

METRO MATTERS

News that connects you



NEWS

Metro to resume fare collection Oct. 1

By Al Sanders • September 17, 2020

Ready when you are.
A healthier Metro is here.

.....

**Metro will start collecting fares
October 1.**

 Tap your ORCA card for an
easier and healthier way to pay!

 **King County
METRO**
Moving forward together

With safety innovations in place, Metro is ready to start collecting fares

On Thursday, October 1, Metro will resume collecting fares for all transit services: [buses](#), [Access paratransit](#), Seattle Streetcar ([First Hill](#) and [South Lake Union](#)), [Vanpool](#), [Via to Transit](#) and other flexible services, and water taxi ([Vashon](#) Island and [West Seattle](#)). Fare collection is already taking place on Sound Transit Express bus and Sound Transit light rail.

In anticipation of growing ridership, Metro has implemented numerous health innovations so fares can be safely collected with minimal contact between operators and passengers. Metro is installing transparent [safety partitions](#) on buses, Access paratransit, Community Ride, Community Van, DART, and Via to Transit. Water taxi's fare collection carts have been similarly modified to include a transparent shield.

Metro is encouraging riders to use a contactless payment option—such as an [ORCA](#) card—to speed up the boarding process, and further protect both themselves and the operator. Here's how to get started:

- Visit the ["Where to buy" page](#) to learn how to acquire an ORCA card online or in-person. Metro's [Pass Sales Office recently reopened](#) to assist customers in getting ORCA cards and reloading their E-purses.
- You can also acquire [Transit GO Tickets](#) through your mobile device.
- For those who qualify, [ORCA LIFT](#) is available to help reduce the cost of riding Metro.
- Youth and seniors are also eligible for reduced fares.

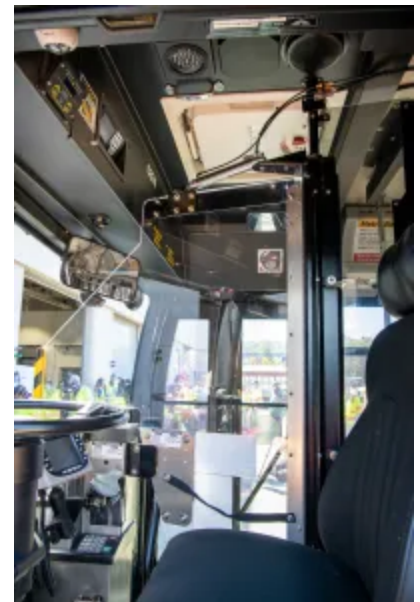
Metro will [suspend fare enforcement](#) through the end of 2020. Fare enforcement officers will continue to provide a broad range of customer services, including answering questions related to using transit and navigating new safety innovations. Metro is working with King County, the King County Sheriff's Office, cities, and community stakeholders on alternatives to fare enforcement in the future.

Metro suspended fares on March 21 to protect passengers and operators from the potential spread of COVID-19. Passengers have been boarding and exiting through the rear doors, reserving front-door access for customers using mobility devices or who require use of the boarding ramp.

At current ridership levels, which are about 40 percent compared to last year, the suspension of fare collection is costing Metro an estimated \$5.5 million per month in revenue. Though ridership dropped as many riders heeded guidance from elected leaders and public health officials to stay home, many riders have continued to rely on Metro to access groceries, jobs, medical care, and other critical needs. As King County gradually reopens, use of transit will expand beyond essential trips and the need for Metro service, and the funding to support it, will increase.

Metro continues to encourage passengers to support the health of other passengers and our frontline essential workers – the operators and crews, supervisors, and maintenance staff—by:

- Wearing a mask
- Staying home when sick
- Maintaining physical distance
- Avoiding closed areas



Safety partitions are being installed in our coaches to protect both passengers and our operators

- Signing up for Transit Alerts
- Paying with your ORCA card

Visit the [Healthier Metro page](#) for the latest information on how Metro is protecting passengers and operators, and how riders can help protect themselves and others when riding transit.

[#Access](#)[#King County Metro](#)[#ORCA](#)[#ORCA LIFT](#)[#streetcar](#)[#Transit GO](#)[#Water Taxi](#)

26 Comments



Anonymous says:

October 3, 2020 at 3:12 am

Folks.... Metro has told everyone to not enforce the fare. Relax. It's just that now the drivers have tons of people without masks standing there telling their long stories about why they aren't going to pay, Metro needs to explain to the riders that payment is optional so this doesn't happen. You could do rear door boarding with a donation box at the rear doors. It's risking covid transmission to said drivers or at least increase the stress of said drivers. You don't need to tell your story to the driver. Just walk on by.

★ Loading...

Reply



Mathew Renner says:

October 16, 2020 at 4:34 pm

If you do not pay then you are a thief and should be thrown off the bus.

★ Loading...

Reply



Percival Stirling says:

October 1, 2020 at 10:21 am

The usual King County Metro sloppiness / unprofessionalism occurs. Barely a few signs here and there and almost none on the bus. How was anyone supposed to know that fares were resuming? ST plastered them all over their buses.

★ Loading...

Reply



Anonymous says:

September 30, 2020 at 9:59 pm

How can you send the text alert 24 hours before reenstating fare? I can't afford this, still unemployed but still reliant on the bus to get food and such.

★ Loading...

Reply



Anonymous says:

September 29, 2020 at 9:39 am

Can fare enforcement please only enforce wearing a mask? At least 25% of riders and drivers aren't wearing a mask or aren't wearing it properly.

Also, is there going to be a COVID reduced fare rate? Doesn't quite make sense to charge full price for a service that is inherently risky and during a time where people are struggling financially due to the pandemic itself.

★ Loading...

Reply



Anonymous says:

October 20, 2020 at 9:45 pm

On some routes it's more like 75% not wearing masks. Metro has drivers sending them a message for every non-compliant rider, but most drivers are not doing it at all. I think they feel it's hopeless and pointless or they may believe the virus is a hoax. So the estimate of non-compliance that Metro is making is based on a small fraction of total trips and is very under-estimated.

Another issue is riders who pull their masks up as they board but then pull them down as soon as they pass by the driver. Some do the reverse and come on and talk to the driver while not wearing it and then they pull it up as they get to their seats.

Unfortunately, many people out there simply don't believe the virus is a real risk to them. Others do not think masks do anything to help. There has been all manner of misinformation and changing advice about it so it's understandable that everyone is not on the same page about it now. And many riders have drug and alcohol and other issues that leave them unable to do basic things like wear a mask, Either way, some of us would prefer not to get this virus and wind up dead or permanently disabled from it.

Metro management has drivers trying to keep all the windows and hatches open when the outside temperature is 55 or above. The problem is that often one passenger will get on and go throughout the bus slamming every window shut. Then they usually get off the bus a couple stops later.

Metro management is also trying to get HVAC filters that have anti-microbial properties.

Heat and sunlight deactivate viruses and this virus won't be any different, so cranking up the heat on the buses might be helpful, but just having the windows open for fresh air would probably be best. The more fresh air coming in, the better. And there will always be the one loud passenger who demands the driver turn down the heat. Also, heat makes people sleepy and they miss their stops. Heat moves from warmer areas to cooler areas and so having the heat up and the windows open at the same time might push the hot air out along with any droplets from the mask-less wonders.

★ Loading...

Reply



Anonymous says:

September 29, 2020 at 2:00 am

increase bus capacity

★ Loading...

Reply



Anonymous says:

September 27, 2020 at 11:18 am

Please finish installing ALL the driver safety partitions (sneeze guards) before starting front door boarding. Some of the 7400 coaches at South Base still do not have them!

★ Loading...

Reply



Anonymous says:

September 27, 2020 at 11:15 am

Please finish installing ALL the driver safety partitions (sneeze guards) before starting front door boarding again. Some of the 7400 coaches at South still don't have them!

★ Loading...

Reply



Anonymous says:

September 26, 2020 at 4:20 pm

Will there be fare machines at the back doors? Resuming entering through the front doors doesn't seem wise. Will only one person in the front section still be enforced? It would be great if the fare enforcement "officers" were authorized to enforce the mask wearing rule, and to escort unruly passengers from the bus.

Those of you complaining about the increase of homeless people, Shame on you. Those people could be your old neighbors or friends you haven't heard from in ages. They still need bus access to get food and medical care, too. Find some compassion.

Great that you want to start collecting fare again when people are still out of jobs! Are you going to at least drop the cost of fare? We're all screwed right now, and you can't squeeze blood from a stone.

★ Loading...

Reply



Percival Stirling says:

October 1, 2020 at 10:24 am

Stuff your phony "compassion" comment. I bet you don't even ride the bus along with the rest of us and have to put up with the problems they cause

★ Loading...

Reply



anonymous says:

September 25, 2020 at 12:06 pm

You really need to do more to keep homeless people off the buses! Yesterday afternoon I caught the southbound route 36 bus at 3rd Ave./Pike St. The bus was at or very close to capacity when it got to the 2nd Ave./Main St. stop (next to Union Gospel Mission). Two homeless men with large carts wanted to board in front, but the driver told them the wheelchair seating area was already occupied. These guys – with their carts – boarded at the back door and sat in the side-facing seat next to the door. This was an articulated bus with only one rear door, so these guys were blocking the entire aisle with their carts. Meanwhile, another man sitting in back of the bus (whom I suspect was either mentally ill or on drugs because he kept talking aloud to himself) began complaining about these guys blocking the aisle. When he got off around 12th Ave S./S. Jackson St, he threw a drink at these guys as he walked past them. At that point the driver told the homeless guys with the carts to get off because they were causing a disturbance, but he let them stay on when they told him they were getting off within the next 2 stops anyway.

I think Metro needs to do the following:

1. Don't let people with carts use the rear door on the buses. Even if you're on an articulated bus, many of the articulated buses used on routes 36 and 70 are the older ones with only one rear door. If people board in the rear with carts, the carts block the entire aisle.

2. Put security staff on the routes with a lot of homeless people (ex: 7, 36, 49, 70, and 101) AND give them the authority to eject people for non-payment or disruptive conduct. Many of the homeless people I see on those buses and around the bus stops are mentally ill and create disturbances on the buses because they're screaming at no one in particular, going through drug withdrawals, etc.

3. Evict the homeless tent campers around places like the Williams Place park in front of the Capitol Hill Kaiser Permanente clinic, the parking lot at 8th Ave./S. Jackson St., the Pioneer Square Link station, and the park by the 3rd Ave. courthouse. These campers have brazenly staked out permanent spaces by putting up fences and large furniture by their tents, so it's at the point where most non-homeless people don't want to use these stops!!

★ Loading...

Reply



Tim says:

September 25, 2020 at 8:12 pm

Respectfully, take your rant somewhere else. It's not helpful and this isn't the forum for your lack of compassion.

★ Loading...

Reply



Percival Stirling says:

October 1, 2020 at 10:23 am

I agree, Ignore the phony "Compassion" post below

★ Loading...

Reply



Anonymous says:

September 25, 2020 at 10:02 am

Hi am concerned about bus168 to maple valley from kent on weekends and holidays yu wait for the bus for 1 hour the n kn coming its written bus full please provise a bigger bus for this route on weekends and holidays,thanks

★ Loading...

Reply



Anonymous says:

September 25, 2020 at 2:38 am

Increase capacities! Don't charge if you're making people wait and wait and wait for an empty enough bus! We need more transit!

★ Loading...

Reply



Anonymous says:

September 23, 2020 at 2:31 pm

FIX IT

★ Loading...

Reply



WanttoRide says:

September 23, 2020 at 3:12 am

I am in a high-risk group and not being able to predict crowding, masking and movement of riders has killed my ability to ride. Each of these relates to allowing freeloaders to ride as per the above posts. It's also true that without fare enforcement, it will only get worse in winter, and so will the risks, with less ventilation.

Without a car or a rideshare budget, I am literally delaying health care for lack of a transit option, and I doubt I'm the only one.

★ Loading...

Reply



LG says:

September 20, 2020 at 5:32 pm

I stopped taking the bus after March 2020. After fares were suspended I felt like I was going to have a heart attack each time I rode the bus. Homeless people made buses into "mobile shelters" and too many mentally unstable riders that you don't know if you'd make it alive to your destination. I would want to start taking the bus again, but with fare enforcement suspended until the end of 2020, majority of riders will still be the non-tax paying freeloaders. Until you can make bus riding sensible and "safe" for your paying passengers, no bus trips for me until then!

★ Loading...

Reply



Anonymous3 says:

September 18, 2020 at 12:45 pm

Honestly, if fares aren't being enforced, then I'm just not going to pay. Why should we have a system that only serves to trick ethical, kind people into subsidizing bus service for the selfish people that refuse to pay? How exactly does that benefit people of color anyway?

Fine, I'll join the group of selfish people, save myself \$99 each month.

★ Loading...

Reply



Mathew Renner says:

October 16, 2020 at 4:37 pm

If you do not pay the proper fare you are not just selfish, you are a thief. Nothing more than a criminal.

★ Loading...

Reply



Pamela Akiyama says:

September 18, 2020 at 4:50 am

I think Metro needs to evict homeless people who are camping next to bus stops. Besides the places Anonymous Me named, there's also a large homeless camp in the parking lot under the overpass at 8th Ave.S./S. Jackson St. This camp has at least a dozen large tents along the fence next to the bus stop and several more tents set further in the lot. Many of these people have also built makeshift fences around the tents or moved large furniture next to the tents, which indicates they intend to stay on a long-term/permanent basis. I find that few bus riders use this stop due to the homeless camp.

Also, the park in front of the Capitol Hill Kaiser Permanente clinic and Capitol Hill Safeway (16th Ave./E. John St.) has a homeless camp with approximately 10 large tents and people who've moved in sofas and recliners in order to stake out a permanent space there. This stop is heavily used because of its proximity to Safeway and Kaiser, but I doubt most people would use it if there were closer stops without so many homeless people there.

Metro, keep homeless people off the buses and away from the stops! A lot of my coworkers used to use mass transit, but now a lot of them are driving to work instead because we've had so many encounters with panhandlers and mentally unstable people that we no longer feel safe!

★ Loading...

Reply



Al Sanders says:

September 18, 2020 at 1:39 pm

Pamela,

Thank you for letting us know about your concerns. I will send this information to our customer service and our service quality staff.

★ Loading...

Reply



Percival Stirling says:

October 1, 2020 at 10:22 am

You are right. it's just downright dirty and dangerous

★ Loading...

Reply



AnonymousMe says:

September 17, 2020 at 10:06 pm

Besides Anon2's comments about riding a bus, how about the 3rd Ave areas where the bus stops are? The number of boarded up sites between the old Macy's and Benaroya Hall and the loiterers taking over cries out for active patrols or just wait for another McD's shooting and more talk but no action from elected officials and our SPD.

★ Loading...

Reply



anonymous2 says:

This doesn't make sense. Per the above:

On Thursday, October 1, Metro will resume collecting fares for all transit services: buses, Access paratransit, Seattle Streetcar (First Hill and South Lake Union), Vanpool, Via to Transit and other flexible services, and water taxi (Vashon Island and West Seattle).

But further down in the same post:

Metro will suspend fare enforcement through the end of 2020.

If you're suspending fare enforcement, you're basically sending the message that fare payment is OPTIONAL! A lot of people on both your Facebook page and this blog have been begging for you to reinstate fares to help alleviate the overcrowding and homeless joyrider problems on routes such as routes 7.36, 49, 70, 101, and the First Hill hospital routes. If you're reinstating fares but not actually enforcing payment, nothing is going to change from the current status quo!!

As it is now, I'm already seeing a lot more homeless people camped around downtown. This is just going to get worse as we get into fall and winter. You need to enforce fare collection to keep homeless joyriders off the buses. I routinely see homeless people who get on buses just to sleep, who only ride one stop because they're too lazy to walk to their destination, or just to kill time until the shelters open. Many of these people are mentally unstable and disturb other people on the buses because of inappropriate behavior. Fare collection and actually having security on the buses would help a lot.

Metro caters to the homeless population so much that a lot of people I know who used to commute to work on the bus are now driving instead. The commuters who can choose to work from home, drive, or use UBER aren't going to come flocking back to buses when COVID-19 ends unless you address the issues with overcrowding, infrequent service, homeless joyriders, and homeless camps next to the bus stops!

★ Loading...

Reply

Leave a Reply

SEARCH OUR BLOG



ARCHIVES



STAY UPDATED

Get the latest blog posts delivered your way.

Subscribe via Email



Follow via RSS



King County
METRO

ADDRESS AND PHONE

King Street Center
201 South Jackson
Street
Seattle, WA 98104-
3856
Phone: 206-553-3000
WA Relay: 711

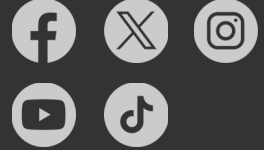
ABOUT METRO

Careers
General Manager's
vision
Leadership team
Advisory groups
Policies
Data and reports
Bus advertising
Contractor resources
Transit Police

CONTACT US

Lost and found
Send us a comment
Pass sales office
ADA and accessibility
Making a Title VI
complaint
Anti-harassment

SOCIAL



[Accessibility](#) [Privacy](#) [Comments Policy](#) [Terms of use](#)

© 2026 Metro Matters