

*Integrating Public Transit & Shared Micromobility Payments to Improve Transportation Equity in  
Seattle, WA*

## **Background**

Shared micromobility services such as bike share and e-scooter programs may offer a unique opportunity to reduce vehicle trips, especially when paired with public transit. However, they also have the potential to increase transportation equity for disadvantaged communities through the reduction of first- and last-mile travel time. The City of Seattle and its transit agencies have identified this potential, however, Seattle has yet to investigate how shared micromobility service payments can be integrated with existing public transit fare structures to improve transportation equity. The objective of this research is to explore how shared micromobility services can be integrated with transit to increase transportation equity in Seattle. In particular, this research focuses on integrating public transit and shared micromobility payments to reduce barriers to accessing these services.

## **Methods**

This research takes a two-pronged approach to investigating this issue through the use of:

1. Literature review of existing academic and grey literature relating to this topic to generate a comprehensive understanding of barriers low income and marginalized communities face when accessing shared micromobility services.
2. Jurisdictional scan exploring current practices in cities with integrated shared micromobility and transit.

## **Key Findings**

The key finding from this research is that income-based programs which provide affordable and accessible payment options for low-income and marginalized communities provide the greatest opportunity to reduce transportation inequities. Programs that take a living income-based approach, provide options for those who are unbanked or do not have access to credit, and are integrated with transit fare cards have the most potential for uptake among transportation disadvantaged communities.

## **Recommendations**

Recommendations were developed for implementing integrated transportation programs in the City of Seattle. These include:

- 1. Integration with the ORCA card.** Seattle residents should be able to access shared bikes and e-scooters using their ORCA card, which is the smart card payment system used by Seattle's transit agencies, in order to increase convenience and accessibility of payment.
- 2. Adoption of a living income-based approach.** Eligibility for Seattle's subsidized ORCA lift program is currently based on 200% of the federal poverty level, which does not adequately reflect the region's high cost of living. Instead, King County's Self-Sufficiency Standard should be used to determine eligibility for income-based subsidies.
- 3. Increase accessibility of payment options.** Financial barriers to accessing shared micromobility services should be reduced through offering cash payment options through intermediary vendors and simplifying the registration process for the ORCA Lift program.

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