WSDOT Ferries Division: Low Income Fare Update

Washington State Transportation Commission

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WSF Low Income Fare Update Presentation Outline

- Low income fare pilot language approved in 2019
- Update of initial analysis
- Estimates of usage and fare revenue loss
- Timeline and next steps
2019 Tariff Cycle

Language adopted in WAC 468-300-010

- LOW-INCOME FARE PILOT - Starting no earlier than January 1, 2020, special passenger fare rate(s) may be established for a pilot program offering a low-income fare on any ferry route for riders made eligible through an existing transit agency's low-income fare program. Enactment of this program is dependent upon legislative funding for the pilot project. If funded, Washington State Ferries' Assistant Secretary shall submit a proposal to carry out this pilot program and the Washington State Transportation Commission must approve both the program and the fare schedule before it is implemented. Once implemented, WSF shall provide, at a minimum, updates to the Commission every six months on the pilot. The pilot will conclude no longer than three years from its implementation.
Initial Analysis - 2017

Initial work – 2017

• Looked at ORCA LIFT as a mechanism

• Eligibility – ages 19 to 64, household income less than 200% of federal poverty level

• Enrollment process

• Administration costs

• Fare revenue impacts
Fall 2019 Update

Update of analysis subsequent to adoption of 2019 fares:

- Potential users – about 175,000 trips/month
- Assuming discount would be at half fare
- Conservative fare loss estimated at $2 million/year
- Recommend to wait until next generation ORCA is rolled out
- Administration costs still need review
- Recommendation to start pilot on a few routes rather than system-wide
Next Steps

Low Income Fare Program Creation and Implementation Process

Begin Program Creation Fall 2020

- Finalize cost estimate for legislature (Fall 2019; update in Fall 2020)
- Submit cost estimate to WSTC, legislative staff
- If funding secured:
  - WSTC review and approval of program and final rates (see below)
  - WSF works with DSHS to confirm income verification at ferry community-served CSOs
  - WSF and partners implement customer outreach strategy
- Implementation (additional steps)

2021 Legislative Session

NextGEN ORCA Implementation

Parallel process - internal:

- Internal WSF workgroup meetings, create recommendations
- ET reviews internal workgroup recommendations, makes decision on process
- WSF final determination of funding need and program recommendations
- WSF works with WSTC to design program and set fares
- WSTC alters program, if necessary; approves
Contact

For more information on the WSF Low Income Fare Update, please contact:

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