

MEETING NOTES

February 10th, 2017

Harborview Medical Center

Participants: Cori-Ann Ching (First Transit), Kari Ware (Solid Ground), Penny Lara (King County Metro), Sagar Ramachandra (Hopelink)

Staff: Staci Haber

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The meeting began at 10:05am.

BRIEFING AND TOUR: SOLID GROUND CIRCULATOR

Kari Ware, Transportation Director at Solid Ground, provided an overview and tour of the [Solid Ground Circulator](#). This transportation service provides free rides for people living on low incomes and those who use health and human services in downtown Seattle.

The Circulator was piloted in 2012, when the *free ride zone* in Seattle ended. The Circulator goes beyond the initial zone to also serve medical facilities in First Hill. The route was created with social service destinations in mind while maintaining adequate frequency. For example, there was a desire to run the route down the middle of city, notably 3rd Avenue, but the area was too crowded. Instead, riders may get off on the top of the hill at Boren, walk downhill to the main library, and then continue downhill to get on the Circulator again. On the first day of service, there were 75 passengers. Now the Circulator averages 300 riders per day, on only two buses. The Circulator also comes in under budget every year. Service runs every 15 to 20 minutes, with the drivers in contact with each other to ensure they maintain a relatively equal distance. All Circulator stops are also Metro bus stops.

The Circulator fleet consists of one 23-passenger and one 19-passenger vehicles. The vehicles kneel and deploy a ramp, not a lift, to accommodate mobility devices. And since Solid Ground Transportation also contracts with King County Metro to provide Access paratransit service, all the drivers had to drive for Access for at least five years before being eligible to drive the Circulator. The drivers are prepared for emergency situations, though the service has an amazing safety record. The Circulator follows the same code of conduct as Metro's fixed route service. But the drivers are not able to call Metro Police and must instead call the Seattle Police Department, which leads to some confusion. Cori-Ann Ching (First Transit) asked if there are cameras on the buses. Kari said no but some Metro Access contractors do on their vehicles.

The circulator is available to anyone, but outreach is targeted to social service agencies in Seattle, with no advertising to minimize tourists using the service. Solid Ground sees a spike in ridership in the beginning of the month, when riders receive their checks and travel on the Circulator to access food and other services.

Solid Ground continues to work with the City to make appropriate changes to the service. After surveying riders, there is clear demand for weekend service, extended hours, more frequent stops, and additional bus capacity. Solid Ground's contract is up at the end of 2017, so Solid Ground is currently working on a satisfaction survey to verify the need and importance of the Circulator for the community. Staci Haber offered to get feedback at the Community Resource Exchange, a one-day resource event for individuals experiencing homelessness, on March 9th at Century Link Field.

The attendees then went outside to tour the vehicle outside Harborview Medical Center. There was a suggestion to add information on other relevant services, like ORCA LIFT, on the Circulator vehicles. Penny Lara (King County Metro), who previously worked on ORCA LIFT at Seattle-King County Public Health, acknowledged her unfamiliarity with Solid Ground while at the ORCA LIFT office, so perhaps there is an opportunity to connect the two programs as they serve similar clients.

Kari also invited any Coalition members to participate in a ride-along on the Circulator, to speak to passengers about their experience and to identify transportation barriers and opportunities for this population.



UPDATE: KING COUNTY METRO'S ACCESS RESOURCE

Staci Haber briefed the members on the follow-up to the last meeting's discussion on creating an audio/video in multiple languages explaining Metro's Access program and eligibility. Staci connected with Spencer Cotton, ADA Certification Administrator at King County Metro Accessible Services via e-mail. Spencer explained that in order to create any foreign language audio recordings, there would first need to be a process of creating certified written documents to assure interpretation is communicated correctly. So any new documents, including a brief overview of Access, would first need to be created in English, then interpreted and certified in written form, and then read by a certified foreign language speaker.

Staci explained there are potential funds available in the Hopelink Mobility Management grant to support this effort. Spencer pointed out the challenge is information constantly changes, so funds will need to be identified to continually provide timely information and updates. Penny Lara offered to explore additional funding resources and support for this resource. Cori-Ann Ching also offered to help. Staci will follow up with additional stakeholders needed for this project as well as seek formal approval from Washington State Department of Transportation to use existing grant funds for this project.

DISCUSSION: 2017 WORK PLAN

There was little time to discuss a formal 2017 Work Plan for the Education and Outreach committee. In addition to the audio/video project mentioned earlier, there has been on-going discussion about promoting Metro's [special assistance cards](#). Both First Transit and Hopelink distribute these cards, but it's still not widely known how well they're used by the intended community or if there's any training for the bus drivers. Cori-Ann Ching will follow up with Sara Campbell at Metro Accessible Service about the ability to promote the cards as part of a county-wide outreach campaign.

ACTION ITEMS

- *Staci Haber* will follow up with Kari Ware about soliciting feedback on the Circulator at the Community Resource Exchange;
- *Penny Lara* will follow up with Kari Ware about connections with the ORCA LIFT office;
- *Staci Haber* will reach out to WSDOT about diverting grant funds for the Access audio/video project;
- *Staci Haber* will solicit participation of other Committee members for the Access audio/video project; and
- *Cori-Ann Ching* will follow up with Sara Campbell on the use of the Metro Special Assistance Cards.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, April 12th from 10:00 to 11:30am at Sound Generations, Hyde Shuttle Warehouse

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH CONTACT

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