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**PORT OF SEATTLE
Order No. 2024-13**

...to direct the Executive Director to expand alternative transportation options for airport workers through the SEA Moves transportation management association, including through a pilot program to provide free or low-cost ORCA cards to a subset of eligible employees at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and a study of a dedicated SEA employee commuter bus program.

**ADOPTED
November 19, 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA) is one of the largest employment sites in the State of Washington, with tens of thousands of workers onsite every day. As the owner and operator of SEA, the Port of Seattle has a goal to reduce the use of single-occupancy vehicle travel to and from the airport in order to achieve a wide variety of goals – including operational efficiency, environmental sustainability, worker recruitment and retention, and traffic congestion reduction.

The Port pursues this goal through numerous strategies, as described in Commission Resolution 3759 – the Ground Transportation Policy Directive; the Ground Transportation Access Plan (GTAP); and the airport’s transportation management association (TMA) – now called SEA Moves. In particular, a key initiative is encouraging the use of public transit and other alternative means of commuting by SEA workers.

This Order directs the Executive Director to take a number of steps to expand alternative transportation options for airport workers through the SEA Moves transportation management association, that includes a pilot program to provide free or low-cost ORCA cards to a subset of eligible employees at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and a study of dedicated SEA employee commuter bus program. Importantly, the findings of these efforts will inform future updates to the Port’s overall ground transportation policies and strategies through regular reporting and data analysis.

Overall, the Port is striving to expand alternative transportation options for airport workers and to strengthen public transit as a financially accessible option for SEA workers. Enhancing alternative transportation options for SEA for workers has the potential to create a wide variety

of benefits – including reducing the high costs for the Port associated with operating, building and/or purchasing parking infrastructure, improving worker recruitment and retention, creating a better travel experience for passengers coming to and from the airport, improving customer experience for airport users, enhancing environmental sustainability, and even possibly increasing regional freight mobility by taking cars off the highways. These goals can only be achieved through an impactful transportation management association program.

The elements of this Order will be undertaken along with other commute program efforts to improve the employee commute program at SEA and to reduce reliance on single driver employee trips and on employee use of airport parking – as identified in the GTAP and led by SEA Moves.

TEXT OF THE ORDER

The Port Commission hereby orders the Executive Director to complete the following tasks:

1. **Establish an ORCA Card Pilot Program:** The Port of Seattle shall establish a pilot program (the "Program") to provide free or low-cost ORCA cards covering the cost of transit to and from SEA to a specifically identified subset of eligible workers at SEA. The program will examine how such a program could not only impact commuting practices, but also how reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips by SEA workers benefits the airport overall. Staff are directed to identify and collect such data as needed to provide clear analysis of the impacts of this effort as part of the SEA Moves programs.
2. **Employee Bus Study and Pilot:** Port staff are directed to assess the feasibility and operational requirements for launching a dedicated SEA employee commuter bus program, with the goal of beginning a pilot program in 2026. A shuttle bus route dedicated to employees has the potential to address several challenges with the existing airport commuting environment – including the cost to park at the airport; early and late shift start and end times that do not coincide with traditional transit schedules; and employee home locations that are not well-served by public transportation.
3. **Negotiations with Transit Partners:** Port staff are directed to negotiate with King County Metro, Sound Transit, and any other relevant transportation providers who are part of the ORCA card program to explore opportunities to enhance the availability of off-peak transit services specifically tailored to the needs of SEA workers.
4. **State Policy Advocacy:** Port staff shall evaluate whether the State of Washington's current commute trip reduction policies are fully inclusive of the needs of large, 24/7 job sites such as SEA. In particular, the Port will advocate for state funding to support the enhancement of transit and alternative transportation options that serve the airport and its workforce.

5. **Pilot Program Reporting and Commission Policy Update:** Port staff shall update the Commission regarding the progress toward these efforts as part of the regular Ground Transportation Program Report. The evaluation shall consider specific benefits of a robust SEA Moves program to the airport, to airport employers, to travelers, and to the surrounding community. In addition, staff are directed to study the costs and benefits of a potential parking cash out program for airport employees. The Commission will consider the findings of all of these efforts in terms of any necessary updates to Resolution 3759 – the Ground Transportation Policy Directive.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE ORDER

The Port of Seattle Commission has spent many years working to improve alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel to and from the airport. Besides the regional costs of such travel in terms of air emissions and highway congestion, it is increasingly challenging for the Port's parking facilities to accommodate this demand.

The Airport currently operates 4,100 parking spaces at an operational cost of approximately \$4 million a year. Yet, despite this existing capacity, current demand exceeds supply, leading to waiting lists that at times have been over a thousand employees. The Airport team is also bringing forward an action for almost 7,000 additional parking slots at a cost of \$6.7 million a year, plus operating costs, as well as 1,500 new parking spaces at the SeaTac Office Center (STOC). The costs to the airport to purchase and operate these systems are significant – not to mention the impact on regional and airport traffic congestion – all of which leads to the obvious need for increased usage of alternative transportation options.

The Commission also believes that increasing alternative commuting options makes SEA a more affordable and desirable place to work for the more than 20,000 employees who work at the airport – strengthening recruitment and retention, which leads to more efficient airport operations and improved customer experience for airport travelers.

For all of these reasons, the Commission has taken multiple steps toward this goal, including the establishment of SEA Moves. This Order is a logical next step in those efforts.

The Port has long supported light rail and other public transportation modes as a means of improving regional transportation and access for workers. Our participation in regional transportation boards, the Port's funding of major regional transportation infrastructure, and our advocacy at the local, state and federal levels highlight our direct interest in supporting expanded participation in regional light rail and bus services. Every transit trip reduces regional congestion and improves our ability to operate the airport and to make it easier for workers to reliably arrive on time – prepared to deliver high-quality service to the millions of passengers who travel through the airport every year.

The challenge of commute trip reduction is particularly difficult at a 24/7 facility like SEA, where workers are travelling to and from the airport at off-peak commuting hours. Therefore, innovation solutions like an ORCA card pilot program and a potential Employee commuter bus program are required to identify all possible ways to achieve the goals of the Commission's Ground Transportation Policy Directive.