

King County Mobility Coalition

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 16th, 2021, 9:30 – 11:30 am
Remote Zoom

In Attendance:

Members/Alternates: Adam Halpern, Alex O'Reilly (co-chair), Amy Biggs, Andes Kong, Belina Van, Caitlin Wasley, David Waggoner, Don Okazaki (co-chair), Dorene Cornwell, Jacque Mann, Jean Kim, Jennifer Covert, Jon Morrison Winters, Joy Scott, Karla Lynch, Linda Woodall, Mark Smutny, Monica Ghosh, Robert Blumenfeld, Sam Nigh

Partners: Alison Turner (City of Tukwila), Anne Marie Jehle (King County Metro), Bebhinn Gilbert (SKCMC), Betsy Maxwell (City of Kirkland), Bree Boyce (Hopelink), Brock Howell (SNOTRAC), Camille Heatherly (EERC), Carrie Avila-Mooney (Sound Transit), Catalina Gomez (Hopelink), Chris Andree (City of Tukwila), Christine Geneus-Hill (American Cancer Society), Dan Story (DSHS), Dean Sydnor (RARET), Erik Seymour (HopSkipDrive), Gunner Scott (King County Metro), Julie Burrell (King County Metro), Kenny Salvini (Here and Now Project), Kim Becklund (King County Metro), Kim Pearson (PSRC), Lindsey Greto (King County Metro), Lisa Hirohata (Kaiser Permanente), Maggie Harger (NKCMC), Marianna Hanefeld (WSDOT), Marie Marquart (MV Transit), Melissa Allan (King County Metro), Michelle Welker (Seattle Children's), Mike Dee (Lake Forest Park Citizen's Commission), Mike Ryan (Zone One Emergency Management), Myani Guetta (HealthierHere), Nancy Slote (Seattle Public Library), Riley Patterson (Muckleshoot Indian Tribe), Salwa Raphael (SVTC), Sara Sisco (Hopelink), Sarah Boden (Beeline Mobility), Sol Dressa (GRTMA), Sonia Morales (Molina Healthcare), Susy Miller (Seattle/King County ADS), Tara Wagner (Catholic Community Servies), Victor Londono-Quintero (Hopelink)

Staff: Cassidy Giampetro and Staci Sahoo

Welcome, Introductions, & Brief Announcements

After 15 minutes of networking before the start, the meeting began at 9:30 am. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves in the chat and share brief announcements. Announcements shared were:

- The King County Mobility Coalition is looking for a co-chair to serve alongside Don Okazaki for the 2021-2023 term. Interest and nominations were accepted until the end of the week.
- Don Okazaki of King County Metro shared an opportunity to provide feedback to Seattle and King County regarding customers' needs, barriers, and the dispatching process to improve wheelchair for-hire transportation. Those

interested in giving feedback should reach out to Lachen Chernyha at lachen.chernyha@seattle.gov.

- Christine Geneus-Hill of the American Cancer Society shared that the Road to Recovery Program is suspended but hoping to return in Q3 of 2021.
- Erik Seymour of HopSkipDrive shared that HopSkipDrive is getting busier as schools are opening but is still very active in transporting older adults to vaccination sites. They are open to partnering with anyone who could use support in that department.
- Mark Smutny of Sound Generations shared that his organization is merging the Hyde Shuttle program and Volunteer Transportation into one management in which he will be the Director of Transportation. Hyde Shuttle is also serving Kent as of February 1st.
- Dorene Cornwell encouraged people to check out the Disability Mobility Initiative Campaign to advocate for sidewalks, curb ramps, bicycle infrastructure, and more.

Consent Calendar

November 2020 Meeting Minutes: The Coalition approved the meeting minutes as drafted.

Find A Ride + Hopelink Education and Outreach

Sara Sisco, Program Manager of Education and Outreach at Hopelink Mobility Management, shared a presentation with the group on the transportation education and outreach program she leads. [View the meeting slides](#) to review the breadth of clients her work serves and more details on the primary services offered, being:

- Travel Ambassador trainings
- Getting Around Puget Sound events
- Public Transit Orientations
- The Transportation Resources Line

Sara also displayed the new and improved FindARide.org website to the group. She reviewed how to use the site and encouraged providers to check out their service's page to ensure all details are accurate. The Find A Ride website uses trip origin to help users discover transportation options to meet their needs. Besides visual revamps and provider updates, new additions to the site include accessibility features, a distinct region for Snoqualmie Valley, a "my location" setting for origin-destination, and more robust filtering.

During Sara's presentations, the following questions and comments were shared:

- Q: Has the Find A Ride website been tested with screen readers? Do you know which ones?
 - A: We have not explicitly tested the site with screen-readers. We are working on an FAQ video to show people how to use the site and leverage accessibility accommodations.
- Q: Will there be additions to include Kitsap transportation providers?
 - A: Since our team does not work with Kitsap providers, it is hard for us to include and keep their content updated. PSRC is also interested in adding Kitsap, so if people are interested, we will look into connecting with Kitsap providers.
 - Response: We see more folks moving to the Kitsap area – such as Bremerton, Bainbridge, and Port Orchard – and working in the Seattle area. It might be a good idea to include them at some point. There is also a new fast ferry from Southworth to Seattle in addition to current ferries.
- Q: Does Find A Ride work on Microsoft Edge?
 - A: Yes, it does. Right now, its only limitation is not working on Internet Explorer.
- Q: How does a user who does not speak English get assistance through the Transportation Resources Line?
 - A: We use Language Line to ensure we can serve people in their preferred language.
- One attendee shared they'd be interested in having a map that shows each mobility service's service area compiled into one map, with the ability to zoom in. Staci Sahoo, representing the KCMC, shared how service areas are included on individual provider pages. The Coalition is looking into this idea as an online version of the Coalition's Accessible Travel Map.

To receive a training on [FindARide.org](https://www.findaride.org) or to learn more about Hopelink Education and Outreach, contact Sara Sisco at ssisco@hopelink.org.

Vaccine Transportation

Staci Sahoo, Director of Mobility Management, facilitated a presentation and discussion on transportation to COVID-19 vaccination sites. She informed the group that Hopelink's Mobility Management team has been facilitating a COVID-19 Vaccine Mobility Taskforce made up of key stakeholders, including Public Health, that meets weekly to discuss the evolving situation. This group aims to ensure that transportation is not a barrier to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

The presentation started with a review to get attendees up-to-speed on the work done thus far on the subject – including current large-scale vaccination sites, what

transportation providers are hoping to mobilize, and existing transportation barriers. It was necessary to acknowledge how the short and erratic supply of vaccines impacts all conversations around the subject. [View the meeting slides](#) for a more in-depth depiction of the situational awareness presented to the group. Staci shared the complexity of integrating the logistical needs of transportation providers to the nuance of quick-emerging vaccination sites.

Questions and answers during this portion of the meeting are compiled here:

- Q: Do drive-up sites prevent people from using Medicaid transportation options?
 - A: No, Medicaid *does* serve people getting appointments at drive-thru sites.
- Q: Can the taxi script program be better marketed? I have a friend with mobility issues who used it to get her first shot and will for the second one, too. They have low-income, and it worked well for them.
- A participant shared they would love to hear more about the accessibility of the Kent site. They are curious about how and who was involved in assessing the overall accessibility of the site.
- A representative from Beeline Mobility affirmed they are interested in helping and subcontracting to provide additional capacity.

An [educational memo](#) compiling needs related to transportation to vaccines was shared in the chat. After reviewing what transportation barriers have already been identified, attendees were asked to participate in two polls to gauge their experience managing transportation needs related to vaccination. The two poll questions and their results are as follows:

1. Are you currently seeing transportation barriers to receiving the vaccine?
 - a. 47% of the group (20 of 43 responses) said Yes
 - b. 9% of the group (4 of 43 responses) said No
 - c. 44% of the group (19 of 43 responses) said Unsure
2. Do you anticipate transportation being a barrier to vaccination with higher supply or in future phases?
 - a. 75% of the group (33 of 44 responses) said Yes
 - b. 9% of the group (4 of 44 responses) said No
 - c. 16% of the group (7 of 44 responses) said Unsure

The group was invited to expand upon their responses in the chat. People shared:

- I anticipate demand for the vaccine will outpace our ability to move people to and from vaccination sites.

- There are very few vaccination sites in Snoqualmie Valley, more than on the greater Eastside. If people with less access to public transportation must go to Bellevue or Redmond, that's a problem. If they get more vaccination sites in the valley, that will help.
- A higher supply of the vaccine will increase transportation requests (Medicaid), which could end up being a supply/demand challenge.
- The methods of vaccine distribution should hopefully smooth out as time goes on.
- As vaccines become available, schools are wanting to become vaccination sites. The hope would be that schools in more rural locations could be used as sites.
- The biggest barriers are confusion about who is eligible for vaccines and then matching transportation timing with appointments. The fire department supports some sites, which is great, but understanding who is eligible is a big hassle. Age? Caregiver status? Multigenerational household? Essential worker?
- There is anxiety about getting the second dose 21 or 28 days after the first dose.
- Timing is critical. You can't drop the passengers off hours early, and you can't have them arrive late, so negotiated windows and uncertainty needs to be eliminated.
- There is also a need for day-of transportation. Last-minute appointments are being filled through cancellations. We need something more immediate.
- Q: Is the digital divide a barrier to securing transportation to vaccination sites?
- Q: If someone has Medicaid, is Hopelink Medicaid their only transportation option? Can they use other low-cost options?
 - A: They can use other low-cost options, although we are promoting Medicaid the most because they can take and stay with someone at vaccine sites. You can also use public transit or gas cards through Medicaid in addition to the door-to-door service.

Staci then brought forward proposed solutions that the COVID-19 Vaccine Mobility Taskforce has been working on. Finding solutions has been difficult without understanding demand and scale, but the group has identified two main ways to contribute. Two polls were used to receive feedback regarding the solutions. The two solutions offered were:

1. *A centralized transportation referral line:* this centralized intake form and/or phone number would offer support to organizations after clients have secured appointments. This line would be provided initially to key agencies, like 211 and the Community Living Connections network, to refer clients who need transportation help to. The line would be staffed by Hopelink Mobility Management, not a call center, who could problem-solve and connect people to existing resources.

- a. Poll: Do you think this solution will meet needs?
 - i. 57% of the group (24 of 42 responses) said Yes
 - ii. 2% of the group (1 of 42 responses) said No
 - iii. 40% of the group (17 of 42 responses) said Unsure

People shared their reaction to this solution through the following commentary:

- I am very supportive. I wonder about best practices in other regions similar to ours.
 - I like the referral line proposal, but we have to ensure that enough people are working on it so that the wait time and drop calls do not become an issue. An option to prevent this is to get a return call rather than be on hold.
 - This is a great solution. Providing a backup transportation option in case there is no last-minute request option may be suitable.
2. Partnerships with for-profit providers to fill gaps: It also would include non-profit providers, but essentially working with providers like Uber, Lyft, Beeline, taxi companies, and more to make sure that the capacity of existing providers is not overwhelmed.
 - a. Poll: Do you think this solution will meet needs?
 - i. 78% of the group (32 of 41 responses) said Yes
 - ii. 22% of the group (9 of 41 responses) said Unsure

People shared their reaction to this solution through the following commentary:

- I'm concerned that by working with private providers, there will not be enough accessible transportation.
- Q: I was unsure about the partnering question because of not knowing if or what they'd charge the end-user for special needs transportation. Could we ask for a reduced / NGO price?
 - A: We would look for options to provide users with transportation at no cost to them, likely through FEMA reimbursement.
- Another provider to work with is AssureRide.

As the conversation continued, other questions and comments were addressed in the chat, a catalog here:

- Q: Do the providers wait with the riders? The lines are long. Does the rider have to schedule a return ride?
 - A: Some providers can wait with riders, but many cannot, representing a barrier to many providers wanting to help at drive-through only sites. The rider would need to schedule a return ride for walk-up sites.

- Q: What would it look like if the vaccinations were mobile instead of citizens?
 - A: Public Health has mobile units for senior housing sites. This model has been successful in Seattle and other parts of the county. It often comes down to a localized effort based on doses available.
- Q: Would Hopelink be the broker to sign up the for-profit providers and reimbursement?
 - A: This not something Hopelink is looking to do. It would most likely be a formal ask the local jurisdiction makes to the state and FEMA.
- Q: What are the options for a COVID-positive rider who needs to go to a medical provider/hospital in person?
 - A: Dean shared the name of some providers who are transporting COVID-19 positive patients, being King County Metro's Transportation for Pandemic Response program, Hopelink Medicaid, Paratransit Services Medicaid Transportation, Tri-County Cabulance, Medstar Transportation, Around the Sound, and Wheelcares.
- Brock Howell of SnoTrac shared his Coalition's [map and webpage](#) for vaccine site transportation. Brock shared he hopes that King County Metro can map their transit routes in relation to vaccine sites and that there can be more collaboration from the Department of Health and transit agencies to share data. He also thinks there should be more places to learn how to get to vaccination sites. Brock suggested leveraging community organizations to better coordinate the people they serve to get folks to existing sites using shared rides. Transportation options can be marketed to work with community agencies to group vaccine appointments and trips.

After this, Staci discussed next steps: incorporating the group's feedback and sharing it with the COVID-19 Vaccine Mobility Taskforce, launching the COVID-19 Resources page on Find A Ride, distributing the educational memo about transportation needs, and continuing to further solutions as discussed today.

To get involved with the COVID-19 Vaccine Mobility Taskforce and/or discuss transportation to vaccine sites, contact Staci Sahoo at SSahoo@hopelink.org.

KCMC Project Updates

Cassidy shared Coalition project updates, namely the upcoming finalization of the King County Mobility Coalition Community Transportation Needs Assessment. This assessment, informed by 49 resources and a Coalition survey, identifies 21 total mobility and transportation needs related to specialized transportation and riders with unique needs. It includes emerging trends and touches on anticipated COVID-19 impacts. Cassidy reviewed the top five needs elevated in the Needs Assessment and the plan for distributing this resource.

Attendees were provided a multiple-choice poll to contribute insight on how the Needs Assessment should be disseminated. The poll question and answers are as follows:
Who should we be sharing the Needs Assessment with?

- Meeting with community-based organizations: 71% (25 of 35 responses)
- Meeting with legislators: 69% (24 of 35 responses)
- Meeting with transit agencies: 63% (22 of 35 responses)
- Meeting with city representatives: 60% (21 of 35 responses)
- Other: 3% (1 of 35 responses)

In the chat, a participant recommended considering presenting the Needs Assessment with transit user groups.

Other updates were shared on an upcoming Access to Work and School Roundtable meeting, Access to Healthcare Committee work, and One-Call One-Click project planning. [View the meeting slides](#) for more details. If you have any questions about the above or any King County Mobility Coalition projects, contact Cassidy Giampetro at cgiampetro@hopelink.org.

Quick Briefings

WSDOT

- The rankings for projects seeking funding through WSDOT's Consolidated Grant should be approved by March, and new contracts will go out after July 1st.
- WSDOT is responsible for administering a portion of CRRSAA (COVID-19 relief) funding. They are currently meeting with providers and establishing procedures to move forward with distributing funding. If you are interested in getting more involved with this process, reach out to Monica.
- For further questions, contact Monica Ghosh at GhoshMo@wsdot.wa.gov.

PSRC Update

- The PSRC has developed its priority rankings on WSDOT Consolidated Grant projects. Thirteen A, B, C, and D rankings were awarded. These rankings should be approved next week by PSRC's Executive Board.
- PSRC was surveying all mobility providers across King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap counties to establish an inventory of services. The deadline for this survey has since been met.
- For further questions, contact Jean Kim at JKim@psrc.org.

Sound Transit Updates

- Sound Transit is continuing to work on their program re-alignment efforts considering factors like COVID-19 revenue impacts and increasing property taxes that are causing an affordability gap for their ST3 program.
- Northgate Link is still on track to open later this year, with Lynnwood and Federal Way opening in 2024.
- For further questions, contact Carrie Avila-Mooney at carrie.avila-mooney@soundtransit.org.

King County Metro Updates

- The Subsidized Annual Pass program has over 4,000 people enrolled. A partner toolkit is being developed so that it can be included in communications and help promotion. The best place to get information on the Subsidized Annual Pass Program is the [website](#), and enrollment through the Public Health phone number and DSHS is encouraged.
- King County Metro is performing outreach to those who are Access eligible to use the service for essential trips.
- For further questions, contact Lindsey Greto at lindsey.greto@kingcounty.gov.

Mobility Management Updates

- To see Subregional Coalition updates, view [the meeting slides](#).

Next Steps

Next meeting: *Tuesday, May 18th, 2021 at 9:30 – 11:30 am, Zoom*

Agendas, minutes, and handouts from past Coalition meetings are available online on the [KCMobility Resources](#) page.