

Pierce Transit

Title VI Fare Equity Analysis

Pursuant to FTA Circular 4702.1B

Proposed Permit Parking at Tacoma Dome Station

February 26, 2019

PIERCE TRANSIT TITLE VI FARE EQUITY ANALYSIS
PROPOSED PERMIT PARKING AT TACOMA DOME STATION
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PIERCE TRANSIT TITLE VI FARE EQUITY ANALYSIS

1 INTRODUCTION

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. This analysis was conducted in compliance with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1B, which requires any FTA recipient serving a population of 200,000 or greater to evaluate any fare change and any major service change at the planning and programming stages to determine whether those changes have a discriminatory impact. This document is an analysis of Pierce Transit's consideration to introduce parking permits at Tacoma Dome Station.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 PROPOSED FARE CHANGES

Pierce Transit is considering the introduction of parking permits at Tacoma Dome Station (TDS). As the region's largest park and ride garage, TDS has 2,393 parking stalls located in two adjacent six-story structures with approximately 200 stalls per floor. TDS is the South Sound's multimodal transit hub and it has been operating at over 90% capacity since 2006. Customers who arrive in the early morning before 8:00 a.m. often are faced with difficulty finding a spot to park. The consideration for permit parking aims to achieve the following goals:

1. Ensure open parking space by managing demand
2. Encourage riders to bike, walk, or carpool to transit
3. Recover the cost of managing and enforcing the program

Because parking permits would impose an additional cost on a specific group of transit riders, this could be considered a fare increase so Pierce Transit is analyzing it as such for the purposes of Title VI.

This fare equity analysis analyzes whether the introduction of permits for parking at TDS will have a disparate impact on Pierce Transit's minority riders and/or a disproportionate burden on the agency's low-income riders.

2.2 FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

FTA requires that its recipients evaluate the impacts of fixed-route fare changes on minority and low-income populations. If the transit provider finds potential disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens and then modifies the proposed changes in order to avoid, minimize or mitigate those impacts, the transit provider must reanalyze the proposed changes in order to determine whether the modifications actually removed the potential disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens of the changes.

If a transit provider chooses not to alter the proposed fare changes despite the disparate impact on minority ridership or disproportionate burden on low-income ridership, or if the transit provider finds, even after the revisions, that minority or low-income riders will continue to bear a disproportionate share of the proposed fare change, the transit provider may implement the fare change only if:

- the transit provider has a substantial legitimate justification for the proposed fare change, **and**
- the transit provider can show that there are no alternatives that would have a less disparate impact on minority riders but would still accomplish the transit provider's legitimate program goals.

If the transit provider determines that a proposed fare change will have a disparate impact or disproportionate burden, the transit provider shall analyze the alternatives to determine whether alternatives exist that would serve the same legitimate objectives but with less of a disparate or disproportionate effect on the basis of race, color, national origin, or income status. Where disparate impacts are identified, the transit provider shall provide a meaningful opportunity for public comment on any proposed mitigation measures, including any less discriminatory alternatives that may be available.

This fare equity analysis analyzes whether the introduction of permits for parking at TDS will have a disparate impact on Pierce Transit's minority riders and/or a disproportionate burden on the agency's low-income riders.

3 TITLE VI POLICIES & DEFINITIONS

Pierce Transit's Board of Commissioners adopted policies in February 2013 related to Title VI which apply to fare changes: Disparate Impact Policy; and Disproportionate Burden Policy. The requirement for these policies comes from Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1B, "Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients" which became effective October 1, 2012. The Circular requires any FTA recipient that operates 50 or more fixed route vehicles in peak service and serving a population of 200,000 persons or greater to evaluate any fare change and any major service change at the planning and programming stages to determine whether those changes have a discriminatory impact.

3.1 Pierce Transit Disparate Impact Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish a threshold which identifies when adverse effects of a major service change or any fare change are borne disproportionately by minority populations.

A disparate impact occurs when the minority population¹ adversely affected by a fare or service change is ten percent more than the average minority population of Pierce Transit's service area.

(paragraph not relevant to fare changes removed)

If Pierce Transit finds a potential disparate impact, the agency will take steps to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts and then reanalyze the modified service plan to determine whether the impacts were removed. If Pierce Transit chooses not to alter the proposed changes, the agency may implement the service or fare change if there is substantial legitimate justification for the change AND the agency can show that there are no alternatives that would have less of an impact on the minority population and would still accomplish the agency's legitimate program goals.

¹ Minority Population – Persons identifying themselves as a race other than white or of Hispanic origin, self-reported in the U.S. Census.

3.2 Pierce Transit Disproportionate Burden Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish a threshold which identifies when the adverse effects of a major service change or any fare change are borne disproportionately by low-income² populations.

A disproportionate burden occurs when the low-income population adversely affected by a fare or service change is five percent more than the average low-income population of Pierce Transit's service area.

(paragraph not relevant to fare changes removed)

If Pierce Transit finds a potential disproportionate burden, the agency will take steps to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts and then reanalyze the modified service plan to determine whether the impacts were removed. If Pierce Transit chooses not to alter the proposed changes, the agency may implement the service or fare change if there is substantial legitimate justification for the change AND the agency can show that there are no alternatives that would have less of an impact on low-income population and would still accomplish the agency's legitimate program goals.

² **Low-Income Population** – Persons reporting as being under the federal household poverty limit as defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In 2018 the poverty limit was \$25,465 for a family of four including two children.

4 METHODOLOGY

Staff used data from Pierce Transit's Fall 2018 Tacoma Dome Station Survey to assist with the fare equity analysis. Respondents were initially intercepted at or near boarding locations and asked to go to an online link to complete the survey. 699 respondents completed the survey.

Data collection occurred from October 16th to November 6th, 2018. The data from the 2018 survey represents the most current data about those who access transit via TDS available to Pierce Transit.

The 2018 TDS Survey provides data on the following user characteristics:

- Race/Ethnicity
- Household income
- ORCA LIFT participation
- Age
- Gender
- Frequency of ridership
- Frequency of parking at TDS
- Mode to destination
- Home zip code
- Number of working vehicles in household
- Alternate means of accessing transit at TDS
- Perspectives on permit parking policy options and goals

The survey provides valuable information about the demographics of the customers who park at TDS. In terms of ethnicity, 26% of those who park at TDS identified themselves as non-white. The US Department of Health and Human Services' poverty threshold is dependent on household size. Table 4-1 below shows these thresholds for the 48 contiguous states and District of Columbia: The TDS survey collected the lowest threshold of income data as "less than \$35,000". This is approximately equivalent to 138% of the federal poverty level for a family of four, which is reasonable to use for Pierce County.

TABLE 4-1 2018 FEDERAL POVERTY THRESHOLDS

Poverty Thresholds for 2018 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years

Size of family unit	Related children under 18 years								
	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight or more
One person (unrelated individual):									
Under age 65.....	13,064								
Aged 65 and older.....	12,043								
Two people:									
Householder under age 65.....	16,815	17,308							
Householder aged 65 and older.....	15,178	17,242							
Three people.....	19,642	20,212	20,231						
Four people.....	25,900	26,324	25,465	25,554					
Five people.....	31,234	31,689	30,718	29,967	29,509				
Six people.....	35,925	36,068	35,324	34,612	33,553	32,925			
Seven people.....	41,336	41,594	40,705	40,085	38,929	37,581	36,102		
Eight people.....	46,231	46,640	45,800	45,064	44,021	42,696	41,317	40,967	
Nine people or more.....	55,613	55,883	55,140	54,516	53,491	52,082	50,807	50,491	48,546

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 4-2 below shows the current and potential permit fees by permit type.

TABLE 4-2 PROPOSED FARE CHANGES (PERMIT FEES)

	Current Monthly Fares (Fees)			Proposed Monthly Fares (Fees)		
Facility:	SOV	HOV	ORCA LIFT	SOV	HOV	ORCA LIFT
Tacoma Dome Station	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$80	\$0	\$27

Table 4-3 below shows the number and percent of minority, low-income, and overall riders from Pierce County who use parking at TDS, as well as number and percent of minority, low-income, and overall population of Pierce County. Since 90% of those who park at TDS are from Pierce County, and only 3% percent are Pierce Transit riders, we must compare the minority and income status of those who park at TDS with the overall population of Pierce County, rather than the typical method for fare equity analyses of comparing with data about the agency's customers.

TABLE 4-3 TDS USERS AND PIERCE COUNTY LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS AND MINORITY POPULATION

	Annual Household Income						Race or Ethnicity					
	Low-Income (<\$35K)		Non-Low-Income (>\$35K)		Total Pierce Co. Households		Minority		Non-Minority		Total Pierce Co. Population	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
TDS Users from Pierce County	35	6%	490	94%	525	100%	141	26%	400	74%	541	100%
Pierce County³ Overall	79,034	25%	233,805	75%	312,839	100%	270,686	32%	574,507	68%	845,193	100%

According to the TDS survey results, a lower proportion of minority and low-income customers access TDS parking than the proportion of minority population and low-income households in Pierce County.

The data provided in Table 4-3 provides the basis for the equity analysis which is provided below in Section 5.

³ American Community Survey 2017 5-Year Table B19001H

5 EFFECTS OF PROPOSED FARE CHANGES ON MINORITY AND LOW-INCOME RIDERS

Pierce Transit's Disparate Impact (DI) and Disproportionate Burden (DB) policies are stated such that only fare types and media that are used by more than 10% of minority riders and 5% of the low-income riders could be subject to a finding of DI or DB.

5.1 Disparate Impact Analysis

Pierce Transit's policy (see Section 3.2) states that a disparate impact occurs when the minority population adversely affected by a fare or service change is 10% more than the average minority population of Pierce Transit's service area. Table 4-3 provides this bolded data in the "Minority %" column which shows that 32% of Pierce County's overall population identify as non-white (minority) and only 26% of TDS Users identify as non-white. Since the percentage is lower for TDS users, the proposed fees do not result in a disparate impact to minority TDS Users.

5.2 Disproportionate Burden Analysis

Pierce Transit's policy states that a disproportionate burden occurs when the low-income population adversely affected by a fare or service change is 5% more than the average low-income population of Pierce Transit's service area. (In this case we must look at low-income households rather than population since that is the data we have on TDS users.) Table 4-3 provides this bolded data in the "Low-Income %" column to compare low-income households in Pierce County with TDS users who reported having household incomes less than \$35,000. In this column we see that 25% of the households in Pierce County are low-income while only 6% of TDS Users come from low-income households. Since the percentage is lower for TDS Users, the proposed fees do not result in a disproportionate burden to low-income TDS Users.

5.3 Mitigation of Negative Impacts

While the proposed permit parking program does not have any disproportionate negative impacts to minority or low-income customers, it is important to consider whether there is a disparity in the receipt of benefits created by the proposal, and what mitigation or minimization of negative impacts the agency can implement as part of the permit parking program.

The negative impacts of implementing the proposed permit parking program at TDS include:

- A fee (for riders who opt to purchase a permit);
- Increased competition for unpermitted spaces (for riders who opt not to purchase a permit); and
- Requirement for customers to have and use the regional fare media card, One Regional Card for All (ORCA), as a condition for qualifying for and renewing parking permits.

The benefits of the proposal for those who opt to purchase permits include:

- Access to reserved parking that is available during the highest demand period (weekday mornings).

As an opt-in program, no customer would be required to pay the fee and incur the negative impact; however, they would also forego the benefit of priority access to permit parking spaces. Some of the strategies to mitigate or minimize the negative impacts, or conversely, to maximize the benefit received by low-income and minority customers, include:

- Reduced-price SOV permits for ORCA-LIFT qualified customers will be available. Permit pricing is proposed to be no less than 33% and no more than 50% of the full SOV permit price for the same facility.
- Permits for single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs) will be consistent with local market rates for monthly parking. Reduced rates will be offered to ORCA-LIFT qualified customers and high-occupancy vehicles (HOVs with two or more transit riders per vehicle).
- Permits are optional. Customers without permits will still have access to a portion of parking spaces at no charge, as non-permitted spaces will continue to be available on a first-come, first-served basis to transit riders.
- Any unused permitted spaces become available after morning rush hour has completed, at 8am, allowing for later travelers, in particular those with non-traditional work hours, to find available parking.
- Permit issuance requires that participants use regional transit service, meeting a regionally established threshold of utilization (minimum of 12 transit trips per month). Transit trips are verified using ORCA (regional transit card) usage data.
- Marketing and advertising strategies to reduce barriers to access permits for minority and low-income riders will be employed.

5.4 Outreach Plan

Pierce Transit is implementing an outreach plan and public comment period to educate riders and the general public about potential parking permit program at TDS and to collect feedback on the proposal. A variety of mechanisms for feedback will be available, including an online comment form, telephone, email, traditional mail, and social media, as well as opportunity to attend a public hearing scheduled for March 11, 2019. Pierce Transit's Board of Commissioners intends to take action at their April 8th meeting.

Activities during the comment period related to the proposal will:

- Reduce confusion by clearly articulating information about potential parking fee options;
- Recognize that parking and access issues affect all riders (regardless of whether they use parking or not);
- Provide access to the information to engage riders directly affected by the proposal;
- Offer a variety of methods for providing comments on the proposal;
- Provide opportunities for members of the public to engage directly with project staff;

- Showcase Pierce Transit's responsiveness to other agencies' policies and collaboration on parking and access across the region; and
- Conduct outreach in geographically-relevant locales, where key audiences and stakeholders may be inclined to gather.

Public Comment Methods

Public comments will be gathered in a variety of ways and provided to the Pierce Transit Board prior to their decision meeting scheduled for April 8, 2019.

Email: sjohnson@piercetransit.org

Phone: 253-581-8132

Mail: Sandy Johnson, Senior Planner, 3701 96th Street SW, Lakewood, WA 98499

Online: www.piercetransit.org/permit-parking

At public hearing on March 11, 2019

Registered SHUTTLE customers may obtain specialized transportation to and from the hearing by calling SHUTTLE at (253) 581-8000, Option 2, from one to five days in advance of the hearing. An interpreter for the hearing impaired will be provided upon request with a minimum notice of five days.

Pierce Transit staff will employ a robust notification strategy, summarized in Table 5-1, to ensure the public is aware of the opportunity to comment during the comment period. The following types of notification represent a broad combination of materials and notification vehicles to reach out to the community and invite feedback during the comment period.

TABLE 5-1 PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

Dates	Notice	Detail
2/28/19	Web announcement	Project web page on www.piercetransit.org/permit-parking ; home page announcements/news
2/28/19	Legal notice of public hearing	In Daily Journal of Commerce
3/1/19	Press Release	Distributed by Pierce Transit Public Relations using regular media protocol
Ongoing through 3/31/19	Stakeholder briefings and presentations	Updates and presentations on the proposed permit parking program to jurisdictions, stakeholder groups, and organizations, including human service agencies
3/5/19 +	A-Boards and Posters at TDS Platforms, Coach rack cards	Information about the proposal and how to comment
3/5/19 +	TDS Platform Outreach	Pierce Transit staff handing out rack cards and providing supplemental information
3/1/19 +	Social media	Twitter and Facebook announcements throughout comment period
3/21/19	Local Television Interview	Interview and discussion on Cityline, a City of Tacoma talk show
3/4/19 +	Audio announcement on PT Buses	Audio announcement of proposal and opportunity for comment on local buses
2/28/19 +	Email	Rider alert email distributed through GovDelivery at launch of comment period; e-mail to Employee Transportation Coordinators