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Pike Place Market Preservation & Development Authority (PDA)

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## **New Annual Low-Cost Orca Card for Market Vendors Offered by Pike Place Market PDA**

**SEATTLE (July 31, 2015)** – The Pike Place Market Preservation and Development Authority (PDA) announced today the roll out of a new, annual low-cost Orca Business Passport transit pass for Market employees and vendors, a key component of a larger effort to identify and address issues related to long-term affordable parking and transportation in Downtown Seattle. Eligible employees will have the option to purchase a discounted Orca pass for \$27, covering a wide range of transit passes that can cost up to \$198 per month, depending on distance of travel. The reduced cost is supported by a subsidy approved by the PDA Council. More than 140 employees, from across the Market, have so far signed up for the program.

Commute Seattle estimates most vendors will see a savings of \$63-\$90 a month.

“To ensure the traditional character of the Market and the predominance of small shops, micro-businesses, and arts and crafts consistent with our charter, the PDA is offering a low-cost transit pass to Market vendors to promote their survival and the continued vibrancy of the Market,” said Ben Franz-Knight, PDA Executive Director. “This is also consistent with our commitment to sustainability, and a great example of the convergence between sound business practices and a commitment to the environment.”

“ORCA Business Passport is an all-inclusive, regional transit pass that puts the power of unlimited regional transit access in every employee’s hand. An employer-purchased transit pass is the single most important transportation amenity the Pike Place Market PDA can provide,” said Jessica Szlag, Executive Director of Commute Seattle.

Businesses with one to four employees, located in PDA owned or managed property in the Pike Place Market Historic District, qualify for the program, as do employees working 24 hours or more a week. Passes will be good for Metro, Community Transit, Sound Transit, Kitsap Transit, Everett Transit, Pierce Transit, Sounder Train (with RailPlus), Link Light Rail, the Seattle Streetcar, and the West Seattle and Vashon Water Taxis.

Maintaining accessible and affordable customer parking during peak summer months in the Public Market Parking Garage at 1531 Western Ave. is a top priority for Pike Place Market PDA, which receives 10 million visitors annually. It is also a necessity, due to contractual agreements with the City of Seattle and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to provide short term parking for visitors at a low \$3 an hour rate for up to four hours.

Due to the increased number of early bird parkers in the garage in June, the Preservation and Development Authority (PDA) took the necessary step of raising parking rates and discontinuing the early bird rate as of August 1 to ensure short term parking availability in the garage for Market shoppers.

Recognizing the change in parking rates impacts many PDA tenants and their employees, the PDA has taken several steps to help mitigate any challenges to individuals, including:

- Identifying and personally communicating to Market vendors several affordable all day parking alternatives within easy walking distance of the Market, including at Lenora and Western Avenue, a .02 mile/4 minute walk to the Market (**see map, attached**)
- The PDA has partnered with Commute Seattle and King County to offer an annual Orca Passport transit pass at a significantly reduced monthly price, \$27
- For the Market's artisans and crafters, low-cost, on-site storage lockers are available to provide a place to store products so they do not have to be transported each day
- The PDA recently broke ground on the new MarketFront, a mixed-use expansion that includes 300 additional parking spaces. This project is expected to be completed in just over 17 months
- Parking rates will be reviewed again in the fall and adjustments may be made based on capacity at that time

**Pike Place Market** is Seattle's original farmers market, founded in 1907, and is one of the oldest continuously operating public markets in the U.S. The market operates within a 9 acre historic district and is a bustling neighborhood of farmers, craftspeople, owner-operated shops, buskers, and residents, many of whom are low-income seniors, and five social service agencies. [www.pikeplacemarket.org](http://www.pikeplacemarket.org)

**The Pike Place Market Preservation & Development Authority** (PDA) is a not-for-profit, public corporation chartered by the City of Seattle in 1973 to manage the properties in the nine-acre Market Historic District. The PDA is required to preserve, rehabilitate and protect the Market's buildings, increase opportunities for farm and food retailing in the Market, incubate and support small and marginal businesses, and provide services and affordable housing for low-income people.

#### **About Commute Seattle**

Commute Seattle is Seattle's Transportation Management Association working to ensure downtown users live more and drive less by increasing access and mobility to and within Downtown. For over 10 years, Commute Seattle has provided businesses with pre-sales product and analysis support, helping them select the transit pass that best suits their budget, culture, and travel needs.