

# ORCA 101

For Downtown Seattle  
Employers



commute seattle



*We'll Get You There*

# Winter/Spring 2017 Contents

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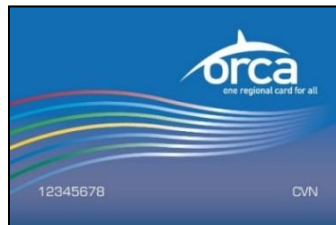


# commute seattle

We are a one-stop-resource for sustainable transportation products, services, and incentives in downtown Seattle. Commute Seattle works with Metro to connect businesses to ORCA Business Programs, improving access to and through downtown Seattle. Contact us to learn more about ORCA Business Account options and other resources to help you save money, attract top-tier employees, and help reduce congestion in your neighborhood.

**ORCA (One Regional Card for All)** is an electronic card used to pay for rides on public transportation throughout the Puget Sound region. Riders can load the card with funds to be used like a debit card, or add a variety of passes to cover fares on buses, trains, streetcars and ferries operated by:

- Community Transit
- Everett Transit
- King County Metro Transit
- Kitsap Transit
- Pierce Transit
- Sound Transit buses, Link light rail, and Sounder Commuter rail
- Seattle Streetcars
- King County Water Taxi
- Washington State Ferries



**ORCA keeps the region moving.** Riders using ORCA help move public transit more reliably with quicker boardings. Hundreds of businesses and schools offer ORCA to their employees and students, which reduces traffic congestion and motor vehicle emissions.

**For a rider,** ORCA is fast, easy, and can save money when transferring. There's no need to carry cash or worry about remembering the correct fare for each ride. ORCA cards automatically include a two-hour transfer between buses, trains, streetcars and water taxis.

ORCA is suited to both occasional and frequent riders. ORCA cards can store funds in an "E-purse" to deduct fares as you ride, as well as unlimited monthly passes.

Specific cards are available for people eligible for reduced fares based on age (youth or senior), disability or income (ORCA LIFT).

**For employers, schools and other organizations,** ORCA is a highly desired, cost effective and simple to administer benefit for employees and students. The benefits and details of ORCA for businesses are described in this guide.

To learn more or to purchase ORCA Business Passport, please contact Passport Sales Specialist Kendle Bjelland at 206-613-3242 or [kendleb@commuteseattle.com](mailto:kendleb@commuteseattle.com)

# Why Subsidize Employee Transportation?

## Seattle Businesses Subsidize Employee Transportation

Employer transit subsidies are the new norm in Seattle. 83% of large (100+ employees) and 54% of small (<100 employees) Center City worksites offer transit incentives to their employees.

Worksites offer transit subsidies to:

- Increase their competitiveness in attracting and retaining talent
- Alleviate parking challenges
- Take advantage of tax savings and give employees a tax free raise
- Easily administer transportation benefits through an annual pass program
- Equitably cover all employees' transportation needs
- Help fulfill their commute-trip reduction obligations
- Promote societal benefits such as transit usage and environmental friendliness

Employees benefit from these subsidies by:

- Saving thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket transportation expenses
- Taking advantage of FICA tax savings
- Reclaiming their time by relaxing on transit instead of driving in traffic
- Enjoying flexible options including bus, light rail, commuter train, streetcar, vanpool/vanshare, and water taxi
- Personally committing to sustainability and commute trip reduction

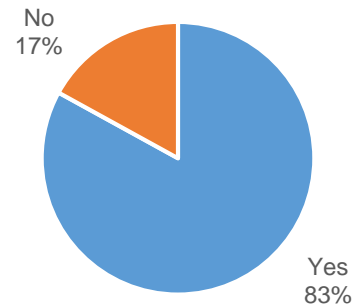
View Commute Seattle's complete 2016 Seattle Employer Transportation Benefits study at:

[www.commuteseattle.com/mediakit/report-2016-seattle-employer-transportation-benefits/](http://www.commuteseattle.com/mediakit/report-2016-seattle-employer-transportation-benefits/)

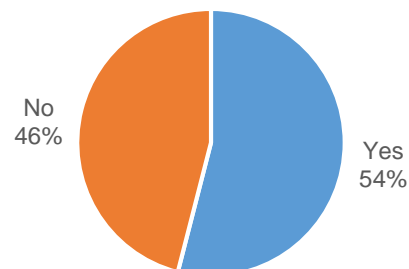
## Companies and Employees Can Save on Taxes

Both employers and employees can save on taxes when a company implements transportation subsidies or purchases transit passes for their staff.

Large Worksites (100+ Employees) Subsidizing Transit



Small Worksites (<100 Employees) Subsidizing Transit



Employers can get a Commute Trip Reduction credit against their Washington State Business & Occupation tax, potentially earning up to 50% of the amount spent back.

Employees and employers can save on FICA taxes through pre-tax transit spending. This is an employee paid, employer administered program that allows employees to set aside money for transit pre-tax. While this program is relatively easy to administer, some employers choose to use a 3<sup>rd</sup> party business to manage this benefit. Companies and their employees can reduce FICA taxes in three different ways:

- Employee-paid pre-tax
- Employer-paid tax-free
- Shared cost

To learn more about how businesses can take advantage of these tax savings, please view our Taxes and Transportation guide and webinar at:

[www.commuteseattle.com/resources/](http://www.commuteseattle.com/resources/)

### Commuting Trends Show Most Downtown Employees Don't Drive Alone

Every two years, Commute Seattle conducts a survey of commuting trends in downtown Seattle. The 2014 Commuter Mode Split Survey revealed that over two-thirds (69%) of Downtown rush-hour commute trips are taken by modes other than driving alone, up from 66% in 2012 and 65% in 2010. Public transit (45%) remains the most popular commute choice, followed by driving alone (31%), carpool/vanpool (9%), walking (7%), teleworking/flex schedules and other (5%), and bicycling (3%). Non-motorized modes now represent 15% of all Downtown commute trips, and will continue to grow as Downtown's residential population expands.



Rail, bicycling, walking and teleworking have grown the fastest since 2012, reflecting the success of public investments in transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure, and a continued trend toward mobile workplaces.

Learn more about Commute Seattle's 2014 Commuter Mode Split at:

[www.commuteseattle.com/2014-modesplit-survey](http://www.commuteseattle.com/2014-modesplit-survey)

# ORCA Business Accounts

**ORCA Business Passport** is a cost effective, comprehensive, annual transportation pass program for employers to provide to employees. It includes unlimited rides for seven different regional transit agencies. It also provides a 100% vanpool and vanshare subsidy as well as a guaranteed ride home for participating employees in case of emergency. Trips on Washington State Ferries are not covered by ORCA Business Passport, however WSF passes can be loaded onto individual ORCA cards as needed. Employers must purchase Passport for all benefit eligible employees, and can cost-share with employees up to 50%.

**ORCA Business Choice** allows employers to load a dollar amount or a variety of passes, including PugetPasses and Washington State Ferry passes, onto their employees' ORCA cards at retail pricing on a monthly basis. Business Choice gives the employer the flexibility to subsidize as much or as little of their employees' transportation costs as they want, for as few or as many of their employees as desired.

Considerations	ORCA Passport	ORCA Choice
Contract and Payment	Annual	Monthly
Unlimited rides	Yes	Yes with monthly passes, no with E-purse
Minimum Coverage	ALL benefit eligible employees	Company chooses who to include
Cost	Bulk pricing	Retail rate
Employer Contribution	At least 50% from company	As much or as little as company decides
Home Free Guarantee	Yes	No
Administration	Minimal to no administration	Monthly, can be time consuming to individualize employees needs

ORCA Business Passport Pricing*			
Type of Pass	One-Way Fare	Monthly Equivalency	Annual Cost
ORCA Passport For Central Business District Companies	N/A	\$57.07	<b>\$709.88</b>
ORCA Business Choice Pricing**			
Link Light Rail: Beacon Hill/SoDo - Westlake	\$2.50	\$90	<b>\$1,080</b>
Metro Peak One Zone	\$2.75	\$99	<b>\$1,188</b>
Metro Peak Two Zone	\$3.25	\$117	<b>\$1,404</b>
Sound Transit Inter-County Bus	\$3.75	\$135	<b>\$1,620</b>
Community Transit Commuter Bus North/East	\$5.50	\$189	<b>\$2,376</b>

\*Prices valid for March 1 to August 1, 2017

\*\*To view a comprehensive list of fares and monthly passes, visit:  
<http://kingcounty.gov/depts/transportation/metro/fares-orca/what-to-pay.aspx>

# ORCA Business Passport

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*ORCA Business Passport is a cost effective, comprehensive, annual transportation pass program for employers with 5+ employees. Employers in downtown Seattle, Belltown, International District, South Lake Union, and Queen Anne can participate with 5+ employees, while employers outside of downtown Seattle must have 20+. Custom contracts are available to businesses with 500+ employees.*

## **Passport Covers:**

- Unlimited rides on all regular bus services on Community Transit, Everett Transit, Kitsap Transit, Metro Transit, Pierce Transit, and Sound Transit
- Unlimited rides on regular Sound Transit Link light rail service
- Unlimited rides on Sounder commuter rail
- 100% vanpool fare subsidy on Community Transit, Kitsap Transit, Metro Transit, and Pierce Transit vanpool vans
- 100% vanshipare fare subsidy on Metro Transit vanshipare vans
- Unlimited rides on Seattle Streetcar, King County Water Taxi and Kitsap Foot Ferry
- Emergency guaranteed ride home service (for trips meeting program criteria)

## **Benefits Include:**

- Offering employees an annual comprehensive transportation pass with a single card
- Reducing administrative costs – the Passport annual program does not require monthly online administration or knowledge of what type of passes employees need
- Managing employee cards online
- Providing equitable transportation benefits to all employees
- Employees have daily flexibility in choosing how they commute to work

## **Rules and Eligibility:**

- ORCA Business Passport is only available to individuals through their employer.
- The program requires that a pass be purchased for every benefits-eligible employee at the worksite.
- Companies can share up to 50% of the price of the pass with employees.
- Participating companies must have a minimum of 5 to 20 employees depending on the location of the company worksite.

## **Pricing:**

- ORCA Business Passport prices are annual prices per pass. The price varies depending on the location of the company's work site.
- Passport prices are adjusted every 6 months to reflect fare changes amongst the seven participating transit agencies.
- Companies that participate in the ORCA Passport program typically demonstrate increased ridership after the first year. Renewal pricing for the area is adjusted to account for this increase.
- New ORCA Business Passport customers are subject to an initial one-time \$5 per pass card fee.
- New ORCA Business Passport customers are eligible for a first-year incentive.

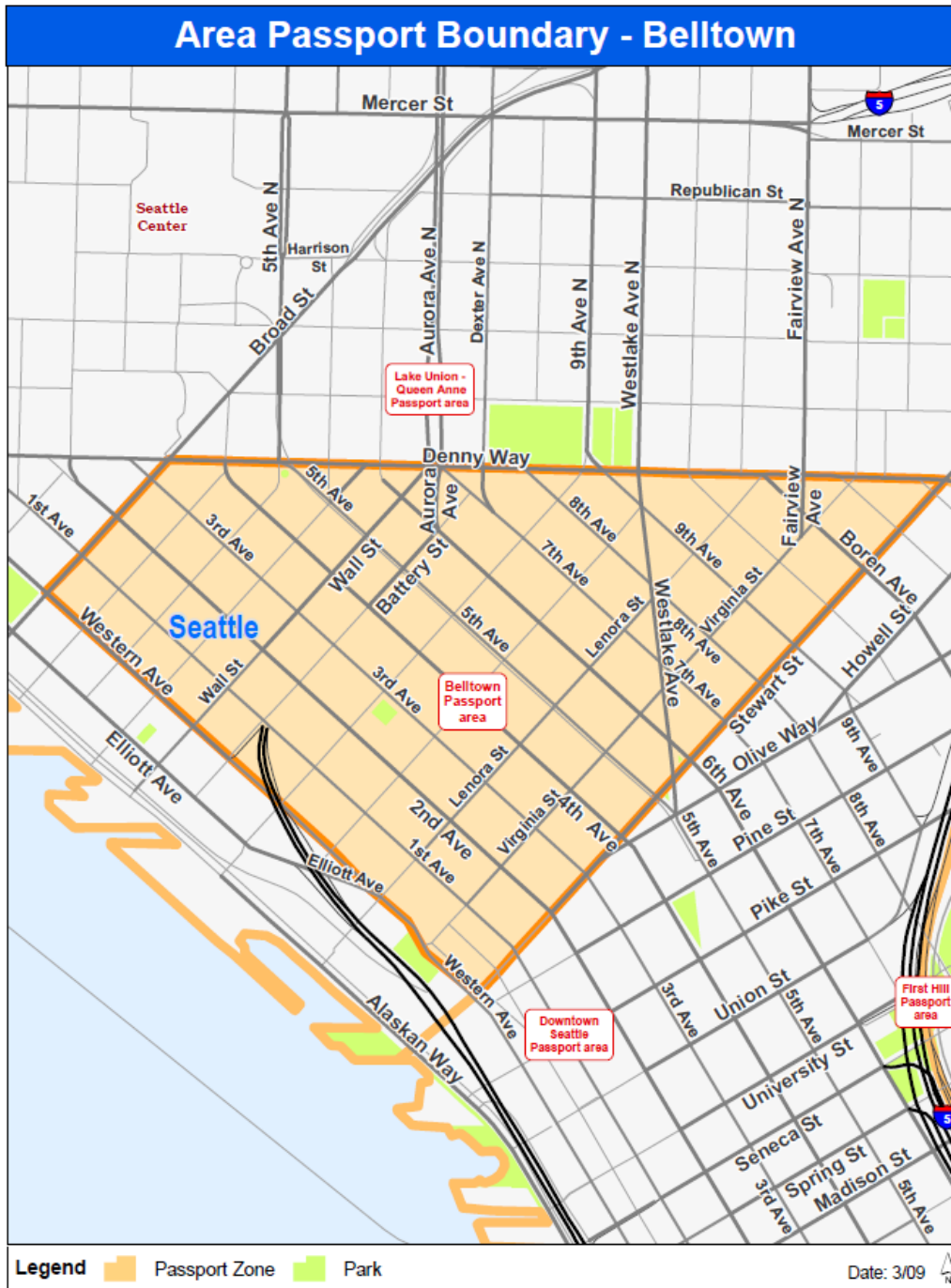
# ORCA Business Passport



Passport Area	Min. Employee Count	First Year Price	Initial Card Fee	First Year Rebate	First Year Net Cost	First Year Monthly Net Cost	Renewal Price
Downtown Seattle CBD	5	\$709.88	\$5	\$30	<b>\$684.88</b>	\$57.07	\$818.86



# ORCA Business Passport



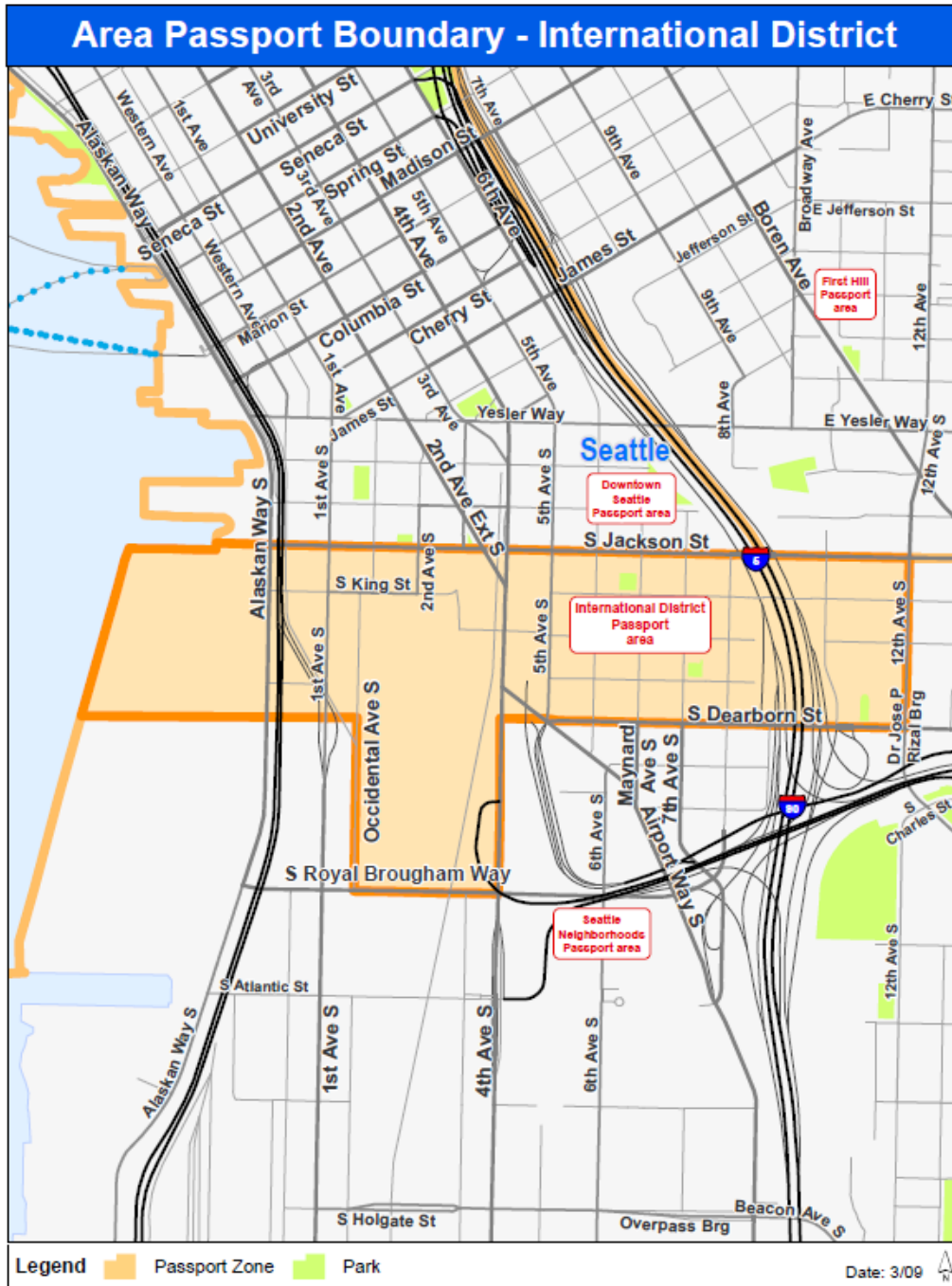
Passport Area	Min. Employee Count	First Year Price	Initial Card Fee	First Year Rebate	First Year Net Cost	First Year Monthly Net Cost	Renewal Price
Belltown	5	\$720.17	\$5	\$30	<b>\$695.17</b>	\$57.93	\$773.45

# ORCA Business Passport



Passport Area	Min. Employee Count	First Year Price	Initial Card Fee	First Year Rebate	First Year Net Cost	First Year Monthly Net Cost	Renewal Price
First Hill	20	\$477.26	\$5	\$25	<b>\$457.26</b>	\$38.11	\$770.90

# ORCA Business Passport



Passport Area	Min. Employee Count	First Year Price	Initial Card Fee	First Year Rebate	First Year Net Cost	First Year Monthly Net Cost	Renewal Price
International District	5	\$629.61	\$5	\$25	<b>\$609.61</b>	\$50.80	\$814.17

# ORCA Business Passport



Passport Area	Min. Employee Count	First Year Price	Initial Card Fee	First Year Rebate	First Year Net Cost	First Year Monthly Net Cost	Renewal Price
Lake Union/Queen Anne	5	\$508.99	\$5	\$15	<b>\$498.99</b>	\$41.58	\$708.07

# ORCA Business Choice

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*ORCA Business Choice provides total flexibility for employers and employees. This program offers multiple products on a single ORCA card, including monthly passes, e-purse or e-voucher.*

## **Business Choice Includes:**

- Monthly transit passes at retail prices for bus, train, ferry or Metro vanpool.
- Access to **all** regular bus services on Community Transit, Everett Transit, Kitsap Transit, Metro Transit, Pierce Transit, and Sound Transit
- Access to regular Sound Transit Link light rail service
- Access to Sounder commuter rail
- Access to Washington State Ferries
- E-purse option – Employees use stored value to pay for travel on a per-trip basis or convert to monthly pass
- E-voucher option – Employees convert to E-purse or monthly pass and if unused, E-vouchers are eligible for a credit to the employer

## **Benefits for Employers:**

- Purchase ORCA cards and load or reload value monthly, or as needed, online
- Load multiple ORCA products (like E-purse or E-voucher ) onto a single ORCA card
- Provide cards only to those employees using transit services
- Provide a subsidy and/or Pre-Tax benefit to employees
- Flexibility to change products from month to month
- Conveniently pre-pay online via credit card or by mailing a company check
- Replace lost or stolen cards to transfer products to new cards using online replacement transactions.

## **Benefits for Employees:**

- Load bus, train, ferry and Metro vanpool passes, and per-trip fares on one card.
- Conveniently convert the E-voucher to E-purse and pay for travel on a per-trip basis or convert to a monthly pass
- Add value to cover the cost difference between the employer sponsored subsidy and the total cost of the desired product or fare
- Ability to register cards. If a card is lost or stolen, the card can then be replaced with a replacement transaction and the value issued to a new unused card

Sign up for ORCA Business Choice online at:

<http://metro.kingcounty.gov/cs/employer/emp-orca-steps.html>



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## Contact Information

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## Glossary

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### **Business Passport and Business Choice**

The two types of accounts available to businesses, schools or other organizations for providing ORCA to their employees, students or other on-going user groups.

**E-purse (electronic purse):** Money stored on an ORCA card and used like cash to be deducted for each ride. E-purse value does not expire and can be purchased in any amount from \$5 to \$300.

**E-Voucher:** Works similar to E-purse, but is only available to employers. Funds are credited back to the employer after 30 days if vouchers are unredeemed.

**Home Free Guarantee:** Also known as Guaranteed Ride Home. Any participating employee who takes the bus or train, carpools, vanpools, bikes or walks to work is eligible for a free taxi ride home in case of an emergency. Limited to 8 rides per year.

**Mode Split:** The proportion of trips taken on different forms of transportation, such as driving alone, carpooling, using transit, biking and walking.

**ORCA:** An electronic transit fare card for riding public transportation in the Puget Sound region.

**Product:** The options available to purchase and load onto an ORCA card, such as E-purse, PugetPass, passes for specific transit agencies, or a Washington State Ferry pass.

**PugetPass:** The name of a selection of monthly pass values representing different fares on all services in the region (except WSF, which has separate passes). A \$3.00 PugetPass would cover unlimited rides on any service at the fare of \$3.00 for a calendar month. PugetPasses are priced at the value of 36 individual rides.

**Vanpool/Vanshare:** Vanpools require a minimum of 5 participants including 2 drivers and a bookkeeper. Vanpool fares are based on the length of commute and the size of the van. A Vanshare group is limited to 20 miles round trip and the group must connect to some form of public transportation. Vanshare groups require a minimum of 5 participants.



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