

Eastside Easy Rider

COLLABORATIVE

Eastside Advocacy for Transportation Services

MEETING NOTES

September 24th, 2019; Redmond City Hall

Participants: Alaric Bien (City of Redmond), Alex O'Reilly (City of Bellevue), Brooke Knight (Northshore Senior Center), Cassidy Giampetro (Hopelink), Christy Stangland (City of Bellevue), Cliff Perry (Northshore Senior Center), David Lynch (Hopelink), David Waggoner (Veterans Coalition), Joanne Donohue (Sound Generations), Jon Morrison Winters (City of Seattle), Leslie Miller (City of Kirkland), Mark Smutny (Sound Generations), M'Liss Moon (Hopelink), and Pran Wahi (Indian Association of Western Washington)

Staff Support: Staci Haber (Hopelink), Camille Heatherly (Hopelink)

WELCOME AND MEETING PURPOSE

STACI HABER

The meeting began at 2:45pm and attendees that arrived after initial EERC introduce themselves. Staci says that the meeting's purpose is to develop a strategy for adding transportation services for special needs populations in East King County, namely Bellevue, Kirkland, and Redmond.

Alaric Bien from the City of Redmond asked if the City Transportation Department staff would be more equipped to attend the EATS meeting in addition to the city human service planners. We agreed both should be engaged in this conversation.

WORK TO DATE

Jon Morrison Winters reminded the group that the task-force has been working on solutions for a long time and has been discussed in detail, so they are not starting at "square one," but looking for real solutions to the issue. Affirming Jon's

point, Staci supported that the members have collected strong data and contacted possible service operators for the Eastside.

Future major transportation changes in the Eastside require that the task force consider both the short-term and long-term implications of goals. Staci then asked if anyone in the room had their own ideas for how to solve the lack of transportation on the Eastside, to which Alex O'Reilly from the City of Bellevue, replied that there are multiple solutions to address these transportation gaps.

STRATEGY DISCUSSION

Christy Stangland, City of Bellevue, mentioned that the Bellevue, Redmond and possibly Kirkland have developed solution concepts as part of King County Metro's Community Connections program. Christy suggested we reach out directly to the city offices for the reports, rather than ask the group for feedback. However, Staci wondered if Metro's sponsorship of these reports could limit the solution scope.

Speaking on behalf of Sound Generations, Mark Smutny stated that funding through Metro may be an obstacle. Instead, Mark suggested that Metro can allocate funding to Hyde shuttles for the Eastside. There are Hyde shuttles that have been underperforming in Seattle and reallocating their services to an area with higher need might be a better use of their funds. To successfully use Hyde shuttles on the Eastside there also needs to be a secure parking area near Bellevue. Pran Wahi is in favor of Mark's proposition of refunneling Hyde Shuttle funds from Metro and with the help of Northshore Senior Center, as it is a clear and quick solution.

Brooke Knight explained that Northshore Senior Center has been working with Pran to identify service gaps to specific populations and seeks to continue this outreach. Northshore Senior Center is also trying to expand their service area and seeks to learn from partners of this group what other resources are already out there and who they can best serve.

Jon believes there are many resources, including funding, between the three big cities -- Bellevue, Redmond, Kirkland -- and he is looking forward to navigating conversations about what this group can produce. He offers to internally lobby for certain aspects of any program produced and suggests that more transit authorities join this effort.

Alex stated that she has asked City of Bellevue in the past for programs to fill the service gaps this group is confronting. She said that a well-liked program could use community support to get the City of Bellevue to sustain the program, and there needs to be political willpower behind a transportation initiative. The perceived distance between Seattle and the Eastside appear to create a bias.

Mark responded by describing how the role of gentrification and suburbanization of poverty has influenced transit realities. The red-tape and internal processes behind altering underperforming services creates a huge delay. Instead he stated that he is looking at more flexible options through the support of agencies and outside funding to formulate a response that can eventually lead to grant opportunities. Pran again pushed that a solution that solves an immediate need and can be implemented quickly should be the group's priority.

Cliff Perry, Northshore Senior Center, said that improvements on the Eastside require a grassroots movement to leverage cities to respond. He thought that this group can find a solution for a short-term solution in the time being, but that community engagement and support are key to a sustained program. Others agreed they wanted to solidify this meeting as one that meets continuously to formulate solutions and find where it is necessary to apply pressure for advocacy purposes.

Christy believed that there is a definite need in her community and agreed with Alaric's earlier point that the right stakeholders need to be at the table in order to get work done.

Leslie affirmed the need for this group in her community and explained that existing services are too specific, small, or localized. The Community Van is working well but has limitations since it is volunteer-led.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Joanne Donohue took a moment to detail the new grant Sound Generation obtained with Meals on Wheels and Uber. Sound Generation's volunteer transportation program is using Uber as a back-up when volunteer drivers are not available. They have been in the process of training customers of Sound Generations on how to use an Uber app to schedule their rides. This program has significantly reduced their denial rates by 50%.

Staci used this example to explain the innovative ways in which gaps can be filled in existing programs. She then discussed possible funding opportunities to consider when brainstorming solutions. The Eastside can apply for a competitive, consolidated grant if they can prove the need. Mark Smutny also offers that Metro can fund in-kind.

NEXT STEPS

After Pran asked if they will be moving forward on Mark's proposed solution as soon as possible, Mark and Staci responded that it might take more time to figure out the technicalities. Staci asked the group to consider what kind of conversation they should have with other transportation agencies, and Alex proposed the city transportation planners are invited since they are working with the agencies. Jon pointed to a need for shifts in the culture change.

ACTION ITEMS

- ***Staff Support***
 - Send out Meeting Notes.

- Create and email out a Doodle Poll for future EATS meeting.
 - Look into reports of the Redmond Loop that can give insight on the program's lessons.
 - Follow-up with Eastgate's pilot program, Ride2, for more statistics/information on the success of program.
 - Follow up with Mark Smutny on Hyde Shuttle's capacity.
 - Begin 1:1 stakeholder interviews to gauge success for this project.
- ***City Human Service Agencies (Alex, Christy, Alaric, and Leslie)***
 - Contact their respective transportation planners to see if they can offer some insight on transportation agency engagement and/or invite to next meeting.
 - ***Joanne***
 - Send the statistics on the Meals on Wheels and Uber partnership program, specifically on denial reductions.

NEXT MEETING

Date: TBD

Location: TBD

EASTSIDE EASY RIDER COLLABORATIVE CONTACT

Camille Heatherly, Eastside Mobility Coordinator

(CHEatherly@hopelink.org / 425.625.6784)

EASTSIDE ADVOCACY FOR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES CONTACT

Staci Haber, Director

(S>Haber@hopelink.org / 425.943.6769)