



City of Seattle

Seattle Renters' Commission

Devin Silvernail & Jessica Westgren, Co-Chairs

December 18, 2019

Re: *Transit Riders' Union ORCA for All Campaign*

Dear Members of the Seattle City Council:

The Seattle Renters' Commission supports the Transit Riders' Union [ORCA for All](#) campaign.

In the near term, ORCA for All [pushes for](#):

- The Seattle City Council to pass legislation that would require large employers to subsidize transit ridership
- Require workers employed through public contracts to receive fully subsidized transit passes
- Require fully subsidized transit passes for all University of Washington employees
- Reform fare enforcement in Sound Transit

The long-term vision of ORCA for All is to make mobility a human right and boldly combat climate change.

According to data from [Sightline](#):

- ~26% of renters commute by transit, compared to ~19% of homeowners
- ~25% of black households commute by transit, compared to ~20% of white households
- Both women and lower-income households are more likely to commute by transit

The Seattle Renters' Commission supports increasing transit ridership and infrastructure because renters and people of color benefit disproportionately. We also hope that many more renters would be able to take public transit if their employer subsidized the cost.

The current Reduced Fare Orca cards can be a significant monthly and yearly cost for our citizens. Local service is \$45.00 per month for Reduced Fare riders, or \$540.00 per year.

As we continue to invest in making transit more frequent, accessible, and reliable; we also urge policymakers to ensure that riding transit is as safe as possible. Many of us have felt unsafe while taking transit. We believe that we can do better. Instead of focusing on Fare Enforcement and punitive actions for people who cannot afford the bus fare, the funds and resources spent on Fare Enforcement should be diverted to increasing rider safety. Fare Enforcement is not a safety feature. Instead, it disproportionately and negatively affects our most vulnerable citizens.



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As traffic congestion worsens, income inequality grows wider, housing becomes less affordable, and climate catastrophe looms on the horizon, we need bold solutions. Public transportation helps in the fight for all of these and we should be encouraging more people to take public transit every opportunity we can.

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CC: Honorable Mayor Jenny A. Durkan, City of Seattle
Andres Mantilla, Director, Seattle Department of Neighborhoods