

## Overview

The Central Puget Sound region's public transit agencies are planning to improve the transit customer experience through the development of a next generation ORCA system.

Key goals of the new system include:

- Providing prompt account revalue, eliminating the delay between when customers load value onto a card and paying their fare
- Increased flexibility for customers, including acceptance of multiple fare payment options and the ability for the system to evolve with future payment technology
- Improving access to ORCA via a mobile app, a customer-oriented website, and an expanded retail network.

The new ORCA system will be flexible to allow more methods of payment and utilize maturing technologies, no matter where they take us in the years ahead. The system will also leverage that flexibility to continue to improve the customer experience while maintaining a secure system.

## Current activities

- The ORCA program wrapped up the planning stage after finalizing a concept of operations which incorporates ORCA customer research, factors in ORCA agency needs, and applies the latest knowledge from the fare payment industry.
- In early 2017 the program has moved into the procurement stage, during which the ORCA team will specify the system requirements, with the help of technical industry experts and agency specialists.
- Following the release of the Request for Proposals in late 2017, competitive contracts will be awarded in late 2018 for multiple vendor partners to develop the next generation system.

## Next steps

- After completion of procurement, subsequent program phases will include design, development and testing, deployment and installation, and operations.
- The approach includes a plan to transition from the current ORCA system to next generation system as smoothly as possible.
- The transition to a new system is expected to begin around late 2021.

## **Building on success**

Since 2009, the seven Central Puget Sound transit agencies have used the ORCA smart card system to create easy, seamless fare payment so people travel more easily on the region's buses, trains, streetcars and ferries. ORCA has:

- Over 400,000 average weekday boardings
- Over a million cards in circulation
- 1,800 business accounts serving employees, schools and other institutions
- Over 125 add value locations at retail stores
- A network of over 100 self-service ticket vending machines
- New reduced fares options for riders with low income
- New products such as the regional day pass
- Mobile ORCA-to-Go units serving the community with ORCA cards at fairs, festivals and outreach events across the region.

## **ORCA partnership**

- The ORCA consortium consists of seven regional transit providers: Community Transit, Everett Transit, King County Metro, Kitsap Transit, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit and Washington State Ferries.
- Sound Transit is the regional contracting and procurement agency for the ORCA next generation program.
- The seven agencies work closely with the consultant team to develop the next generation ORCA system.
- ORCA is governed by a Joint Board, executive-level representatives from each of the seven ORCA agencies.

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