanks for listening. Kristen Daniels Seattle, WA Metro rider since 1995
689. How will the plan address transportation assistance for people with little or no income who use the Ride Free Area to travel to essential services downtown? I cannot come to the 3/29 session, but would like to know the possible plans for this. Adele Reynolds 5929 Beach Dr. SW 98136
690. To Whom It May Concern, I think the decision to phase out the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle is ridiculous. Currently, lower-income people and tourists can take advantage of this great benefit. But also downtown workers like myself. I'm very lucky to work for a company that pays for my ORCA card, but it's nice to be able to take an underground to the International District for lunch and not have to remember to bring my card with me. Also, when I moved here from San Francisco, I was able to get to know the downtown area, and get to some interviews, for free. To be honest, I'm not very impressed with transit system in this area, but the Ride Free Area was the one element that has always stood out. Really, such a bad decision. A. Haan
691. To Whom It May Concern: Good morning -- I've received - as have several of my co-workers - an email invitation from Metro to the public open house tomorrow evening regarding the operational changes for the bus system, particularly as to the elimination of the ride free area. Before any of us comment, I have a question - as my comment is to NOT ELIMINATE the ride free area, is it worth commenting further, explaining my reasoning, or is this a done deal and therefore my efforts would be useless? Thank you; I look forward to your response. Thomas E. Dunne Social Worker/Municipal Court Unit Associated Counsel for the Accused (206) 624-8105 ext.245 FAX (206) 624-9339 tom.dunne@acapd.org
692. Greetings, **May I suggest that provision also be made for walking-disabled persons without an income-test?** Paige Garberding Attorney at Law Associated Counsel for the Accused 110 Prefontaine Pl. So., Ste 200 Seattle, Washington 98104-2677 (206) 624-8105 ext. 239 Fax (206) 624-9339 paige.garberding@acapd.org
693. I Ride the bus quit often, and I am low income. I live in West Seattle. I have lived in the area over 20 years. Here in Seattle just like any where else, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Metro has continually rose its prices and the GAU (SUBSIDIZED INCOME) has been deducted almost \$150. Metro buys bells and alarms such as the computer voice that tells you what street will be coming up next. This is a total waste. When it is a common complaint that in business people say that they want to talk to people. There is a microphone right there that the driver can use to tell your location.
694. Please don't cut the free ride area downtown, this is a good thing to have for tourists that come to visit Seattle. Sincerely, Rhonda Weaver Inventory Control Specialist Ocean Beauty Seafoods LLC Phone: (206) 281-5894 Fax: (206) 260-8892
695. Hello, I am unable to attend the open house for tomorrow. Thank you for seeking the public input on this delicate matter. I am in favor of discontinuing the ride free area. In summary, the ride free area drives up the cost of transportation by increasing uncompensated usage. The zone also makes this

mode of transportation less desirable for some. The privilege has been, in my opinion, abused by some and allows for disruptive passengers to ride free in an area of our city that should be safe, attractive and pleasant for our tourists. Those passengers that are truly disabled can apply for the appropriate passes and allowances through their case managers, etc. The ride free zone also makes the matter of paying fare confusing to people because the process varies by zone and sometimes driver. The ride free zone was a nice idea, but has come away from it's intended purpose and made the down town bus rides more expensive and less desirable. Please end the ride free zone. Thank you for your consideration. Therese Franco

696. I totally disagree with your decision to charge for what is currently the ride free zone in downtown seattle. In my opinion, it should be expanded. Right now there are businesses I would visit, or visit more often, if they weren't outside the ride free zone. I take the bus to work often and when I decide to stay after work and visit a business, it really helps to have a bus to hop on and off quickly to get around the down town zone. Chinatown, the stadiums, and the Regrade, should all be included in a ride free zone to help businesses get more clients. now that parking at the meters is so expensive and extends to 8pm, it is even more important that the ride free zone be preserved and expanded. I think this is going to be very damaging for downtown Seattle businesses who rely heavily on the after work crowd. On a slightly different issue, if Metro goes forward with this ill advised plan, what is the cost going to be? It needs to be fair and way less expensive than the current \$2.25/2.50 fare. If it is going to cost the same to go a few blocks as it does to get to the city limits, it is a crazy plan. I live on Capitol Hill and I already find it to be really irritating to pay the same to take a bus 2 miles as it does to get to the city limits. Maybe more people would take the bus if the cost were was zoned better. I know that taking subways in New York, WA DC, London, Boston, Paris, and San Francisco have the fare based on the distance. Metro needs to do that too. Because of the high cost to take a bus to go 2 miles from my home, I walk whenever I can and skip the bus altogether. I wouldn't if the price were set more fairly. On yet another slightly different subject, how will this work for sounder buses? Right now I can take the Metro bus (I take the 49) and then pick up a sounder bus going up 5th avenue all the way to my office on 5th and yesler. As the downtown is a free zone, I don't have to worry about the cost differential between the 2 bus systems. I know, however, that these buses cost more. So how will the fare I paid on Metro apply to a sounder bus? As Metro has no bus going all the way up 5th, it is way more convient to get on the other bus to get to my office in the morning. I want to find out how traveling between bus systems in the downtown will be handled. If the city wants to get people out of their cars and keep the downtown vital, the bus needs to be more enticing. This plan is going in exactly the wrong direction. Cheri L. Filion 1133A 10th Ave E Seattle, WA 98102 425-273-1624 filioncl@comcast.net

697. Greetings: I moved into the inner city to be close to my job, as big greenie/sustainable/ environmental person. I do not understand why there is even a discussion about the downtown ride-free area. It is a no-brainer as attracting shoppers and has generated millions of tourist dollars from those coming from both inside and outside this area. Who's attempting to eliminate this, and what are they thinking? The City is already greedy as clamping down on installing metered parking spaces and installing parking signs where they did not before, which make it hard for my business neighbors in the International District to have people park in front of their stores. Metro, Sound Transit and Community Transit, whose management in my opinion may have spent their huge government planning grants for tons of BS, have been more about their driver union payments than caring about regional issues; and their management has not given them a clear mission getting people out of cars

and on the bus. I am deeply disappointed with old-thinking, taking public money, and poor planning. I attended a national Smart Cities conference in San Diego last month re smart city planning around transpo points and DID NOT SEE ANY OF YOU THERE. There is an event tomorrow Thursday about residential developments around transpo points but I do not expect to see you there as you are deadheads until proven otherwise. Sincerely, Susan K. Godfrey Mondoverdo Communications 206-682-2399

698. Hi— Read the info on your website about the 9/29/12 changes and have a question that was not addressed. Sorry—can't make it to the open house. **If all riders pay on entry, how will two-zone trips be handled? Will all of King County be considered one zone on Sept. 29th?** I've asked a couple drivers and they didn't know. Thanks. Randy McDougall
699. Eliminating the Free Ride Zone: I have lived in downtown Seattle for over 10 years and used the Free Bus Zone tremendously. It encourages downtown business, tourism and commerce. I think that if you stop the Free Zone, then you will hurt alot of business'. Those business' are already hurting enough.
700. To Whom it May Concern, As a resident of Belltown (Zombieland), I wish to express my dismay at the elimination of the 'ride free' service in downtown Seattle. I have been told by a great many visitors to Seattle as well as residents that this service is a very attractive feature of Seattle. Cut Managers and benefits first! Thank you, Ian Tanza
701. **Will the proposed changes in having everyone pay when they get on the bus, even in the tunnel, affect people like myself with a Senior Orca Card? I often transfer with the card to two or three buses within the two hours allowed. I would like to be reassured that the current method will be carried forward. If it is changed, I could end up paying \$2.25 each way, for a total of \$4.50 for a round trip even if I stay within the two-hour time period.** This seems exorbitant for seniors. Thanks.
702. To Whom it May Concern, I am quite worried that with the end of the free ride area, those with no income who rely on the service will be left in the cold. **I hope that some sort of "free ride card" can be given to eligible individuals and accompany the change in policy. Furthermore, as an employee of a local nonprofit who works downtown, I frequently use the bus to travel from Pioneer Square to Belltown. Requiring an additional fee for the trip will cut down on the number of meetings I am able to conduct by adding an additional transaction cost.** Best, Michael Kaemingk
703. Hello, Here is an idea to speed up the boarding of passengers when the RFA is eliminated in September. **Post signs at bus stops with wording along these lines: "Please have your exact fare, transfer or pass ready when boarding."** I do notice some customers wait until they reach the fare box before digging out their payment. Maybe this will help. Thanks, Chuck Francoeur 2721 Fourth Ave., #130 Seattle, WA 98121 850.266.3750
704. Hello, I commute daily on Metro and couldn't be happier about eliminating the ride free zone. I believe I heard or perhaps read somewhere that in order to ensure all passengers pay the fare, they will only be allowed to enter via the front of the bus. When de-boarding, they may exit through the back door. **My question is how do you plan to control the number of people who will simply choose to board via the back door when passengers are exiting? Seems hard to imagine but I think the only way to ensure EVERYONE is paying the fare is to require all passengers enter/exit via the front door.** This would be inconvenient to say the least for daily commuters; however, it's very frustrating to see

the number of passengers who are getting a free ride on a daily basis because they can't pay. These are the folks who are essentially driving the fares up for those of us who are honest paying customers. Thank you for your attention and response! Maureen Connors

705. How Could You? As a public entity undermine the public in this way, and simply offer an "open house" with no responsibility to listening to your constituents, and those who pay to keep this service running? I watched a man in his 80's get harassed by a bus driver for not having a Metro Senior Card AND pay up NOW. He was using a walker carrying meager household items purchased from Goodwill, the man did not have money or much strength and she wanted him to go downtown and get an "official" card from Metro to pay senior fare. The homeless and low income folks who live downtown now will be expected to pony up money to get to their service providers. WHAT ARE YOU DOING, GETTING THE POOR TO COVER YOUR COSTS?!?!?! How does this make sense??? How cruel can you be??? With the rising gas prices the middle class are returning to the buses, increasing your revenues but still you pursue the money of the poor. I will be glad to move downtown so I don't need to buy an Orca card and give you my money, but I am fortunately young and strong enough to be able to walk to where I need to go. But I know with your current policies I do not want to support your non-public minded policies. Lisa Connolley
706. I take the bus tunnel frequently in and around areas downtown. It's a wonderful resource. I want to ensure that King County Metro is financially sound, but what can we do about the bottlenecks that occur in the tunnels during rush hour? I'm sorry I missed the open house earlier today.
707. Greetings: I am a vehement opponent to Metro's elimination of the innovative downtown Seattle Ride-Free zone. Today attended what I thought was to be a discussion on this subject but it was not a public forum. It was several tables with propaganda from Metro to which apparently did not get to a public vote and also apparently excluded the City of Seattle from the discussion. For years I have been disappointed with Metro and Sound Transit, which agencies have wasted public and private money for "planning services" which have not resulted in a comprehensive regional transportation system compared to other more advanced cities of our size. Here are my oppositions to closing the Free Ride Zone in Seattle: 3-1/2 years ago I moved to the International District as having lived in the burbs and as greenie rode all 3 bus systems: Metro, ST and CT to get to my downtown Seattle jobs. I have seen too much waste and mismanagement by ST and Metro "planners" who have not produced direct results. I believe this charge will affect downtown workers, tourists, and low-income residents whose offices are being closed in their neighborhoods requiring them to travel to downtown to receive basic services and that any remedial efforts to close those gaps will create another bureaucracy. My arguments for keeping the ride-free area are that: 1. Metro and Sound Transit have mismanaged their budgets in the past so why subsidize them now. 2. Downtown Seattle is a point for public service offices which are being closed elsewhere. 3. Downtown Seattle is a tourist destination, and if visitors must pay a bus fare especially coming from the airport it is a big pain in their keister to get to their downtown hotel. What are they thinkin. Yours for better urban transportation, Sincerely, Susan K. Godfrey Mondoverdo Communications Seattle 206-682-2399
708. Hi, I attended the open house yesterday and left with a question: How does Metro calculate the alleged "fare revenue lost" from the operation of the Ride Free Area? Since most of the RFA riders would not btturn into paying customers once the RFA disappears, it's not obvious where the "lost fares" come in: they don't pay now, they don't pay with no RFA—so where's the loss? Additionally,

what percentage of the current RFA riders does Metro calculate would continue to ride in the RFA once the RFA disappears, given as a percentage from zero to 100%? How is your figure arrived at?  
Thanks, John S

709. Hi, I need to transfer to the 203 shuttle on Mercer Island to reach Herzl Ner Tamid conservative congregation on East Mercer Way by 6:00 PM on Fridays for religious services. I currently leave work at 5:00 PM, and am unable to move it any earlier. Currently, I am able to catch the 5:06 PM 550 bus and transfer to the 5:34 203 shuttle. However, even now this occasionally doesn't work. Will the 203 schedule be adjusted to accommodate for the later arrival times of buses from Seattle? Thank you.  
Cheers, Brian Matt
710. Dear Metro, Thank you for holding the open house regarding the impending elimination of the Ride Free Area. I'll respond to various elements of the current plan in a separate letter, and focus this letter on the transit agencies around the country that use a different fare for cash boardings and RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) card boardings in order to disincentivize change fumbling at the bus door. First, let me point out that this sort of differential fare is not a hardship on anyone, beyond the cost of getting an ORCA card. Once someone gets a card, it would pay for itself within a certain number of rides. Right now, the incentive is to not get a card, and continue to use cash, since there is no disincentive to cash fumbling, other than monthly passes and lack of inter-agency paper transfers, and the disapproving moans of fellow riders wanting to get somewhere faster. But using cash is a hardship on the whole system and on all the riders who have to put up with slower buses. It also results in less service. Having a differential fare requires no new technology, nor even having to reset the ORCA readers. It can be achieved by voting to raise cash fares, voting to lower ORCA fares, or a combination of the two – whatever it takes to get the votes. Note that raising cash fares requires no inter-agency agreements, other than possibly for the Reduced Regional Fare Permit. Differential fares needs to happen in order to keep buses moving downtown when the RFA goes away. Six transit agencies around the country that I've looked at use different fares between cash and card boardings. I've attached links to the fare charts of each agency, showing the differential fare. They are: Chicago Transit Authority <http://www.transitchicago.com/fares/> Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority [http://www.mbta.com/fares\\_and\\_passes/bus/](http://www.mbta.com/fares_and_passes/bus/) Port Authority of Allegheny County (Pittsburgh) <http://www.portauthority.org/paac/FaresPasses/Fares.aspx> Note that PAPC is the other transit agency that uses a free ride area. Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority <http://www.wmata.com/fares/Metrobus.cfm> Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (Houston) <http://www.rideMetro.org/FareInfo/Default.aspx> In this case, the differential is five free rides for every 50 rides paid for on each card, which is a more convoluted way to administer the differential, requiring fancier programming. Gold Coast Transit (Ventura, CA) <http://www.goldcoasttransit.org/fares-eff-aug-2011.html> Besides the multi-ride discount, Go-Ventura card users get a 10% discount on every ride, which does not require fancier programming. <http://www.goventura.org/?q=travel-ventura/vista/go-ventura-bus-pass> These agencies can provide data showing the effects of differential fare rates between cash and cards. I hope you will talk with them, and follow their lead in making transit faster, with the net result of being able to provide more service using the same service hours. I also want to point out the local precedent for differential cash fares on transit: the King County Ferry District: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/WaterTaxi/VashonRoute/Fares.aspx> <http://www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/WaterTaxi/WestSeattleRoute/Fares.aspx> If it is

okay to disincentivize cash payments on the ferry, it ought to be politically acceptable to do the same for buses. Thank you again for taking public input on this transition! Best, Brent White

711. Dear Metro, This is the other part of my comments following up on the open house regarding elimination of the Ride Free Area. I am generally supportive of all the engineering fixes that are being considered. I am quite supportive of the plan to move more peak-only buses out of the tunnel. In addition to my previous letter regarding how to minimize cash fumbling, I'd like to emphasize one additional goal: Using all the bus doors for the duration of the deboarding/boarding process. In practice, that will involve investment in personnel. For buses where most of the passengers are alighting, the process should actually be pretty cheap. Just add two canned messages. First, "Please exit at the rear door, as you are able." Then, when there are no more passengers boarding, and there are still a bunch trying to get out, and the aisle is clear at the front, "You may now exit at any door." There is no need to wait until September 29 to test this process. It can be tried on any multi-door pay-as-you-enter buses as soon as the canned messages are made available. Or, various drivers could get on their loudspeakers and say the message, and see how well the process flows. For buses where most of the passengers are boarding, the process will certainly be a little more expensive. Employee-assisted rear-door boarding is the only substitute I know of for simply going to off-board payment. However, assistants standing by the door with hand-held ORCA readers cost a lot less than operators. This process doesn't have to wait until September 29 to be tested. Boarding expeditors could be stationed at major downtown bus stops (outside of RFA hours) and at major transit centers as soon as Metro has the money to hire them. The boarding expeditors could also potentially help with mobility device securement (if properly trained) and answering questions from riders who would otherwise hold buses up with those questions. Security guards could also be trained to perform these functions. In sum, the non-street-engineering keys to avoiding bus gridlock on September 29 are (1) minimizing change fumbling through strong disincentives; and (2) keeping all the doors in use for the duration of the deboarding/boarding process. I look forward to the end of the Ride Free Area and Pay-After-You-Shove-To-The-Exit. I hope Metro is given the tools it needs to make the process go smoothly. Thanks again for doing this! Best, Brent White

712. Dear Metro, I wanted to offer a cheaper, and less-clogging, alternative to the free circulator bus proposal. When the Line E starts up, it could easily become the "free bus" downtown, with no fare inspections until north of the free ride zone. By being consistently free 24/7, and perhaps extending the zone to any social services that are just outside it, this "free bus" would be a connectivity improvement over the current RFA for those who can't afford to pay anything at all. The RapidRide branding would make the bus easy to see. Until then, the 358 could be designated as the "free bus". Southbound, it would simply become free entry when it reaches the free zone. Northbound, it could have random fare inspections, sharing the RapidRide C/D inspection team, just north of the free zone. This would not only save the service hours of a circulator bus, but also keep downtown from being clogged with yet another bus route. Hopefully, this would also reverse the problem of using up more free ticket vouchers by enabling human service agencies to save their free ticket vouchers for trips to and from downtown. I hope this helps. Best, Brent White

713. People in the downtown Seattle area take the bus and patronize business establishments because of the free ride. Do they really think this will go on if people have to pay? Watch profits go down. I hope businesses are aware of this and are planning some kind of subsidy to retain the "free rides".

714. Dear everybody, I have now personally spoken about this matter to the Mayor and the entire city council at the City Hall Open House, and to the heads or representatives of Metro, Sound Transit, and King County at the Ride Free Zone Open House. You all agree that it would be nice to retain a piece of the free zone to allow it to grow back but that the current system is too complicated. Bus drivers, in particular, hate it. No one has a problem with the word "free," the problem is with the word "zone." Now that the zone is gotten rid of, there is no reason to retain any part of it. But that doesn't mean we have to lose the word "free." I propose switching from a zone based free bus system to a route based system in which at certain times throughout the day, entire routes would be free from beginning to end. I have spoken to them and the bus drivers LOVE this idea. It makes their jobs even easier. On a free route, the driver doesn't have to deal with money or transfers, just stopping at every stop and letting everyone on or off. Here is my imaginary Press Release: SEATTLE CHANGES FROM "FREE BUS ZONE" TO "FREE BUS ROUTES" In a deal worked out between the City of Seattle, Metro, and Sound Transit, rates will be set for certain hours during which individual routes will be available from beginning to end for free. "Right now we've made a commitment to X hours of free time a day," said [insert your name here]. "It will be up to Metro to decide which routes and when." "We invite the public to participate in the decision," said [insert your name here]. "Along with payments from the city, costs will also be defrayed by an increase in cost on other lines. It makes sense for the people who ride the bus most often should help subsidize the free buses they themselves use." "We're considering a rotating schedule that will eventually cover every route. The free zone can now extend to the suburbs where buses have never been free," said [insert your name here]. "We will subsidize the homeless who will miss the current system the most by simply supplying more passes to homeless shelters and other social agencies," said [insert your name here]. "We've got till September to get the new system in place so there will be no disruption of free bus service in Seattle, which has been a tradition for many decades. This system can start with just a few lines then mutate and grow as the economy changes," said [insert your name here]. According to [insert your name here], "The cheapest rates would be for the lines least ridden. There are all kinds of variables to take into account when figuring out the cost. There's a lot to be done in five months." "It's a good idea," said Michael Dare, who thought of the whole thing. "I hope they do it." MD
715. I believe that eliminating the free ride zone is a very poor idea. It will result in additional traffic downtown and will also discourage ridership by people who are not frequent transit riders, but get exposure to the system through the free ride zone. Overall, the alleged cost savings does not outweigh the negative effects on public relations and traffic. Please keep the free ride zone alive. Molly A. Lawrence
716. "Mark me down as opposed to eliminating the downtown free ride area. :) John Sweeney President,
717. Dear Sir/Madam: The change to remove the 'free-ride' downtown Metro bus service is another nail to destroy downtown small business. What more will King County and Seattle City Government do to deter business in the downtown core? First, Mayor McGinn raised parking fees and increased paid parking hours 8AM-8PM. This was not a prudent change. It has resulted in deterring people from coming to the downtown core to shop and dine, and is killing small business already under pressure from the economic downturn. Now, Metro has decided to eliminate the 'free-ride' area of the downtown core, which will also act as a further deterrence to downtown small business activity. Also if bus transport is supposed to decrease auto use downtown, the added cost will reduce bus usage and therefore is counter to increasing public transportation use. It will also be a burden to those,

especially older citizens using the free bus service under a fixed income, and others that not only use the free-ride downtown bus service to frequent downtown businesses, but also for transport to work. It will also affect tourists visiting the city, convention business attendees, and cruise ship patrons using public transportation, previously moving about the downtown core freely. Higher paid parking and lack of free bus service in the downtown core will negatively effect small businesses throughout the downtown core. Both are bad for business and poor choices, especially during the fragile recovery. Sincerely, Ed Kane, Ph.D. 2414 1st Ave # 506 Seattle WA 98121

718. The SCIDpda would like for the Chinatown – International District to be included in the downtown circulator. We understand that most details of this program are yet to be ironed out , but as a downtown neighborhood with a large residential population of seniors and lower income households, please include us. Also, as the marketing plan targeting tourists and their use of Metro and the Circulator is further developed, please include the Chinatown-ID as well. Feel free to contact me with further questions –thank you. Maiko Winkler-Chin Executive Director Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation & Development Authority phone: 206.838.8242 fax: 206.467.6376
719. [comment originally sent to SDOT] Thank you for participating in the open house on the Ride Free Area transition. I wanted to bring to your attention an alternative to the expensive proposal to have a free circulator bus starting September 29. Instead of adding a new bus line and further congesting 3rd Ave, route 358 (soon to become the E Line) could be designated as the "free bus" for the length of the district, or even further, depending on where social service providers are located. It could also be free 24/7 within the district, for the sake of uniformity, simplicity, and not to mention, compassion. Instead of having to find service hours to use on a designated new circulator route, Metro would actually be able to save some service hours. The 358 would run faster both ways through the district without riders having to pay at the front door. The buses on 3rd Ave would not be further congested by an additional bus line. The cost of having fare inspectors doing random inspections on northbound 358s just north of the district would end up being a savings over the cost of inspecting the whole E Line, since the north end of the district would be a crossover point with the C/D Line, where Metro's fare inspection team can go back and forth. By having the 358/E free all day and night within the Central Business District, it would be a connectivity improvement over the current RFA for those who cannot afford to pay any fare. It would also turn the RFA transition from a big net loss on available free bus ticket vouchers into a net savings on vouchers, as downtown social service providers could then save their free vouchers for clients going to and from downtown. Thanks for everyone's hard work. I hope you find this proposal useful. Best, Brent White 206-551-5144
720. To Whom It May Concern: I am writing you in regards to some alternate options you may consider for ending the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle. First of all, I strongly believe that the Ride Free Area is a great tradition for both Seattle area residents and tourists all over the world. I work for a hostel at the international district to help budget travelers to stay in Seattle. During the summer time, our 284 beds are all occupied with them who are mostly from outside of the country. When they check out the hostel, they all appreciate the greatness of the Ride Free Area which they say that they never see such a friendly system in other places. It is now very unfortunate to hear the announcement regarding the ending the Ride Free Area. From a tourist point of view, I just want to show you some ideas you may consider to keep attracting tourists and move them smoothly in the Seattle area below.
- 1) Day Pass on weekdays Currently a day pass is available on weekends only. If the transit authority

issues the day pass every day, 7 days a week, this helps travelers move without hassle around the area

2) Free shuttle bus in the tunnel If a number 99 type bus runs every 30 minutes in the tunnel from International District station to Convention Place station, tourists will get a comfortable impression without knowing the traffic mess on the ground. 3) Bus fare payment at a vending machine Tourists especially coming from outside of the country don't usually carry small changes. If they can pay a bus fare at a vending machine in a large bill or on a credit card, it would be very simple to ride and convenient for them without trouble finding a bank around. I appreciate your serious consideration regarding these alternate options above after the ending of the Ride Free Area.

Sincerely, Yasu Shigemitsu

721. The rapid Bus Service Bus stop between Lenora and Blanchard on third Ave Because third Ave has too many routes that come at once. putting the rapid Ride line between local stops would mean a shorter distance to stop and faster Downtown. Take the route 550 out of the tunnel and have routes 550 and 554 begin and end at the same stops have them both layover at 2nd and Wall. Make it easier for people traveling to Mercer Island to be able to catch both routes 550 and 554 in one place. Also shorten the south bound Tunnel Routes 101 102 and 150 to Royal Borughm and bus Way Route 106 to Lanader and Bus Way. The Keep the train hold up the buses and the buses hold up the train. Extend the route 41 to Lander and Bus Way so riders can catch one or two bus routes or the train to connect with southbound Routes -- Mary Ellen Yarusso

722. Have the Downtown Business Pay for free shuttle Buses that Serve the Downtwon area like the Shuttle That Serves the water front And sell advertising space on bus shelters Replace artwork on Bus shelters with advertising for a little extra revenue The rapid Bus Service Bus stop between Lennora and blanchard on third Ave Because third Ave has too many routes that come at once. putting the rapid Ride line between local stops would mean a shorter distance to stop and faster Downtown. Take the route 550 out of the tunnel and have routes 550 and 554 begin and end at the same stops have them both layover at 2nd and Wall. -- -- Mary Ellen Yarusso

723. Hi, We live in Pioneer Square and find the ride free zone very convenient. We often take buses through the tunnel to Westlake for dinner, shopping, etc. We estimate we use the ride free zone three times a week. While we understand the issues surrounding the elimination of the ride free zone, we would like it if there would be some consideration for those of us who use Metro for short rides downtown. It seems unreasonable to pay the full fare to go from Pioneer Square to Westlake. It would be nice if there were some way to accommodate this, especially since Pioneer Square tourism is also dependent on people being able to move easily from downtown to the Square. Thank you, Ann Rowe

724. [Sends same email every few days. About half is promotion for his business] ... like countless others in Seattle, I depend on the ride free zone -- to even propose its removal is, by definition, clinically insane. Think of all the elderly on fixed incomes who need this essential service! The rich are NOT, repeat, NOT to be pitied ..... they are to be HEAVILY TAXED in order to raise enough revenue to maintain the ride free zone!

725. Colby Burrows. N. Seattle and KC resident, transit user and business owner. I suggest RFA be reduced to waterfront line and bus tunnel only. Funding can come from renting out space to wifi providers and wireless companies to re-broadcast cellular service in the tunnel. Also bus tunnel advertisements could be allocated to the RFA. Big benefit to tourists that can easily grasp the tunnel and waterfront lines. Can call me with questions or comments.

726. Yeah, I'm very opposed to the change. I've been riding buses in Seattle for years and I remember the day there were no ride free zones and in fact you bought tokens. So I thought the ride free zone was a great innovation, it really speeds up boarding, I don't believe people understand if you only board in the front and you're taking on a big load for a big, articulated bus and there's a couple of older people, someone in a wheelchair, it could take 10, 12, 14 minutes. I don't think people understand that. The current system, all 3 doors open, people clamor aboard, the bus is off in a minute or two. I don't think people are prepared for the congestion it's going to create downtown and if you have a slow load trolley, all the other trolleys behind it have to wait. No one can even pull around it so if you have one slow load trolley that's really, really slow, it's going to back up every trolley on the line behind it. But, I really think it's a bad idea, I think Metro should figure out how to get more money out of the city and not eliminate the ride free zone.
727. "Hi there, yes. I just wanted to comment about the end of the free ride zone scheduled for September and in your information page ""What bus riders need to know"" the first bulleted point says ""These changes will make Metro systems simpler to use and unfortunately, I am a case manager and I work with low and no income clients and that first bulleted point is the opposite of true, it's going to be way less simple to use because they don't have money and now it will cost money so I'm not at all sure how my clients are going to traverse the free ride area like they used to do to come to receive services and training at my organization whose mission is to serve low and no income folks. It's going to be a pretty big deal. That's my first point, my second point is, I have an ORCA card, an annual pass and I ride the bus almost every day on the way to work so it will not impact my spending whatsoever, however having everybody enter the bus at the front and exit the bus at the rear, I ride a very busy, standing room only express bus and it's going to have a major impact, so I just wanted to put that out there. My name is Daniel Bedau and my phone number is 206-267-7610. Thank you. Bye."
728. Hi. My name is Jay Doran and I work for the Seattle/King County Coalition on homelessness and I was hoping to get an electronic copy, a Word document or PDF form of the comment form that's available on your website so that we could hand those out to our members in hard copy form. If you would please call me back, my number is 206-357-3149 or you can email me at jay@homelessinfo.org. Thanks a bunch. Bye. [He was accommodated.]
729. Hi. My name is Tamara and I want to, if it's not too late, I want to let you guys know that I am not at all opposed to eliminating the ride free area or requiring the fare to be paid when you enter, it sounds like it would create a lot of currently lost revenue to become gained revenue for Metro and with all the proposed service cuts and bus eliminations, I think that any measures should be taken that can be taken to prevent that from happening. I'm someone who relies on the bus, a car is not an option for me, I don't want it to be an option for me, it's expensive, causes traffic, harmful for the environment. I solely rely on Metro and I would rather pay more money for bus fare and take other necessary measures than to lose bus routes that I rely on like the number 46, 16, 5, 28, 44, etc. so if you have any questions or if there's anything else I can do to help, a phone number for me is 206-427-2970. Thanks for your time. Bye.
730. Hey, this is Doug Brimm calling about the Ride Free Update brochure. On the first page it says something about transportation assistance for people with little or no income. I want to know how we get that. Give me a call, 206-412-8036.

731. Yeah, this is James. I think it is not a good idea taking the privilege away from the customers downtown, especially businessmen or anybody. I believe downtown area should be free all the time like everywhere in the United States of America, it's all free. So, taking this privilege away, everybody will be hating you guys. Bye.
732. I left the information after the tone but I never heard any tone indicating that my information had been understood or accepted. I look forward to hearing a return phone call if in fact you did get my message. Thank you, goodbye.
733. Yes, I received an email notice of the public meeting at Metro headquarters on Thursday on Tuesday. That's not really adequate notice. When I just tried to click on the link to the subject in the email, it did not respond. Again, that is not very satisfactory. The link being [kcMetroalerts@service.govdelivery.com](mailto:kcMetroalerts@service.govdelivery.com). One almost gets the impression that the county does not want the public at these public meetings because of all the inconvenience of having to listen to them. This is not the first time this has happened that I've gotten 48 hours notice for an important meeting or open house. Perhaps you would be good enough to call me and let me know when the next such open house is going to take place or the next opportunity for a member of the public to study the plan on the end of the free zone and other transportation assistance in the present ride free area if there is going to be any such hearing. My telephone number is 206-285-4888. That's all the information required to call me back because I'm the only person at that number. Thank you very much.
734. I attended the open house yesterday, Thursday the 29th and filled out a survey form and I have a couple of additional comments I need to make because I forgot to include them. I indicated that as a low income person, the option of the free circulator would be the best option to help people with low income or no income to get around in the downtown core area, indicating essential would be 3rd Avenue between Virginia St. and James St. and what I need to add to that is, I feel the hours need to be essentially the same as is currently done for the ride free area, about 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., at least until 7 p.m. in the evening and I would hope that the frequency would be very high as in every 10 minutes to enable people to get around timely. I believe that's all of my comments for now other than I am very interested in being kept up to date as to what the progress is on the options for accommodating low income people after the ride free ends. Thank you.
735. There are other ways to fill budget holes you catalyst pigs, people rely on the f\*\*\*\*\*g free area to get around. This is ridiculous.
736. Yes, Hi. I think you should leave the free ride area option alone because there's people and students depending on it. Especially senior citizens and handicapped. Also, it helps to help people make ends meet. Thank you, this is Angela. Thank you.
737. Regarding the free ride, I'm against that because here in Seattle it rains a lot and a lot of people really need the transportation in downtown and regarding the fact that they will be giving discount fare for people who cannot afford people will sell this tickets, it will be more chaotic. A lot of people will be applying to DSHS to get these tickets. That is my personal opinion. Thank you.
738. My name is Melanie Susan Neal. This is why I'm calling: I think I understand what you guys are saying except for will people still be able to use bus transfers when they're getting on and off the bus. Thank you. Bye.

739. Hi. This is Lois Martin calling, and I heard/read in the bus about the change where everyone enters in the front but I also heard from someone that you will be requiring everybody to leave from the rear then which presents a problem if that's true, it's a problem for older people and people that are carrying groceries and me especially when I wheel my cart full of groceries, I cannot walk through that aisle and go out the back door. Also, the long buses, they do not, the back end does not stop at the curb it stops like 4 feet from the pavement, an old person cannot get off the bus then. So, if you would call me back, I would appreciate it. Also, I was unable to make it today. Are you going to have another public meeting? One is not enough. Anyway, my name is Lois Martin, and I would appreciate a call back. Thank you.
740. Hello. First of all, thank you for this opportunity to comment. I think it's great that you guys are eliminating the ride free downtown Seattle and I also think it's great that you guys are charging fare up front beginning in September, I think these are good tactics and less opportunity for people to take advantage and such. Good job and I really appreciate you folks. Thank you very much, bye bye.
741. Hi. This is Brenda again, I (unknown words) return my call. I am not going to be able to attend the 4 o'clock meeting tonight however my question is, on the second statement of your flyer posted on each bus, it says that all riders are going to be required to pay every time they ride the Metro in King County, does that mean that transfers are no longer valid? Such that, I'm going to be paying \$2.25 for 3 bus rides that I need to go to work to and from Rainier Valley in Renton. on the rider free zone, I don't have any problem with that, but the transfer I'm really worried about that because that's like \$30 a day just to ride the Metro including the transfers. You can just leave me a message answering that question. Thank you.
742. I've just this morning checked your computer information regarding the end of the ride free area and where as I am unhappy about the end of the ride free area I'm relieved to see that you are stating there will some accommodations made for low income people, I am one of those and I have been dependent on the ride free area for getting around from shelter to shelter and with income of only \$698 per month SSI having to buy a bus pass would be just taking away too much of my income. I am wondering specifically what the accommodations will be and how they will work and I am hoping that it will be something that will be available at no cost at times I do take bus trips and pay regular rates for those and I'm wondering how soon the plan for that will be available so that we can comment on it.
743. Yes, I just want you to know that I think they should absolutely keep the free ride bus zone, it is so important to so many people, especially seniors and low income and instead of cutting there, they should increase our sales tax to ten percent. This is Lynn. I hope you'll try and keep our ride free area for us. Thank you.
744. Yes, my name is Jim Tillman. I think it's folly to expect that because there's a calculated revenue lost of 2.2 million dollars based on the ridership in the ride free zone that that revenue will be collected once the ride free zone is eliminated. I would hazard that at least 50 percent of those ride free fares in the ride free zone are people who are using it for convenience factor and will simply stop using the service so you can easily take half of that off of there. I think it's a bad decision that affects also people that are coming into the state and the city to visit, I think it's completely unwise to try and gain revenue from some small factor like that that's being totally overstated. Thank you.

745. Mr. Holman. Michael. Thank you, talk to you later. Bye.
746. Hi. I just wanted to comment that I support eliminating the free ride zone and uh...(phone disconnected)
747. My name is Kelly Kurtz. I'd like a return call, you can leave a message if I'm not here. I'm just interested in the rationale behind eliminating the free ride zone. Thank you.
748. Yes, I'm calling in hopes that my input would encourage you to retract that decision to end the ride free area. All it's going to do is create more congestion in the downtown traffic area than what it already is, it's already totally crazy and having the ride free area in the downtown area, allows people to park away from the downtown hub area and relieve some of that congestion, it's not going to cost Metro any more money for running, you're going to incur the same costs whether you have that or not so from a cost cutting measure, that's not going to do it for you. I really, really hope that you all will retract that policy and help to alleviate the traffic problems that we already have.
749. Okay, Hi. This is Mark and I want to know if you will provide a sign language interpreter for the open house this Tuesday at 4p. If you're not going to, that's fine, I just want to know if you're going to have one or not. Okay. Thank you.
750. (very difficult to make out what caller was saying). Give me a call \_\_\_. My name is Bergin Telisi. Okay, bye.
751. Hi. My name is Marietta Mullins and I would like some information about the, where and what stage the proposed termination of the ride free zone is and if the people have a say, it sounds like they do. Will someone please give me a call? Thanks, bye.
752. Hi. My name is Brenda and I'm a commuter and I would like a return call. This phone will be good until 1:15p or I will try to call you again with regards to a couple questions on the Thursday meeting. If it starts on a specific time, I see that it's open house so can we come anywhere from 4-6 and what particular weight does people's voice carry with regards to the policy formulation on the elimination of ride free zone whenever you enter the bus for all King County trips. Thank you.
753. Hi. I wanted to comment on Seattle's ending the free bus service downtown in September and it's so very important to us to have it. I would rather that the city or the county whoever pays for it raise the sales tax to 10% and keep the bus service. If you have an answer, please call me. My name is Lynn. Thank you so much, please see what you can do.
754. "Transcribed from Spanish Line: My number is \_\_\_ and my name is Ricardo if you can return my call please. "
755. "Transcribed from Spanish Line: My question is if you are going to take away the free buses for the downtown area. My number is \_\_\_ to call me back. "
756. Hi. Adrienne Smith and I've been a frequent rider for more decades than I'd like to admit and I would like to thank you guys for finally coming back to the proper common sense after the hideous changes that you made to the bus routes in October in which we refer to the October from hell. At least you're

doing something sensible. If there isn't going to be a free ride zone in downtown Bellevue, there shouldn't be one in Seattle and all it's doing is giving vagrants a warm place to stay and it makes trips very disturbing. Thank you very much. Have a good day.

757. Hi. My name is Karen Schmidt. I'm a frequent Metro rider for thirty-some years. I would like a return call. I noticed with interest your March 29th open house about getting rid of the downtown free ride area which sounds like a done deal although you said that people could come and get information and give comments. I think it's a really bad idea, I think it's a pretty great thing for downtown and I understand the hassle of people getting on and then you have to pay when you got off if you rode the bus from the free ride to say like, U District. I can see eliminating that but I think there should be some way to hand out a downtown transfer for you know, x square backs and keep that for shopping and tourism purposes, I think it just sucks to have people have to pay \$2.50 or \$3 to get on a bus downtown and ride 4 or 5 blocks, so I would love it if someone actually would call me back, \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you.
758. My comment is this: **If you're going to remove the free ride zone, you should restore the \$99 yearly pass for seniors**. You should restore that pass. We really need that break. Thank you.
759. Yes, I would like a return call please about the meeting on the 29th. My name is Leah and my phone number is \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you.
760. I'm totally against eliminating the ride free area in downtown Seattle, I feel it will greatly impact businesses and both people who live here, people who work in Seattle who use the bus to get to different places downtown and also tourists. I think you will see a decrease in the number of people using restaurants and maybe going down to the Pike Place Market or Pioneer Square because it's more of a hassle to get to and they will not want to pay every time they get on the bus, **secondly, I think there's going to be an incredible bottle-neck with people getting on the bus and paying at every single stop. Right now the buses, because in the ride free, large numbers of people get on the bus, if each of those had to go through fumble through their wallets, fumble for change, especially tourists and people who don't ordinarily ride the bus, you're going to have a lot of time spent and I think it's going to put the buses behind schedule on a regular basis and just disrupt service.** My name is Joyce and I would like to talk to someone. Goodbye.
761. I am really glad to see that they've instituted this, that they've decided to end the ride free area for paying passengers, I think it's become dangerous on the bus and somewhat chaotic, I don't even like to ride the bus through the ride free area so I think you are doing the right thing, I hope more than ever that you do institute this policy for paying passengers and for people who are going to work downtown. Thank you.
762. My name is Margaret Ruth. My phone number is \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you.
763. I saw the notice that Metro may do away with the free ride zone because I have many friends and relatives who visit and they love just hopping on the bus, they feel that it's London but I also think it's a good thing for the tourists and also for those of us living here. It seems to work well, I don't know why change it. Okay. Thank you so much. Bye.

764. My name is Anna. My number is \_\_\_ and I think Mr. Constantine should be more concerned about the senior citizens in the Seattle area.
765. Hi, We live in Pioneer Square and find the ride free zone very convenient. We often take buses through the tunnel to Westlake for dinner, shopping, etc. We estimate we use the ride free zone three times a week. While we understand the issues surrounding the elimination of the ride free zone, we would like it if there would be some consideration for those of us who use Metro for short rides downtown. **It seems unreasonable to pay the full fare to go from Pioneer Square to Westlake. It would be nice if there were some way to accommodate this,** especially since Pioneer Square tourism is also dependent on people being able to move easily from downtown to the Square. Thank you, Ann Rowe
766. My name is Trina, my telephone number is \_\_\_ and my concern is about the ride free area downtown being eliminated. I think that is really, really not a good idea. I appreciate that there is a ride free area because some of the things I have to do is just downtown and I'm not going very far so I go from one end of the street to the other, like 3 blocks. If I was disabled or anything and me paying just to go down the street is just ridiculous and I don't think that the King County Department is going to seem any better in terms of funding and financing to start charging people just to go 3 blocks, if even that, just 1 block because being on the bus puts you closure to your destination. I think that would be abusive in terms of providing a public service and I don't think it's going to help at all. I understand it might be because people jump on the bus and then jump off the bus and you can't restrain anybody from getting off and on the bus. There's got to be a better method for handling that than for the elimination of the ride free area. I think what would help is that there be a budget for people who need the ride free because they don't have money to be able to ride free if they have to. Just like they put forth for the teens in trouble, they'll be able to get a free ride then they should put that forth for homeless people, people who just had a bad financial situation and it looks like everybody is in a bad financial crisis and I don't think it helps to put an extra burdent on anybody. Okay, that's all. Bye.
767. Hi there, I'm calling in response to the closure of the ride free zone in September or October. It will also manifest a lot of different pockets downtown Seattle criminal activity. Criminals will not be able to get out of downtown so there's going to be a lot more people producing a lot more crime and it's my big concern that this has been a public service since the very beginning of the bus system that they have been giving these short little rides within a 20 block period, supposedly to the people that are handicapped and cannot get around and that they get public access to the services that they need. I think that is corrupt in our system and YOUR system to take that away from people that really need it. It's too bad that we are so self centered and think only about our own greed instead of about other people's welfare. I'm really concerned about Metro and it's upgrade. Thank you very much and I decline, I am going to help protest against this. Okay, thank you. Bye.
768. Hi. My name is Janet Ashman and I just heard from a friend here that you guys are proposing getting rid of the free ride zone and that would greatly affect myself and other people who desperately need that free ride zone so I'm calling to say that I'm opposed to that. So, if you'd like to respond I have a voicemail at \_\_\_. Thank you. Bye.
769. I just want to talk about the free zone. I think it's a mistake to get rid of it. For one thing, it makes Seattle seem like a friendly city for tourists and for another thing, the homeless don't have ways to get around. So, I'd really like it if you'd reconsider that. Oh, my name is Denise Frezella (?). Bye.

770. Yes, I'm a very concerned citizen in regards to corporate greed in regards to Metro pulling out of a free zone that has been here for a very, very, very long time. They've already cut it down and they've already doubled prices and how much farther do you have to go to have your corporate greed? There should be a reason that disabled and handicapped people should have a zone to be able to get to places that they need to get to and you know that it's located downtown Seattle. Now, I think we should have a protest, protesting this. I am very upset with the aspect that in September you are talking about removing the free zone area downtown when you have already doubled the prices. Okay, and you don't get (unknown word) on some of your rides. So, I'm real concerned about the corporate greed going on with Metro. I am saying that I do not like it and I think we should have a protest and get it on the ballot and have it changed and I hope a million more people call you. Thank you very much and have a wonderful day.
771. Yes, this is President's Day Holiday. My name is Peggy, I am homeless and I am very grateful for the shelter systems by the way in Seattle. I'm calling about the proposal to end the free ride zone to strongly encourage that we find some creative way to preserve that. A woman is making a sign down here to get everyone to call in and participate (unknown words). I'd like to also comment, I know it seems that sometimes only homeless people and so forth ride on the free ride zone and also do all kinds of funky things but in fact historically almost all of the homeless people I knew at some time or another did have a disabled bus pass and I always had tickets from the share shelter. If I couldn't pay I just didn't get on or unless I told a bus driver who was kind enough, I always felt that honesty was the best policy and I know perhaps some of us in the homeless community have trespassed and transgressed but I have also, I need to tell you this, before I became homeless saw people who were in King County and Seattle government ride beyond the free ride zone and go "Forgot my wallet, catch you the next time". You know human nature is at is and many people many different reasons, maybe working on education process would be better. I also sympathize I must say with school children who have to use the Metro to go to school some families can barely afford to feed their families as is let alone pay a bus fare so I'd like to I guess put the public back into the term, the thought public transportation and you'll notice things being as they are, parking being scarce downtown and so forth, many people are in their cars, friends of mine who have cars, it's just cheaper taking the car then to wrangle with some of the other situations and the cuts in service and the changes and so forth. I myself am an advocate for bus riding and biking and all but you've got to be careful, some of the buses I've lived in the University District and Highline Community College. They're running empty with barely anybody in the seats it's not just the beginning of the route either, it's different times during the day. Let's all pull together and cut each other a little bit of slack. Remember we homeless and poor disenfranchised people we're not all alike just as no one else is all alike and thank you and thank you for hearing our concerns and god bless you. I don't actually know how you managed to subsidize the buses in the past. Wonderful service, wonderful buses. I went to college in St. Louis, rode the bus to work and never experienced bus service like I did in King County. Thank you very much and bless you. Bye.

**Comments received after the official comment period for Ride Free Area and pay-on-entry implementation plan**  
**April 14-May 31, 2012**

**FROM EMAILS, PHONE CALLS, AND LETTERS**

1. Please find and fund a free alternative to the RFA. I serve low/no-income individuals. They rely HEAVILY on the RFA to receive the various services (including mine) that are in the downtown corridor. Please do not place further burden on these individuals who are some of the most vulnerable in our community. Thank you.
2. I emailed Metro regarding a simple solution to their ride free area problem and got back an email saying comment period is closed. However on the news they said they are still trying to resolve this issue. Like maybe going out and buy all these vans to shuttle homeless people around from one part of town to another.

Being a bus rider for over 58 years I remember the DIME SHUTTLE downtown. It was always packed solid full of riders. Back in the late 60's and 70's. many years ago before there was a ride free area and you had to pay up front there used to be the DIME SHUTTLE running through downtown.

With the cost of living over the past 40 years a .75 cent Shuttle running up and down 3rd Avenue would seem like a very good idea. The OLD DIME SHUTTLE, stood out it had little metal flags on both sides of the bus at the top and was marked clearly DIME SHUTTLE. NO TRANSFERS etc Metro could have a .75cent shuttle NO TRANSFERS, Passes acceptable. NO BACK DOOR IN AND OUT It could run from Jackson to Stewart or maybe Lenore where all the social services are at the start of the Denny Regrade area. (sorry I don't call it bell town, my beloved late cousin June told me the true story of Bell Town.)

The DIME SHUTTLE used to be packed full of riders ferrying from one end of town to the other and sometimes people would only ride one or two stops. I think a .75 cent shuttle would be in order rather than spending a fortune on vans etc. Metro could paint the buses SHUTTLE BUS on the sides and front. Have them run every 10 minutes like the old dime shuttle used to do. You would be amazed at the number of people who would pay that .75 just to ride a few blocks. Or of they have a pass they could use that instead. Metro will make money and the people downtown would be happy to be able to get from one end of town to the other. Whether it was just to run up or down town on the lunch time, run to the court house, do a bank errand etc. If you think a .75 cent shuttle is not enough then have a \$1.00 Shuttle. The shuttle would only run weekdays from 9 or 10:00am until 4:00pm So instead of spending a fortune on these little buses etc why not use what we have and bring back the shuttle limited weekday hours of course.

3. The Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle is desperately needed by the many homeless and very-low-income folks who rely on it to get between service providers spread from Belltown to Pioneer Square. When it is discontinued there will be no way for these people to make the appointments they need to get or maintain benefits and take care of their health, not to mention get to their shelters at night, unless the RFA is replaced by a frequent circulator bus

that has room for them and their backpacks and that is wheelchair accessible. While you are at it, please extend the service for the circulator up to Harborview, since it is the healthcare provider by default for so many homeless and low-income citizens.

4. The decision to end the Ride Free Area will have negative effects on our community, and will disproportionately affect people who are poor and homeless. Seattle and King County should jointly invest in mitigating the effects of this policy decision. Please invest in a free, public, accessible way to navigate downtown easily: a free circulator bus designed for people making short trips within downtown. These vehicles should have:
  - easy access for people with mobility limitations
  - room for baggage, strollers, etc.
  - good service frequency (every 15 minutes, replicating the RFA hours of 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.)
  - cover a predictable route that includes Harborview Medical Center.

Providing this service will help people who live, work, shop, and visit downtown, and ensure that people who have no other transit options are able to get where they need to go. Keeping people moving through the downtown corridors is good for local businesses and helps all of us access local government, cultural and sports events, and services. Thank you.

5. The decision to end the Ride Free Area will have negative effects on our community, and will disproportionately affect people who are poor and homeless. Seattle and King County should jointly invest in mitigating the effects of this policy decision. Please invest in a free, public, accessible way to navigate downtown easily: a free circulator bus designed for people making short trips within downtown. These vehicles should have:

- easy access for people with mobility limitations room for baggage, strollers, etc.
- good service frequency (every 15 minutes, replicating the RFA hours of 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.)
- cover a predictable route that includes Harborview Medical Center.

Providing this service will help people who live, work, shop, and visit downtown, and ensure that people who have no other transit options are able to get where they need to go. Keeping people moving through the downtown corridors is good for local businesses and helps all of us access local government, cultural and sports events, and services.

6. Thank you for your courage in supporting an end to the outdated Ride Free Area and the accompanying mess that is pay-after-you-shove-to-the-front-to-exit. I had the opportunity to attend the open house and read up on all the public information Metro is providing on the transition plan. I regret to admit that Metro is ill-prepared for this transition. Metro is aware that the lost service hours due to an all pay-at-the-front system downtown will cost twice as many service hours as eliminating pay-as-you-exit will save. The mitigation efforts will barely scratch the surface of reducing that effect. The transition, as it is planned, could wipe out all the saved service hours from the route reinvestments and restructurings. A major element of necessary efficiency to make the transition work is not in place, and has almost no hope of being in place, by September 29. The efficiency of which I speak is near-universal adoption of ORCA as the payment method of choice when boarding a bus. Metro and the County Council are quite

aware that lack of known locations, and lack of public awareness of locations, to purchase ORCA, is a major barrier to increasing ORCA use. Metro is making great efforts to change that this year. But there remain three other structural barriers to high ORCA usage:

- competition with paper transfers that are, in many cases, more valuable than an ORCA transfers;
- A lack of per-ride incentive to choose e-purse over cash, even if one has an ORCA;
- And the cost of getting an ORCA card.

Many human service agencies are resistant to giving up paper transfers or allowing an e-purse discount, simply because of the cost of getting an ORCA card. Perhaps it is time to cut the Gordian Knot, and eliminate the fee for getting an ORCA card.

There are plenty of precedents for not charging a fee for transit SmartCards. Here are a few:

- The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Charlie Card is given out freely by employees.
- San Francisco's Metropolitan Transportation Commission waives the cost of a Clipper Card when \$5 of fare product is purchased.
- The Chicago Transit Authority waives the card fee for first-time purchasers who register their Chicago Card.
- Transit for London provides a full refund of the deposit for getting an Oyster Card.

Compared to other regions, Metro combines the highest financial entry barrier to use of its smart card with some of the most significant disincentives to using it.

Metro is aware of the federal mitigation requirements in order to institute cash fare differential and to get rid of paper transfers. I would suggest that all the mitigation that is really required is the elimination of the fee for getting the ORCA card. That said, I support continued distribution of free rides through human service agencies (preferably on ORCA when feasible) and the proposal for free downtown circulator buses, as well as all the efforts being made to get ORCA more widely distributed.

Metro may have a long-term budget plan to pay off the cost of the ORCA contract through card sales. But consider this: For the typical frequent rider who has opted not to use ORCA since it was rolled out, her/his cash fumbling has probably cost the system far in excess of the \$2.50 profit Metro hoped to make on the card she/he has not purchased. The fee has become penny-wise/pound-foolish.

In order to make progress on the transition to more universal ORCA use, but also buy more time for the RFA transition, I would suggest negotiating a timeline with the County Council to take the following steps, in this order:

- Eliminate the ORCA card fee immediately, and replace it with a minimum purchase of \$5 of loaded fare product.
- Create a differential fare structure for all fares between cash and e-purse. (That could include, for example, raising the cash fare on RRFPs to \$1 while leaving the e-

fare at 75 cents.) Set a negotiated deadline for implementation of a cash fare differential for all non-free boardings.

- Set a later deadline for elimination of paper transfers, some time after all voucher recipients from the car tab program have had a reasonable amount of time to use their vouchers. (Or hold off on the vouchers and send out ORCA cards with \$20 of loaded e-purse instead, since the cards would now be "free".)
- Set a deadline for elimination of the Ride Free Area, by January 1, 2017, after U-Link opens. This will allow time for both the ORCA transition and the elimination of several downtown and tunnel bus routes.

Thank you again for boldly pushing forward with the modernization of our transit system, while keeping poor riders from being left behind. I hope the council will have the wisdom to take the time it takes to do this right, but the political courage to make it happen.

7. I don't know whether it's a complaint or suggestion or just a comment, but I'd like to say something really important. I got to know that there would be no RIDE FREE AREA from September 2012. If that's true, I'd not say anything against of it, but I'd prefer if you make some more changes before increasing the fare, and cancelling the privileges. Following are the points that require improvement:

King County buses should be efficient; instead of 2 buses going on the same route coming together at a stop, it'd be good if they should be arriving within a gap of 5 mins maximum. So that passengers wouldn't be waiting for long. Students have to wait in the morning for 15-20mins while waiting for the '49', '10', '11' bus which come together or do not show up for some time. This makes the students miss their class for sometime.

There should be a separate bus for the homeless or poor people. Some of them look like beggars and they use extremely bad language. Even the driver is helpless at times. In the last week, I remember 2 incidents when the woman got off the bus just to make that person got off, and later she got on the bus. But she'd an argument with the beggar who was using bad language while talking to her. I was reading a book and was shocked to hear the woman shouting. I don't know exactly what the man said, but I know what the woman complained to the driver. And I even know some people who backed up that woman for doing the right thing. So please I'd like you to arrange a different bus for such people.

Dogs shouldn't be allowed in the bus. What's the use of paying bus fare when you're standing in the bus, and someone's dog is sitting on the bus seat. Then there are signs on the bus that says: 'Stay home if you have flu', 'Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing', 'Use sanitizer'.....I think animals do have germs and it's not good for the humans to travel in the same bus. I'd like you to do something about the animals before increasing the fare. Animals, especially dogs, should be charged double the amount if riding on a bus. I see buses in terrible and messy condition most of the time. I hope you understand my point.

8. I take the 5:45a in the morning time and then the ride free area from the train station in the afternoon and the time frame.

9. Please continue to have this service. I also want to say that I support the "free fare zone" because it benefits tourists & flowing traffic not get your money argue to driver & backup cars
10. I am writing to add my voice and support to the concept of a Free Circulator bus to mitigate the loss this Fall of the Seattle downtown Ride Free Area.

I have served for two decades as a volunteer helping to direct agencies that provide vital services to those in our community who need some assistance in their daily lives: shelter, hygiene services, food, counseling, financial assistance, and a friendly smile. I have been active in local electoral politics for a similar period of time for the same reason.

It is fortunate that social service providers and the Downtown Seattle Association have common purpose in this regard. Kate Joncas of the DSA recently wrote to Executive Constantine and Mayor McGinn: "we urge you to focus on prioritizing meeting the needs of our lowest-income populations" once the Ride Free Area is gone. Action in this regard must come soon, to avoid a "gap period" when the current service is phased out.

A Free Circulator running at least every 15 minutes is the only viable option. It will have the additional advantage of serving the general population as well as those most in need. Social service agencies simply don't have the money or staff to implement the other options under consideration.

I urge the County, Metro, and City to work with all stakeholders in Downtown Seattle to quickly come up with a viable plan to adequately mitigate the sunset of the Ride Free Area.



## King County

Department of Transportation  
Metro Transit Division  
Community Relations and Communications

May 23, 2012

Kevin Desmond, general manager  
King County Metro Transit  
KSC-TR-0415  
201 South Jackson Street  
Seattle, WA 98104

### **RE: Transit Advisory Commission suggestions for communication about elimination of the “Ride Free Area” in downtown Seattle**

On behalf of the King County Metro Transit Advisory Commission (TAC), I write to offer comments provided via email among members of the TAC after our March 2012 meeting. We agreed as a commission simply to transmit the following comments collected from individual members of the commission.

Multiple changes will be implemented simultaneously including elimination of the Ride Free Program, changes in bus schedules/routes/stops, and patterns of embarking and disembarking the bus. A combination of materials and media must be employed combined with the widest possible outreach to the largest number of constituencies.

**Use graphics and create visuals that show flow patterns for embarking and disembarking.** Graphically display the challenge of able-bodied passengers in back simultaneous to disabled passengers in front as well as passengers waiting to board so that people can “see” how it will work. Standard graphic slides should be created that tell the story, “What riders can do to help us make this work.” Use pictures of actual passengers (not officials in ties).

**Outreach needs to be multi-phased and targeted to the complex constituencies of downtown Seattle.** The public open house that was held needs to be accompanied by multi-phased outreach. The RFA has been in place since 1973. It is used as a selling point for downtown homeowners and business employees. It was designed to improve retail sales and a change to it can impact retail sales. We wonder what groups have been polled regarding the demise of the RFA. We are especially concerned about passengers not connected to a social service agency along 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues. Communication needs to be multi-faceted, including working directly with the business community.

We suggest planning presentations for the early September timeframe for CityClub, Greater Seattle and Downtown Seattle Chamber of Commerce, and downtown Rotary to ensure that business people understand what is happening and why.

Since the downtown community is a complex mix of many constituencies, outreach that serves a preponderance of them would be most effective. One idea that might meet this need would be to create a flyer and provide it to businesses to distribute to their employees, as well as a flyer for property managers to distribute to tenants.

Using focus groups could help to make sure that outreach strategies and materials reach those who will be impacted most in a way they understand.

Consider the following distribution channels for informational materials:

- Provide materials for drivers to give to passengers prior, during, and after the transition. Factor in training for drivers to help educate passengers about the transition.
- Place elimination of the Ride Free Area (RFA) signage at each bus-stop. Use reader boards where available.
- Put signage on every bus in the interior advertising placement area.
- Put bus entry and exit guidelines signage downtown at individual stops.

**There are concerns about operational realities of transitioning to pay-on-entry.**

One concern is about security. Currently at night, drivers usually only allow people to exit through the front. We recommend looking into possible security issues with the exit at the back approach. There may be comparator agencies to contact and learn from.

Another concern is how disabled passengers will exit conveniently and securely through the back, and how it will impact load times if disabled people are exiting via the front while passengers are waiting to board.

**We consider a circulator route a great idea!** It will be important for any routing option to include Harborview access. We are concerned about the practicality of running the circulator along 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Seattle's east-west topography challenges concentrating only on those streets. We believe more activity would be found on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues. We recognize that changes due to Viaduct construction may impact any circulator route that is chosen in the short and long term. Finally, we encourage Metro to solicit buy-in from businesses in addition to human service organizations for the specific concept of a circulator.

On behalf of the entire commission, I thank you very much for noting all of these comments.

Sincerely,

Dorene F. Cornwell, chair  
Transit Advisory Commission

cc: Victor Obeso

Betty Gulledge-Bennett  
Jim Jacobson  
Doug Hodson  
David Lantry  
Jim O'Rourke  
Christina O'Claire  
Candida Lorenzana  
Linda Thielke  
Bob Virkelyst  
Darwin Campbell  
King County Council  
King County Executive

The Honorable Dow Constantine  
King County Executive

Dear Executive Constantine,

I have been hearing considerable interest and concern about the elimination of the Ride Free Area (RFA) and how the impacts, particularly to low and no income riders, will be mitigated.

I look forward to your scheduled transmittal of a RFA elimination implementation plan in early May, yet I understand that some details, such as how to provide for the transportation needs of low and no income riders, may not be decided by the time that report is transmitted. I understand that discussions between you, City of Seattle leaders, and human service providers are underway but that you have not reached resolution on all of the important issues.

In order to prepare for this important policy discussion, and to be responsive to citizen concerns that I am hearing, I would appreciate it if you would provide the following:

- a current status update and timeline for working out all aspects of the RFA elimination between now and implementation on September 29<sup>th</sup>;
- data on current use of the RFA by low and no income riders, such as how many individuals use the service and where they reside;
- your current thinking about expanding Metro's reduced ticket program and development of an income-based reduced fare or free pass program. I understand that after elimination of the RFA, the most likely option for providing for the transportation needs of low and no income riders is a free circulator service in Downtown Seattle. Will improvements to free or reduced fare programs also be in place when the RFA is eliminated in September?

Thank you in advance for your assistance. Please kindly "reply to all."

Sincerely,

**Larry Phillips, Councilmember**  
**Metropolitan King County Council, District Four**  
King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue, Room 1200  
Seattle, WA 98104-3272  
206.296.1004  
[larry.phillips@kingcounty.gov](mailto:larry.phillips@kingcounty.gov)

For more information: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/phillips>

To sign up for my eNews: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/Phillips/Newsletters.aspx>



RECEIVED  
DISTRICT ONE

APR 26 2012

COUNCILMEMBER  
BOB FERGUSON

April 25, 2012

Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn  
King County Executive Dow Constantine

Dear Mayor McGinn and Executive Constantine,

As City and County discussions are underway about mitigation for the Ride Free Area, Sound Mental Health feels it is important that the focus remain on serving all the users of the Metro system. For Sound Mental Health, the subsidized transit helps our clients get to and from critical services and appointments. For example, our Forensic Intensive Supportive Housing (FISH) program serves clients in the downtown corridor, and thus relies heavily on the Ride Free Zone. Clients use the transportation for services such as food bank and medical services as well as legal appointments with courts and probation staff. Many clients in the FISH program have little or no income and count on the Ride Free Zone.

As a stakeholder in our City and County, we believe that the City and County must work collectively with those affected by the sun-setting of the Ride Free Area to retain benefits for riders in Downtown. This means continuing to look at all possibilities such as a shuttle to key service provider locations, increased ticket distribution and ongoing support for organizations like Sound Mental Health, that work with people in need as we transition away from the Ride Free Area this autumn.

Sound Mental Health hopes that as you consider new approaches to mobility within Downtown, you will stay true to your transportation mission statements.

**Metro:**

We envision a transportation system in King County **providing mobility for our entire community**. Children and youth, older adults, people with disabilities and **those with low incomes** will share in a coordinated system designed to gain economies of scale, eliminate duplication and expand service availability and quality.

**City of Seattle:**

To deliver a safe, reliable, efficient, and **socially equitable** transportation system that enhances Seattle's environment and economic vitality.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. We look forward to working with you as you shape the most fair and appropriate public transportation policy possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Stone".

David Stone

Chief Executive Officer

CC: Seattle City Council

King County Council

Administrative Offices: 1600 E Olive St • Seattle, WA 98122-2735 • Tel: 206.302-2200 • Fax: 206.302-2210

Information / Referral / Access: 206.302.2300 • TTY: 206.302.2209 • Toll Free: 1.800.828.1449

Serving King County with offices in: Auburn, Bellevue, Redmond, Seattle, Snoqualmie and Tukwila



515 Third Avenue · Seattle, Washington 98104 · 206.464.1570 · fax 206.624.4196 · www.desc.org

April 20, 2012

King County Executive Dow Constantine  
Members of King County Council  
Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn  
Members of Seattle City Council

RECEIVED  
DISTRICT ONE

APR 24 7 11 12

COUNCILMEMBER  
BOB FERGUSON

Dear Elected Leaders,

I am writing to express concerns, and provide recommendations, regarding the elimination of the Metro Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle. DESC (the Downtown Emergency Service Center) serves 2,000 homeless and formerly homeless people **each day**, most of whom are living with serious and persistent mental illnesses. The vast majority of these individuals are served by DESC within the downtown core. Over 200 of DESC's 400+ employees work within the Ride Free Area during its designated hours. Our organizational service model has come to depend on this free resource to transport both clients and staff between service sites.

I want to echo the comments from other human services advocates that our public transit system can and must be accessible to and inclusive of people who are homeless, low income, disabled, elderly. The whole community benefits when the system works for all people. DESC appreciates the King County Council and Executive and the Seattle City Council and Mayor working together to preserve the most valuable elements of this vital public good, and improve on the public transit access for vulnerable community members.

DESC is opposed to the elimination of the Ride Free Area because of the detrimental impact it will have on our organization and the people we serve. However, I understand this change is likely to occur, and therefore ask that you take the following recommendations into consideration to mitigate the impact on vulnerable members of the community, and the organizations who seek to meet their needs:

- **DESC endorses the idea of a free, public loop service that operates daily and is available to everyone and can accommodate the passengers who need it (aka "the circulator bus").** We strongly favor this over distributing more bus tickets to people in need. Bus ticket distribution is administratively burdensome, and access can be confusing to clients.
- **It should be a full-sized bus, and not a shuttle bus.** A full-sized bus will increase the likelihood of the full range of bus riders using this bus, and decrease the likelihood of creating a de-facto "homeless" bus that will only further stigmatize marginalized community members. If a full size bus is not available, we strongly encourage a van of greater than 25 seats.
- **It should have enough stops to address the needs of homeless and vulnerable people, and be useful to those with mobility impairments.** The route should include a long stretch of Third Avenue, as many core services are located on this street. We support a route that includes Harborview Medical Center.

**Supportive Housing**  
1811 Eastlake  
Canaday House  
Evans House  
Kerner-Scott House  
Lyon Building  
The Morrison  
Rainier House  
Union Hotel  
Scattered Site

**Mental Health Services**  
Crisis Respite  
HOST-Outreach &  
Engagement  
PACT-Intensive Team  
SAGE-Case Management

**Employment Support**

**Chemical Dependency  
Services**

**Emergency Shelter**

**Connections**

**Crisis Solutions Center**

**Something Old,  
Something New  
Thrift Store**

**Board of Directors**  
Clark Kimerer, Chair  
Ron Wright, Vice Chair  
Laura Inveen, Secretary  
Merlyn Bell, Treasurer  
Bryan Friend  
Jeffrey Grant  
Veronica Kavanagh  
Mark Sidran  
Larry Smith  
Chris Spitters  
Richard Stevenson  
Sheryl V. Whitney

**Executive Director**  
William G. Hobson

over →

- **It should have predictable schedule with service frequency at least every 20 minutes.**
- **Hours should ensure that people who rely on overnight-only shelters can get to and from those locations** without excessive waits or walks very late at night or very early in the morning.
- **We request that the County and/or City provide lower priced or free monthly ORCA passes for people working under county or city contracts**, similar to arrangements with county employees or the employees of large corporations. While a Circulator Bus will assist, it will not fully address the likely reality that vulnerable homeless individuals will not access services as readily as they currently do. We anticipate a greater need for human service workers in downtown Seattle to do outreach to clients who cease coming to service sites when free access to transportation decreases.
- DESC's service model already depends heavily on mental health and other service staff using the free ride area to conduct regular outreach to clients both on the streets and in supportive housing. In fact, our service model has been recognized numerous times for its flexibility and focus on "in-vivo" services that meet clients where they are -- often in a very literal sense. Doing this level of outreach without a free ride area will be costly. Add to that an anticipated increase in demand due to the decreased access homeless clients will have to free transportation. Combined, these factors will create a significant new financial burden to organizations like DESC, including the hidden expense of more inefficient client contact.
- **We request free monthly ORCA passes that could be used by a variety of staff on an as needed basis.** This could be done in addition to or instead of the above request. Providing flexible ORCA passes that staff could 'check out' when needed would allow for efficient use across many staff. While it would be ideal to provide one ORCA card per staff person, the reality is that for many organizations, like our's, it is financially prohibitive to do so.
- **We encourage you to consider other creative options that mitigate against the impact of this change.** It is clear that there is no silver bullet to replacing many benefits the Ride Free Area provides. For instance, could you consider having a lowered fare for local travel within the downtown area, perhaps through the tunnel stops?

You may contact me or Nicole Macri, Director of Administrative Services, at (206) 515-1514, or [nmacri@desc.org](mailto:nmacri@desc.org), for more information. Thank you for considering DESC's comments and recommendations as you finalize plans to address the impacts from this change.

Sincerely,  
  
 Bill Hobson  
 Executive Director

# RIDE FREE AREA UPDATE



## Ride Free Area update

The Ride Free Area (RFA) for transit in downtown Seattle is scheduled to end on Sept. 29, 2012. Beginning then, bus riders will pay when they enter the bus for all trips. These changes will help King County Metro Transit save money, preserve bus service, and make fare payment and passenger boarding the same throughout the transit system.

Community Transit will make the same changes. Sound Transit is considering similar changes to align with Metro and Community Transit operations in downtown Seattle.

Metro is drafting an implementation plan for making these changes, and is working with Sound Transit, Community Transit, and the city of Seattle. The plan has three parts: bus operations; communications; and transportation assistance for people with little or no income who now use the Ride Free Area.

## Background on the Ride Free Area

The Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle began in September 1973 as a partnership between Metro and the city of Seattle to support retailers, encourage transit use, and speed up bus boarding in the more congested central business district. The city has subsidized some of the cost of operating the Ride Free Area, but that subsidy has not been adjusted in several years to account for changes in operating costs, ridership, and resulting fare revenue lost by Metro. Other transit agencies that operate in downtown Seattle have honored the Ride Free Area, although they receive no subsidy for lost revenue.

Last summer, the Metropolitan King County Council approved a two-year \$20 Congestion Reduction Charge to preserve Metro service. It also directed Metro to eliminate the Ride Free Area or negotiate a new agreement with the city to cover the cost of operation. This is not possible, because the city's budget is shrinking rather than growing. So, Metro is proceeding with ending the Ride Free Area.

As the RFA is eliminated, Metro will move to a pay-on-entry system for all bus trips to be consistent with current pay-on-entry practices outside the downtown area. It will be less confusing for riders to always pay when they enter the bus. All passengers will enter through the front door and be encouraged to exit through the rear doors whenever possible to streamline boarding.



## What do you think?

Please help us by commenting on the different issues associated with ending the Ride Free Area, and give us suggestions you would like us to consider that will keep buses and people moving through downtown Seattle. We want to know how these changes might affect you, your neighbors, your employees, and anyone who uses public transportation.

### Smooth transit operations in downtown Seattle

Ending the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle and asking passengers to pay when they enter could slow down boarding, especially at busy downtown Seattle bus stops. The best way to speed up boarding is to increase the use of ORCA cards for electronic fare payment. Here are some other ideas to keep things moving:

#### Surface streets

- Extend length of some bus stops to hold more buses
- Work with Seattle to revise street signals to keep buses and traffic moving
- Change bus routing to make transit turns safer and easier

#### Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel

- Move one or more tunnel bus routes to surface streets
- Group buses entering the tunnel by their bay location
- Have buses that are mostly dropping off passengers pull far forward to the end of the tunnel platform
- Extend the length of some bays to hold more buses
- Explore the use of portable fare-payment machines

#### Changes in boarding and exiting the bus

- All riders will board at the front door and be encouraged to exit at the rear
- People who use wheelchairs or have mobility issues can still exit at the front door
- People who have loaded a bike on the rack can still exit at the front door
- RapidRide passengers who have paid off board at a station can enter through any door
- Community Transit morning commuters may exit from any door

### **Tell us what you think**

**Will this change how you use the bus?**

**Do you have an idea to minimize delays for bus boarding in downtown Seattle?**

**Do you have a suggestion on which tunnel bus routes should move to the surface?**

## Clear communications

We need to make sure everyone knows that the Ride Free Area is going away and that they will pay when they enter for all bus trips. Starting with a public open house on March 29, Metro and its partners are planning a six-month campaign to educate bus riders about the changes. This will include:

- Signs on buses and at bus stops and transit centers
- Updates on the Metro, Sound Transit, and Community Transit websites
- Information in the summer and fall transit service change materials
- E-mail and text message Transit Alerts sent to subscribers
- Notifications to tourist and visitor groups, and updates to the Metro visitor's guide
- Outreach to other transportation agencies, human services organizations, community groups, and employer networks
- Encouraging the use of ORCA cards to speed up boarding

## Transportation assistance for people with little or no income

When the Ride Free Area goes away, some people will lose the free bus ride they now use to reach healthcare, food banks, job training, and other essential services. Metro and Seattle are working with human service agencies on possible options.

Currently, the county has a program that sells agencies deeply discounted bus tickets that they can distribute to their clients. Approximately 1.1 million of these tickets were distributed in 2011.

The following ideas are being discussed as ways to assist people with little or no income once the Ride Free Area ends:

- Increase the number of human service tickets provided to the agencies
- Operate a free circulator
- Donate vehicles to agencies to run their own transportation programs

### ***Tell us what you think***

**What's the best way to get information to you about transit service changes?**

**What do riders need to know to speed up bus boarding?**

**If you don't currently have an ORCA card, what would encourage you to get one?**

### ***Tell us what you think***

**When the Ride Free Area goes away, will it increase or decrease your use of the bus in downtown Seattle?**

**If you depend on free downtown bus service, where do you currently ride to most often?**

**If there is a free circulator in the future, where should it go?**



## Learn more and stay in touch

### Ride Free Area project

Website: [www.kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride](http://www.kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride)

Email us: [community.relations@kingcounty.gov](mailto:community.relations@kingcounty.gov)

Phone: 206-296-7643

206-263-9988 (Español)

206-263-9674 (Tiếng Việt)

### General information



King County Metro Transit

[www.kingcounty.gov](http://www.kingcounty.gov)

206-553-3000

Sign up for Transit Alerts: [www.kingcounty.gov/metro/alerts](http://www.kingcounty.gov/metro/alerts)



Sound Transit

[www.soundtransit.org](http://www.soundtransit.org)

888-889-6368

Sign up for Rider Alerts: [www.soundtransit.org/alerts](http://www.soundtransit.org/alerts)



Community Transit

[www.communitytransit.org](http://www.communitytransit.org)

425-353-RIDE (7433)

Sign up for Rider Alerts: [www.communitytransit.org/subscribe](http://www.communitytransit.org/subscribe)



City of Seattle

[www.seattle.gov](http://www.seattle.gov)

206-684-CITY (2489)

### Alternative Formats Available

206-684-1151 TTY Relay: 711

12019/comm



**Interpreter**

206-553-3000

Intérpretes Turjubaan Переводчик  
Перекладач 통역사 የቃል አስተርጓሚ  
翻譯員 Thông Dịch Viên ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ



# Questions and answers about changes to the Ride Free Area

---

## Ride Free Area basics

**Q:** What's the history of Metro Transit's Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle?

**A:** The Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle began in September 1973 in partnership with the city of Seattle to speed up bus boarding in the more congested central business district and to support retailers. It replaced the "Dime Shuttle" that had been operated downtown by Seattle Transit, one of two agencies that were combined to create Metro Transit in 1973. For the past 39 years, the city has subsidized some of the cost of operating the Ride Free Area, but that subsidy has not been adjusted in several years to account for changes in operating costs, ridership, and resulting fare revenue lost by Metro.

**Q:** Why is the Ride Free Area (RFA) in downtown Seattle scheduled to be eliminated?

**A:** In August 2011, the Metropolitan King County Council approved a two-year congestion reduction charge of \$20 on vehicle registration renewals. This helped prevent a 17 percent reduction in Metro service.

It also directed Metro to eliminate the Ride Free Area or negotiate a new agreement with the city to cover the cost of operation. This is not possible, because the city's budget is shrinking rather than growing. That cost is currently estimated at \$2.2 million annually. So, Metro is proceeding with eliminating the Ride Free Area.

The Council also directed Metro to take additional efficiency measures:

- Introduce more cost-effective transit services on some lower-ridership bus routes;
- Develop a Transit Incentives Program that offers bus tickets to people when they register

their vehicles. They can then either use the tickets or donate the value of the tickets to the human service agencies in Metro's current bus ticket program.

**Q:** Why is Metro changing to a pay-on-entry system?

**A:** At the same time the RFA is scheduled to be eliminated, Metro will move to a pay-on-entry system at all times to be consistent with current pay-on-entry practices outside the downtown area. It should be less confusing for riders to always pay when they enter the bus. Metro will be asking passengers to enter through the front door and encouraging them to exit through the rear doors to streamline boarding.

**Q:** When are these changes scheduled to take effect?

**A:** Changes are scheduled to begin with the fall transit service change on Saturday, Sept. 29, 2012.

**Q:** How is Metro going to make these changes, and what will be done to address any impacts?

**A:** Metro is focusing on issues related to operations, communications, and low-income riders as it puts together an implementation plan to address the changes and impacts:

- Operational changes will be made to minimize delays resulting from people boarding buses through only the front door, which could slow bus boarding in downtown Seattle. Metro will consider changing the number of buses in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, where buses stop and turn on downtown streets, and how to speed up boarding when everyone pays on entry.
- Customer education will be important, because the changes affect the majority of Metro riders – not just those making free trips in downtown Seattle. All riders will pay when they enter the

bus, no matter where they board, and most will exit at the rear door.

- Metro is currently working with Sound Transit, Community Transit, and the city of Seattle on options to address transportation needs of people with little or no income who currently use the Ride Free Area to travel to essential services in the downtown area. Some of the ideas being considered are: increasing the number of discounted bus tickets available to human service agencies for distribution to their clients; a circulator connecting key downtown service centers; or assisting the agencies in setting up their own transportation programs with donated vehicles.

**Q:** What's going to happen with other buses that operate in downtown Seattle or in King County, like Sound Transit and Community Transit, and the Sound Transit buses operated by Pierce Transit?

**A:** Community Transit will implement the same changes. Sound Transit is considering similar changes to align with Metro and Community Transit operations in downtown Seattle. A decision will be made by this summer.

## How to pay

**Q:** Will it cost more to ride the bus?

**A:** Metro fares are not increasing at this time. But, starting on Sept. 29, you will have to pay a fare to ride buses in downtown Seattle. The best way is to pay with an ORCA card. You can also pay with cash (exact amount), a ticket, or a valid transfer from other Metro service.

**Q:** How will using an ORCA card help me with these changes?

**A:** Having everyone pay on entry could add to the time it takes to board the bus, especially at busy downtown Seattle bus stops during commute times. An ORCA card speeds up boarding because all you have to do is tap your card on the reader by the front door. If you do pay cash, please have the exact fare ready before you board.

**Q:** How is Metro going to enforce the new pay-on-entry rules?

**A:** Metro Transit Police will be providing focused fare evasion patrols in downtown Seattle during this transition. Metro Transit Police deputies will be posted at high-volume locations, especially during peak hours. Deputies will also ride buses in the downtown Seattle area, as they do now.

## How to ride

**Q:** What will be different about boarding the bus?

**A:** Almost all passengers will pay when they enter the bus at the front door. The only exception will be on RapidRide lines, which allow for boarding at multiple doors if you have already paid off board.

**Q:** What will be different about exiting the bus?

**A:** Riders will be encouraged to exit through the rear doors whenever possible. People who use wheelchairs or have mobility issues can still exit through the front door, and so can passengers who have loaded a bicycle on the bike rack and need to unload it quickly.

**Q:** I work in downtown Seattle and use the Ride Free Area buses to connect from my workplace to the ferry dock and/or train station. Am I going to have to pay twice?

**A:** Using an ORCA card will save you money because ORCA cards include an automatic two-hour transfer credit for the value of first trip. If your transfer trip(s) cost the same or less than your first trip, no more will be charged when you tap your card. If your transfer trips cost more, only the difference will be deducted from an ORCA e-purse.

Six of the transit agencies participating in ORCA, and the King County Water Taxi, provide transfer credit for e-purse payments. Washington State Ferries does not provide transfer credit.

Passengers with passes, including those loaded onto an ORCA card, usually have unlimited

monthly or annual trips up to the value of the fare on the pass. Even if you have a pass on your ORCA card, you'll still need to tap your card every time you take any transit trip to show you've paid a valid fare for the trip.

**Q:** I work in downtown Seattle and frequently use the Ride Free Area buses at lunchtime or after work to run errands, shop, and dine out. Will I have to pay for each trip I take during those times?

**A:** Starting on Sept. 29, you will have to pay a fare to ride buses in downtown Seattle. The best way is to pay with an ORCA card. You can also pay with cash (exact amount), a ticket, or a valid transfer from other Metro service.

If you use an ORCA card you will need to tap your card each time you ride, but ORCA cards includes an automatic two-hour transfer window. So, if you make your trips within two hours, you will be charged just once. Passengers with passes, including those loaded onto an ORCA card, usually have unlimited monthly or annual trips. Just tap your card on the ORCA reader and it will show "Pass."

**Q:** I have difficulty walking and standing. I need to sit in the seats near the front of the bus that are priority seating for elderly and disabled riders. What should I do if those seats are full when I board?

**A:** If the seats are full, please ask the bus driver to make an announcement asking if someone can move to make room for you.

**Q:** Starting in September, Metro will have two new RapidRide lines stopping in downtown Seattle. How will we board and pay on those buses?

**A:** RapidRide allows entry through rear doors if you have paid off board. Paying onboard the bus or before you board varies, depending on whether it's a RapidRide stop or station.

## Transportation Assistance

**Q:** How does Metro plan to provide transportation assistance to people who have little or no income?

**A:** Currently, Metro spends almost \$1.9 million per year to provide tickets to low income riders through the King County Human Services Ticket Program. The agencies that receive the tickets pay 20 percent of face value for the tickets. These tickets are distributed by agencies to their clients for travel to shelters, medical appointments, job training, and other essential services. Approximately 1 million tickets are distributed through this program annually.

Metro is working with the city of Seattle and a group of human service agencies to evaluate several options for sustainable transportation once the RFA goes away. These options include: increasing the Human Services Ticket Program; operating a circulator to key downtown service centers; or assisting the agencies in setting up transportation for clients using the downtown services with donated vehicles.

**Q:** How do I know if I qualify for a Regional Reduced Fare Permit and how do I apply?

**A:** The Regional Reduced Fare Permit entitles seniors (age 65 or older), those with a disability, and Medicare card holders to reduced fares on 13 public transportation systems in the Puget Sound region. Proof of eligibility is required, and information can be found on Metro Online at: [www.kingcounty.gov/metro](http://www.kingcounty.gov/metro) or by calling 206-553-3000.

**Q:** How do I know if I qualify for Metro's Access Transportation service and how do I apply?

**A:** People whose disabilities prevent them from using regular bus service may be eligible for Access Transportation service, which is provided using shared rides on vans operated by Metro contractors. You must apply and be found eligible ahead of time to use this program. For more information, call Metro's Accessible Services office during regular weekday business hours at 206-263-3113.

## Changes to transit operations

**Q:** Are there going to be any changes for buses or trains in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel?

**A:** To ensure smooth operations in the tunnel, Metro will likely move some bus routes to surface streets in September. In addition, Metro will be making some operational changes to keep buses moving in the tunnel. This includes some changes to the ways buses and trains are scheduled in the tunnel during the evening commute, and moving the bus bays to more effectively accommodate riders and buses.

**Q:** Are there going to be any changes for buses that use surface streets in downtown Seattle?

**A:** Metro may move some bus routes from the tunnel to surface streets in September, and improve some bus stops and traffic signals to help buses move more quickly through downtown Seattle. Improvements will be mostly focused on Third Avenue.

## Keeping informed

**Q:** How do I find out more and keep up-to-date as Metro finalizes its plans?

**A:** Metro has information about these changes online at: [www.kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride](http://www.kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride), and the site will be updated when new information is available in the coming months. You can also call the Customer Information Office at 206-553-3000.

**Q:** How is Metro informing bus riders about the changes?

**A:** Starting with an open house on March 29, Metro is planning a six-month campaign to educate bus riders about the changes. The campaign includes signs on buses, Rider Alerts, and street teams of Metro employees in September. The Metro Online website will have new information under the "How to Ride" section, and the changes will be included in all the September service change materials.

**Q:** How is Metro informing tourists, downtown visitors, and occasional bus riders about the changes?

**A:** Metro will update signs on buses, at bus stops, and major transit centers to reflect the changes. Metro will publish an updated Visitor Guide that includes information on transportation services and fares, and will develop a Metro downtown bus service brochure for hotels, businesses and visitors bureaus. Metro's website will have updated information on how to pay your fare.

**Q:** How is Metro informing employers of this change?

**A:** Metro will be reaching out to employers, employee transportation coordinators, transportation networks, and community partners – such as the Downtown Seattle Association – to spread the word about the elimination of the RFA and the transition to pay-on-entry.

**Q:** How is Metro getting bus drivers and other staff ready for the changes?

**A:** Metro will train bus drivers and other operations and customer information staff before the change so they can be effective sources of information for riders.



## Ride Free Area project

Website: [www.kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride](http://www.kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride)

Email: [community.relations@kingcounty.gov](mailto:community.relations@kingcounty.gov)

Phone: 206-296-7643

206-263-9988 (Español)

206-263-9674 (Tiếng Việt)



## Alternative Formats Available

206-684-1151 TTY Relay: 711

12019/comm 1202M



## A. Your use of the Ride Free Area

1. 1. How often do you use transit in the Ride Free Area now?

- 3 or more days a week
- 1 to 2 days a week
- Occasionally (less than once a week)
- Never

2. Do you ride buses in the Ride Free Area to transfer to other transportation services?

- Yes, in the AM commute
- Yes, in the PM commute
- Yes, during both commutes
- Yes, outside of commute times
- No, I do not transfer to another service

3. If you transfer from Ride Free Area buses to other transportation services, which ones?  
(please pick the one used most often)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Metro buses             | <input type="checkbox"/> Seattle Monorail       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sound Transit buses     | <input type="checkbox"/> King County Water Taxi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Transit buses | <input type="checkbox"/> Washington State Ferry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Link light rail         | <input type="checkbox"/> Employer shuttle       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sounder trains          | <input type="checkbox"/> Vanpool/VanShare       |

4. 4. How will the Ride Free Area going away affect your use of transit in downtown Seattle?

- I will use transit more than I do now
- I will use transit the same as I do now
- I will use transit less than I do now
- No opinion

5. Do you use an Orca card?

- Yes
- No

If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Does your business or organization provide bus passes?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

CONTINUED

7. How did you hear about the Ride Free Area going away in September 2012? (check all that apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> News media          | <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blog                | <input type="checkbox"/> From a friend                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poster on bus       | <input type="checkbox"/> From your employer                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transit email alert | <input type="checkbox"/> From an organization you're involved with |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transit rider alert | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter             |  |

**B. Information you provide here is optional and helps us to ensure we are hearing from the whole community.**

1. How many people, including yourself, live in your household?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

2. Number of persons in your household who regularly ride the bus:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

3. Your age:

- |                                |                                      |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16-17 | <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-19 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 or older |

4. If you have a disability, please indicate what kind. (check all that apply)

- Mobility
  - Vision
  - Hearing
  - Cognitive
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

CONTINUED

5. Do you consider yourself...

- African-American
- Asian-American (Pacific Islander)
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Hispanic (Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano or Latino)
- Multiple Ethnicities
- White (Caucasian)
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the primary language you speak at home?

- Chinese (Traditional)
- English
- Japanese
- Korean
- Russian
- Spanish
- Somali
- Tagalog
- Ukrainian
- Vietnamese
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. How many cars are owned by those in your household?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more

8. What is your annual household income?

- Less than \$7,500
- \$7,500 to \$15,000
- \$15,000 to \$25,000
- \$25,000 to \$35,000
- \$35,000 to \$55,000
- \$55,000 to \$75,000
- \$75,000 to \$100,000
- \$100,000 to \$140,000
- \$140,000 and up
- Don't know



*We'll Get You There*

**Please return your comment form  
by April 13 to:**

King County Department of  
Transportation Communications  
KSC-TR-0824  
201 South Jackson Street  
Seattle, WA 98104-3856

Alternative Formats Available

206-684-1151 TTY Relay: 711



Các thông tin quan trọng về dịch vụ xe buýt tại khu vực quý vị  
Información importante sobre el servicio de autobuses de su zona

## Ride Free Area Open House March 29

- The Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle is scheduled to be eliminated in September.
- At the same time, riders will begin paying when entering the bus for all trips.

Metro is currently working with Sound Transit, Community Transit, and the city of Seattle on an implementation plan for the Ride Free Area changes. This includes options to address transportation needs for low or no-income people who use the Ride Free Area to travel to essential services in the downtown area.

You can learn more and comment one of these ways:

**Public Open House:** Thursday, March 29, 4-6:30 p.m.

Union Station Great Hall, 401 S. Jackson St., Seattle



Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities, or interpreters for people with limited English are available upon request by calling 206-684-1154. TTY Relay: 711

**Phone message:**

206-296-7643

206-263-9988 (Español)

206-263-9674 (Tiếng Việt)

**Email:** [community.relations@kingcounty.gov](mailto:community.relations@kingcounty.gov)

**Online:** [www.kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride](http://www.kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride)



Seattle  
Medium

African-American Labor Force in the recovery," noted: "Aggregate numbers show that the African-American community as a whole has exhibited poorer labor market outcomes than other races even prior to the recession and during the recovery, demonstrating that they often face different and greater challenges."

Overall unemployment stood at 13.3 percent in February. For Whites, it is 7.3 percent, compared to 10.7 percent for Latinos. Black employment under Obama peaked at 14.9 percent in June 2009, at the

think we're already at 180,000 so we're making progress."

He said he realizes publishers are small business owners and as such need more support from the federal government.

"All of you are news people, and that's the reason we brought you here [to the White House] but you're also business people and entrepreneurs, and that's always been the history of African-American publishing," President Obama said. Publishers laughed when he said, "You don't start off with a big bank roll, most of you right?"

"But also to be able to give people a sense of how the stories that everybody reports on impacts the African-American community in particular. And that obviously is a critical role. And that's not just important to the African-American community, that's important to the American community because it's my belief that when everybody's engaged, when everybody's involved, they're going to make better decisions and ultimately we end up having better governance."

# Attention bus riders

## Ride Free Area Update

- **The Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle is scheduled to be eliminated in September.**
- **You will pay when you enter the bus for all trips.**

### To learn more and comment:

#### Public open house:

Thursday March 29  
4 - 6:30 p.m.

Union Station  
401 S. Jackson St.,  
Seattle WA

#### Online

[Kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride](http://Kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride)

#### Email

[Community.relations@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Community.relations@kingcounty.gov)

#### Phone

206-296-7643

206-263-9988 (Español)

206-263-9674 (Viet)

Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities, or interpreters for people with limited English are available upon request by calling 206-804-1154. TTY Relay: 711



El Mundo

# Atención

## usuarios de autobuses

Información actual de rutas gratis

- Las rutas gratis de autobuses en Seattle están programadas para ser eliminadas en septiembre.
- Usted pagara al abordar el autobús a cualquiera de sus destinos.

Para más información y comentarios:

**Junta abierta al publico:**

Jueves marzo 29  
4-6:30pm

Unión Station  
401 S, Jackson St  
Seattle, WA

**en internet**

[Kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride](http://Kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride)

**Email**

[Community.relations@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Community.relations@kingcounty.gov)

**Phone**

206-296-7643  
206-263-9988 (Español)  
206-263-9674 (Viet)

"Facilidades razonables para personas con discapacidades o interpretes para personas con  
ingios limitado disponibles a solicitud llamando al: 206 684-1154 TTY Relay: 711"

King County  
**METRO**

**SOUNDTRANSIT**

communitytransit



March 2012

goal is to prohibit smoking in all public places, except designated smoking areas.

"Our aim is to work toward a future where Singaporeans consider smoking not only detrimental to health, but also socially unacceptable," Fu said.

Even with the restrictions and taxes that push the cost of a pack of 20 Marlboro cigarettes to 12.40 Singapore dollars (\$9.85), about a third of Singaporean adult males smoke.

In other Asian countries, the habit is even more deeply rooted. About 47 percent of adult males in the Philippines smoke regularly, 49 percent in South Korea and 57 percent in Indonesia, according to the World Lung Foundation.

were born of him.

His future was supposed to be promising. However, turning into a Leftist might have been the biggest mistake in his political career.

## 101-year-old woman paraglides into record books

*Edited from AP* -- A 101-year-old Utah woman who ushered in her birthday with a tandem paraglide ride last year soared into the record books Tuesday.

Great-great grandmother Mary Hardison, of Ogden, has been officially recognized as the "Oldest Female to Paraglide Tandem" by Guinness World Records. She has supplanted a 100-year-old woman from Cyprus who took her flight in 2007.

Hardison said she wanted to paraglide because her 75-year-old son began doing it as a hobby.

"I didn't want him to get too far ahead of me, so I decided that I'd go too," she said Tuesday.

Fear never entered the equation for Hardison, who previously rode all of the adult rides at Disneyland to celebrate her 90th birthday.

Hardison said she was shocked to learn her flight had become a world record.

"To me, I was just going on a little ride," she said. "I had no idea I'd break a record."

Hardison said her active lifestyle has already inspired others her age to pursue similar adventures.

"My desire is for the elderly to keep on going. Do things as long as you are physically able. Be positive. Friends don't like a grumpy person," she said.

As for any future flights, Mary Hardison, who spends her days quilting for charities, is just playing it by ear.

"If the notion strikes, I'll go again," she said.

## gay cruise in Caribbean

George said the men were seen having sex on the Celebrity Summit cruise ship by someone on the dock.

President Rich Campbell, who is aboard the cruise, said in a phone interview earlier that he thought the two men would be released. He did not immediately respond to requests for comment after the two were charged.

The presence of gay cruises in the Caribbean has riled several conservative islands including Jamaica and Grenada, where anti-sodomy laws are enforced with strong backing from religious groups.

Lisa Hardaway, a spokeswoman for Lambda Legal, a national gay-rights legal group, said no one was available to immediately comment on the case.

# 公車乘客請留意

### 免費搭乘區資料更新

- 西雅圖市中心的免費交通服務將於九月份取消。
- 乘客必須於登車時繳付車費。

欲了解詳情或發表意見：

公眾討論會：

三月二十九日（星期四）

下午四時至六時半

Union Station（聯合車站）

401 S. Jackson St., Seattle WA

網上

[Kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride](http://Kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride)

電郵

[Community.relations@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Community.relations@kingcounty.gov)

電話

206-296-7643

206-263-9988（西班牙語）

206-263-9674（越語）

須要輔助的殘障人士以及傳譯的民眾，可撥打206-684-1154尋求協助。聽障轉接服務：711

King County  
**METRO**

**SOUNDTRANSIT**

communitytransit



# SHERIFF KING COUNTY

## 金郡警長辦公室

### 確保家人安全

為著養家活兒，大家都努力地工作，希望能給子女提供優質生活。由於父母在子女成長過程中經常會面對很多挑戰，我們必需幫助父母面對及處理這些問題。幫助您們及您的子女是我的職責。我希望他們在社區內能安全、健康及快樂地成長。我正在此與你們一起合作，幫助你們的社區。

目前最重要的事情是幫助我們的孩童，讓他們能避開來自其鄰里區及學校內同齡群組及較他們年長的大孩子們對他們所產生的誘惑或施予的壓力。這問題由他們上小學便已開始，直至中學期間，我們都要注意孩子面對的挑戰。您的子女有可能會面對欺凌、黑幫、毒品、酒精使用或犯罪如入店行竊及蓄意破壞等劣行的問題。

### 你可以做甚麼呢？

- 告訴子女是可以向他人說「不」及走開的。
- 告訴子女在害怕時是可以向父母、老師、親戚或者是警察求助
- 注意子女的行為，留意他們是否已停止與您交談或行為開始變異？他們的衣著是否有轉變？他們是否突然換了朋友群組？
- 在任何時間都要知悉子女行踪。在可能的情況下，認識他們的朋友及朋友的父母。
- 經常與子女交談！向他們查詢學校的事情，不要害怕向他們提問如黑幫、毒品或任何他們感到受壓的事情。
- 最後，假如你或你的子女懷疑在鄰里區內有童黨及其他罪案活動，請馬上給我們致電！你可以與我們的翻譯員交談（206-296-3311）

作為你們的警長是我的光榮。我誠摯希望你的家庭健康、快樂及安全！

# 請注意 公車乘客 免費公車搭乘區更改通知

- 西雅圖市中心將從九月開始取消免費公車搭乘區。
- 所有公車路線請於上車時買票

### 查詢詳情及建議：

#### 公眾開放日

Thursday March 29  
4 - 6:30 p.m.

#### Union Station

401 S. Jackson St.,  
Seattle WA

#### 網路

Kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride

#### 電郵

Community.relations@kingcounty.gov

#### 電話

206-296-7643

206-263-9988 (Español)

206-263-9674 (Việt)

殘障人士或者需要翻譯可申請協助，請致電：206-684-1154. TTY Relay: 711



month at the Nagomi Tea House at Uwajima. It commemorates Executive Order 9066, which was issued on Feb. 19, 1942, and authorized the internment of people of Japanese ancestry from the entire Pacific coast, including all of California and much of Oregon, Washington and Arizona.

Nearly four decades after it was created, the exhibit conjures mixed feelings about Japanese internment and its impact on racial identity in the United States.

Tomio Moriguchi, one of the organizers of the original exhibition, remembers the first unveiling with pride.

"It was interesting," he said. "We had no idea what it would become."

Moriguchi is a longtime member of the Japanese-American Community League (JACL), to whom many of the photos and historical documents were released.

He realized that "the museum just wanted to show the good parts," of Japanese-American history.

This irked the then-engineer and his friends, many of whom, had spent some years in childhood interred in a camp. Using history, art and activism, along with a \$100,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Moriguchi was able to bring to light the often-forgotten or deliberately ignored story of the Japanese immigrant community.

He wanted to make it real. "We used to have an actual piece of the fence of one of the camps," he said.

The revived exhibition showed that the enduring hardship of the Japanese-American community is still clearly felt. Internal divisions from the WWII era remain a source of strife, and those who lived in the camps continue to confront

When \$250 of his Social Security check seemed to be removed every month, Miyatake inquired about the deduction at a local SSA office, where the worker asked him repeatedly about his citizenship status. More than 50 years later, Miyatake was still registered as a noncitizen during the years in which he was interred.

Beyond the psychological toll, there is a monetary one. The bureaucratic costs of the incarceration of Japanese Americans totaled a breathtaking \$350 billion. The average restitution award to a displaced person was \$440.

When Miyatake and others started advocating for redress from the U.S. government for the incarceration of Japanese Americans, the idea was met with much resistance from outside the Japanese community and also from within. Families who had sons in the service were anxious, pleading with Miyatake not to rock the boat and further internal divisions that he said are still rife in the community today.

Now, in a post-9/11 world, it's more important than ever to remember the burden and cost — personal and financial — of displacing community members from their homes and families, Moriguchi said.

"There was a similar debate about the patriotism of people from the Middle East," he said. This kind of assumed anti-Americanism, he added, "leads to civil rights being taken away. Maybe as I get older, I get less trusting."

More than a dozen similar installations are now on display in museums and universities across the western U.S. It's the legacy of remembrance — both of pride and shame — that, in Moriguchi's words, "is owed to the next generation."

# Attention Bus riders

## Ride Free Area Update

▪ The Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle is scheduled to be eliminated in September.

▪ You will pay when you enter the bus for all trips.

### To learn more and comment:

#### Public open house:

Thursday March 29  
4 – 6:30 p.m.

Union Station  
401 S. Jackson St.,  
Seattle WA

#### Online

[kingcounty.gov/metro/howto ride](http://kingcounty.gov/metro/howto ride)

#### Email

[Communityrelations@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Communityrelations@kingcounty.gov)

#### Phone

206-296-7643  
206-263-9988 (Español)  
206-263-9674 (Viet)

Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities, or interpreters for people with limited English are available upon request by calling 206-864-1154. TTY Relay: 711



*Real Change*

## Hallaron diez cabezas humanas en Guerrero, México de las cuales 7 eran hombres y 3 de mujeres

México - Autoridades localizaron diez cabezas cercenadas en las inmediaciones de un rastro en la alcaldía de Teloapan, al norte de Guerrero, México.

De acuerdo con lo publicado por la versión digital del periódico mexicano Milenio, las cabezas fueron halladas la madrugada del domingo. También se informó de la desaparición de dos miembros de la Policía Preventiva de la localidad.

El medio informa que, pese al hermetismo de las autoridades locales, los mandos federales fueron quienes detallaron del hallazgo junto a un mensaje presuntamente del narcotráfico. "Únicamente aparecieron las diez cabezas, de las cuales siete corresponden a personas del sexo masculino y tres más de mujeres, pero los cuerpos no aparecen hasta el momento y una cartulina con un mensaje del que hasta el momento desconocemos su contenido", citó Milenio a un mando federal. El hallazgo se dio luego de una denuncia anónima vía telefónica. Los cuerpos aún no han sido ubicados por las autoridades. Cayeron miembros de 'La Barredora'

En tanto, según informa la agencia mexicana Notimex, elementos de la Policía Federal detuvieron en Acapulco, Guerrero, a siete presuntos integrantes del grupo delictivo denominado "La Barredora", acusados de tres secuestros y dos homicidios, informó la Secretaría de Seguridad Pública (SSP, federal). Entre los detenidos el viernes pasado, se encuentra el líder de esa célula criminal, identificado como Juan Carlos Hernández Suárez



alias "el Chaolín", de 18; Luis Alberto Mariche López alias "el Pica", de 25, así como un joven de 17 años.

La SSP detalló en un comunicado que dichas personas presuntamente brindaban seguridad y se desempeñaban como choferes de Hernández Suárez.

También fueron detenidos Edgar Salmerón González, alias "el Güero", de 20 años de edad y una menor de 15, quienes supuestamente reportaban los movimientos y las acciones de diferentes autoridades en el municipio de Acapulco.

Notimex indica que a los siete detenidos se les relaciona con al menos tres secuestros, en los de los cuales las víctimas fueron rescatadas, mientras que en el restante privaron de la vida a la persona plagiada.

Los policías federales aseguraron al grupo de vehículos, dos armas largas, 28 cartuchos

## Internacional

# Pasajeros de autobús Atención

Viaje Gratis en su Area

- El viaje gratis en Downtown Seattle está programado para ser eliminado en Septiembre.
- Cuando usted tome el autobus, pagará por todos los viajes.

Para aprender más y comentar: **Abierto al público:**

Thursday March 29  
4 - 6:30 p.m.

Union Station  
401 S. Jackson St.,  
Seattle WA

**Online**  
Kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride

**Email**  
Community.relations@kingcounty.gov

**Teléfonos**  
206-296-7643  
206-263-9988 (Español)  
206-263-9674 (Viêt)

Comodidades razonables para gente con discapacidades, o intérpretes para gente con inglés limitado están disponibles llamando al 206-864-1154, TTY Relay: 711



## Other notifications for RFA open house and comment period

### *Email sent to 360 community partners*

**From:** Relations, Community  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 20, 2012 2:51 PM  
**To:** Relations, Community  
**Subject:** Ride Free Area update: Open house set for March 29

Dear community partner:

The Ride Free Area for transit in downtown Seattle is scheduled to be eliminated on Sept. 29 of this year. King County Metro Transit is working with other transit agencies and the city of Seattle on an implementation plan to address operational changes for buses and transportation assistance for low or no-income people who use the Ride Free Area to travel to essential services downtown.

The four agencies are hosting a public open house on **March 29 from 4-6:30 p.m. at Union Station, 401 S. Jackson, Seattle**. At the open house, we will outline some of the options being considered and gather comments in preparation for finalizing the implementation plan.

We have attached a poster in two different sizes about the open house. Could you please help us by posting or distributing it so that your customers, clients, staff, and community members know about these changes and have an opportunity to comment at the open house, or by phone, email, and online. The comment period for the implementation plan closes April 6.

If your staff has any questions, they can contact Community Relations Planner Ashley DeForest by phone at 206-684-1154 or email: [ashley.deforest@kingcounty.gov](mailto:ashley.deforest@kingcounty.gov).

Thank you,  
Metro Transit

---

### *Email sent to General Manager Kevin Desmond's list of 750 stakeholders*

**From:** MetroTransitGM  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 20, 2012 2:49 PM  
**To:** 'METROTRANSITFYI@lists.kingcounty.gov'  
**Subject:** Ride Free Area update: Open house set for March 29

As you may know, the Ride Free Area for transit in downtown Seattle is scheduled to be eliminated on Sept. 29 of this year. King County Metro Transit is working with other transit agencies and the city of Seattle on an implementation plan to address operational changes for buses and transportation assistance for low or no-income people who use the Ride Free Area to travel to essential services downtown.

Last summer, the Metropolitan King County Council approved a two-year \$20 Congestion Reduction Charge to preserve Metro service. At that time, the Council also directed Metro to eliminate the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle to increase transit revenues.

The four agencies are hosting a public open house on **March 29 from 4-6:30 p.m. at Union Station, 401 S. Jackson, Seattle**. At the open house, we will outline some of the options being considered and gather comments on the implementation plan.

We have attached a poster about the open house. Please feel free to share it with anyone who may be interested in these changes and who might want an opportunity to comment at the open house, or by phone, email, and online.

If you have any questions, please contact Community Relations Planner Ashley DeForest by phone at 206-684-1154 or email: [ashley.deforest@kingcounty.gov](mailto:ashley.deforest@kingcounty.gov).

Thank you,  
Kevin Desmond, general manager  
King County Metro Transit

---

***Transit Alert sent to approximately 50,000 subscribers***

**From:** King County Metro Transit [mailto:kcmetro-alerts@service.govdelivery.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 27, 2012 3:41 PM  
**Subject:** Ride Free Area open house this Thursday

**Transit agencies and city host open house Thursday on Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle**

The Ride Free Area for transit in downtown Seattle is scheduled to end on Sept. 29 of this year. At that same time, bus riders will begin paying when they enter the bus for all trips. King County Metro Transit is working with other transit agencies and the City of Seattle on an implementation plan to make operational changes for buses. The plan will also address transportation assistance for people with little or no income who use the Ride Free Area to travel to essential services downtown.

The agencies are hosting a public open house on Thursday, March 29, 4-6:30 p.m. at Union Station, 401 S. Jackson, Seattle. We will outline some of the options being considered and gather comments in preparation for finalizing the implementation plan.

You don't have to attend the open house to comment on the plan. Other ways to comment are:

Online: [www.kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride](http://www.kingcounty.gov/metro/howtoride)

Email: [community.relations@kingcounty.gov](mailto:community.relations@kingcounty.gov)

Phone: 206-296-7643

206-263-9988 (Espanol)

206-263-9674 (Viet)

Mail: King County Department of Transportation, Community Relations, KSC-TR-0824, 201 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98104