

Regional Fare Forum 2025 Overview

Purpose

- Set a vision for the next decade for regional fares and ensure the regional system is being managed efficiently and effectively.
- Establish priorities for the next phase of ORCA implementation.
- Consider recommendations and policy changes to support fare capping, reduced fare program simplification, and expanding ORCA delivery to more aspects of the regional transit system.

Background

- Since the late 1990s, policy makers have periodically convened in a regional fare forum process to ensure alignment on fare policy and to support an integrated, simple fare payment system.
- Past regional fare forums have resulted standardized passenger categories, regional passes and transfers, and the creation of the ORCA fare payment system, governance structure, and revenue reconciliation.
- The most recent regional fare forum, which occurred in 2016 and 2017, advanced policy recommendations toward continued simplification of agency fare structures to support the development and system design of next generation ORCA.

Desired Outcomes

- Clear policy direction and recommendations to drive individual and regional fare policy decision-making.
- Defined priorities to drive future phases of ORCA implementation.
- Commitment to work with governing board colleagues to examine opportunities and advance policy changes in alignment with regional fare forum recommendations.

Meeting Schedule and Key Topics

- Meeting #1: Orientation, focused on background, purpose, approach, desired outcomes.
- Meeting #2: Simplification, focused on opportunities to advance fare simplification, considerations for aligned fare structures, and benefits and trade-offs of regional fare capping.
- Meeting #3: Equity, focused on reduced fare programs and opportunities to continue alignment regionally and opportunities to simplify and streamline administration.
- Meeting #4: Policy Prioritization, focused on defining shared, regional policy priorities that inform staff and ORCA joint board for future phases of ORCA implementation.
- Meeting #5: Conclusion, focused on reviewing final recommendations and future actions needed by individual agencies.