



King County Special Needs Transportation Assessment

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Forward

Who Are We?

The King County Mobility Coalition is the Coordinated Special Needs Transportation Coalition for King County, Washington. The Coalition is comprised of over 30 special needs transportation service providers, clients, and funders, from government, non-profit, and for-profit sectors and from rural and urban areas throughout King County. Coalition members have come together around the vision of a coordinated transportation network that allows all people to move freely around King County and the Puget Sound region. The Coalition advises the Puget Sound Regional Council's Special Needs Transportation Committee and collaborates with the Snohomish County Transportation Coalition, Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition, and subregional coalitions representing smaller geographic constituencies within King County.

The central Puget Sound region is home to three county-level coordinating coalitions: King County Mobility Coalition, Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition (PCCTC), and the Snohomish County Transportation Coalition (SNOTRAC). Kitsap County has an Information Referral Network (KIRN) that meets regularly. These coalitions serve an important role in the coordination of transportation services. Their primary responsibility is to assess the needs of their local community and current transportation network and provide recommendations to improve the system.

Source: Puget Sound Regional Council Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

The primary purpose of the Coalition is to inform the planning of transportation services in King County for people with limited transportation options due to age, income, disability, limited English proficiency or other limiting factor and develop strategies, tools, and projects to improve mobility. The Coalition brings together individuals and organizations to share information; assess the needs of the local community and current transportation network; provide recommendations to improve the system; and educate decision-makers, community groups, and the general public.

What is This Document?

The 2014 King County Special Needs Transportation Assessment identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, youth, and individuals with limited incomes in King County, Washington and current gaps in the transportation system.

This Needs Assessment:

- Supports the Vision, Purpose, Goals and Strategies of the King County Mobility Coalition included in the Coalition's Charter, which was updated and adopted in May, 2014.
- Guides the creation of a five-year action work plan containing specific objectives and strategic initiatives.
- Updates the 2006 King County Coordinated Special Needs Transportation Plan and the Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan: King County 2010 Update (for links to those documents, please visit <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/kccsnt/plans.html>).
- Informs the Puget Sound Regional Council in anticipation of the next update to the Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for the Central Puget Sound Region and on Special Needs Transportation funding decisions.

This document represents our growing understanding of changing demographic patterns, transportation needs of specific populations, service gaps that reduce mobility for people in King County, and emerging issues and trends in special needs transportation. It summarizes previous research and data collection, rather than duplicating past efforts (see Section 1.B, *Needs and Gaps*). While not duplicating efforts to inventory current transportation services, Section 2 contains links to *Inventories of Transportation Services* maintained by Coalition members and others. The *Emerging Issues and Trends* discussed in Section 3 reflect areas of interest or concern that we believe may significantly impact mobility in the next five to ten years. These topics may be good candidates for future research, more focused assessment and planning efforts, or pilot projects.

The Goals of the King County Mobility Coalition are:

- Broad based community representation and participation on the Coalition
- Transparency and open communication between system providers, funders and users
- Enhanced mobility for the entire community
- Coordination, efficiency and availability of transportation services that meet the specific needs of people who are transportation disadvantaged.

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Needs Assessment

Demographic Profile

An accurate assessment of the changing need for transportation services in King County depends upon an understanding of the demographic profile of the county and how it has changed in recent years. King County's estimated 2011 population of 1,969,722 was sufficient to rank as the 14th most populous county in the United States. The population has continued to grow recently, with the Washington State Office of Financial Management estimating the current population as of April, 2014 to be 2,017,250. In addition to individuals residing in urban, suburban, and rural areas of the county, others traveling in King County who may utilize specialized transportation services include temporary visitors such as tourists, as well as individuals residing nearby who must travel to King County to access the medical care and other services which tend to be concentrated in the urban areas of the region.

PSRC estimates that 47% of individuals residing in the four-county Central Puget Sound region fall into one or more broadly defined categories of "special needs populations." However, not all of these individuals have a mobility challenge. Approximately 1/3 of the region's population has a mobility challenge related to disability, age, or income, a figure that generally holds true for King County.

Comparing data included in the 2006 King County Special Needs Coordinated Plan to more recent Census data may provide a picture of any relevant changes to King County's demographics in terms of specific special needs populations.

In 2006, about 10% of the population in King County was 65 years of age or older. At that time, this percentage was expected to increase to 15% by 2025. In fact, after growing at roughly the same rate as the total population for several years, the senior population of King County was estimated to have increased to 11.6% in 2012 and approximately 11.9% in 2013 indicating that, as predicted, the senior population may now be growing faster than the general population.

The population of individuals under the age of 18 has grown at approximately the same rate as over-all population growth, changing from 21.7% in 2006 to 21.1% of the total population today.

The most current estimate from the 2012 American Community Survey is that 185,234 people with disabilities reside in King County, or about 9.3% of the total population. This figure is not directly comparable to the percentage in 2006, due to changes in the way people with disabilities have been counted in the American Community Survey. PSRC estimates that 23% of the population of King County is low-income (defined as having a household income less than 200% of federal poverty level). This figure is not



directly comparable to the poor population in the 2006 plan. However, it may provide a better estimate of the population for whom income is likely to create a mobility challenge.

Veterans and people with limited English proficiency have been identified by the Coalition as additional groups with unique mobility challenges. Currently, there are approximately 120,204 Veterans residing in King County, or about 6% of the total population.

Numbering over 205,000, people with limited English proficiency, defined by the American Community Survey as those who speak English “less than very well,” comprise about 10.2% of the total population. These two groups may increase in the future due to Veterans returning from conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a continued influx of immigrants and refugees settling in King County.

Finally, in 2012, households having no vehicles available for personal use made up 9.6% of all households in King County. This compares with 6% of households reported in the 2006 plan, which relied on data from the 2000 Census.

Needs/Gaps

This section describes our understanding of the transportation needs of individuals with mobility challenges, as well as gaps in the current transportation system in King County. Our current understanding of needs and gaps relies on multiple sources of information, including assessments and other projects conducted by King County Mobility Coalition members and others.

Common Themes among Sources: Transportation Needs

Many of the sources consulted for this assessment emphasized that people with mobility challenges require a transportation system that is understandable, affordable, safe, and appropriate; the system must work for them.

Education and training resources are needed for individuals to have the *understanding* to navigate the system. These resources must be culturally and linguistically appropriate and relevant to the specific needs of the population. Understanding a system in which trips require multiple modes, as well as transfers across geographic boundaries or between service providers, will require services to be simple, legible, complimentary, and coordinated.

In some cases, individuals may require financial assistance in order to *afford* transportation.

Safety and security are among the most frequently mentioned issues of importance to transportation users. Additional promotion of safety through training and information is needed. Investments in physical infrastructure such as upgrades to sidewalks and other infrastructure improvements may create a safer environment for individuals traveling to and from transit stops and their final destinations. Where mode conflicts are unavoidable, care should be taken to avoid safety hazards such as pedestrian/vehicle conflicts.

Finally, in order to be *appropriate* for diverse riders, services must be flexible enough to accommodate their needs. For example, many special needs populations have an increased need to transport supplies and equipment, including everyday items such as groceries, as well as medical supplies, mobility devices, and other specialized equipment. Travel with family members, attendants, or service animals is a necessity for many.

Common Themes among Sources: Transportation Gaps

The sources listed below point out that transportation gaps create a barrier to access medical care and other essential services. Categorizing gaps may help determine appropriate strategies to address them. The PSRC Coordinated Transit-Human Services

Transportation Plan lists five categories of gaps in the transportation system: spatial, institutional, infrastructure, temporal, and awareness. Many of the sources referenced below also point to a cost gap.

Spatial gaps include gaps in geographic coverage, which leads to a lack of convenience for some and completely prevents access for others, especially those residing in or traveling to rural areas.

As noted by PSRC, *Institutional* gaps are caused by the rules, regulations, and requirements that govern transportation service provision. An example would be eligibility requirements that may not be coordinated across transportation services.

Infrastructure gaps result in a lack of physical accessibility, which is particularly challenging due to the topography of King County. Additionally, many areas of the county lack sidewalks and other basic pedestrian infrastructure, which can reduce access to transit stops.

Temporal gaps include lower levels of service outside of peak travel times. Gaps that already exist may be exacerbated by planned transit service reductions and require a concerted effort to address. One issue that was repeatedly referenced as a barrier was long travel times, which can be thought of as a temporal gap. Service reductions have led to longer waits at transfer points and congestion is slowing all modes of travel in the county and throughout the region.

Gaps in knowledge and *awareness* gaps require an individualized approach to specific populations. Many individuals lack information and often do not know where to go to get it. A common theme from sources below was the specific awareness gap experienced by people with limited English proficiency, who requires translation and interpretation of training resources and other information.

Cost and convenience were final transportation barriers that were noted. Cost was called at as the most critical barrier for some, particularly low-income populations. The cost to own and maintain a private vehicle puts this option out of reach for many. However, even transit-dependent populations are faced with the increasing cost of transit fares. Lack of convenient services was also noted as a challenge that could be considered a spatial, temporal, or infrastructure gap. For example, in some cases neighborhood amenities and services are not conveniently accessible by transportation services designed to serve commuters.

Appendix A summarize each source consulted for this assessment and distill the most relevant insights. Sources are presented in roughly reverse chronological order.

Inventory of Services and Other Resources

- PSRC’s Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan contains an inventory of services for the four-county Central Puget Sound region.
<http://www.psrc.org/assets/11599/CoordinatedPlanAttachmentC-InventoryOfServices.pdf>
- The “Get Moving” King County Transportation Resource Guide contains a list of King County Transportation services categorized by type of service, and additional information.
http://vets-go.com/sites/default/files/booklet_hopelink_training_LR.pdf
- The King County Mobility Coalition Accessible Travel Map (2013 update) shows service areas for demand-response services, as well as routes for Link Light Rail, and RapidRide, King County Metro’s Bus Rapid Transit service.
<http://www.agingkingcounty.org/docs/accessible-options-map.pdf>
- Vets-Go.com contains resources related to Veterans Transportation and a searchable online directory of transportation services that Veterans and non-Veterans can use. <http://vets-go.com>
- Senior Services Ride Guide is a similar searchable database.
<http://www.seniorservices.org/financiallegalprograms/ResourceDatabase/RideGuide.aspx>
- 2-1-1 Community Resources Online (“Transportation” Search)
<http://www.resourcehouse.info/WIN211/results.aspx?SearchID=15041F82-EF34-4A2F-B5DB-64394A9F3037>
- The King County Mobility Coalition’s Website contains helpful resources including links to videos on how to ride public transit that are currently available in 13 languages.
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/mobilitycoalition>
- The Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative developed a website for individuals looking for information specific to services in East King County.
<http://www.eastsideeasyrider.org/>

Emerging Issues and Trends

1. Funding challenges are leading to service cuts. Organizational consolidation creates transportation challenges as service providers' satellite locations close.
Opportunities: Pursue new funding strategies and alternative service delivery. Innovations in service delivery could include new transit modes, better utilization of private-sector services, carshare, bikeshare, and various models utilizing volunteer drivers.
2. Infrastructure is insufficient and deteriorating, contributing to increased congestion. Lack of funding options has led to an increased reliance on user fees such as fares and tolls, which creates an additional cost barrier.
Opportunities: Identify new funding for maintenance and repair, coordinate our work with Transportation Demand Management efforts, explore fee exemptions/reductions for special needs populations.
3. Increased need due to demographic changes, including seniors aging in place and an expected increase of individuals with low vision or hearing loss, returning veterans, continued influx of immigrant and refugees, and millennials delaying driving or choosing not to drive.
Opportunity: Develop specialized approaches to target outreach to specific populations.
4. Technological innovation holds promise to close gaps, but could create others.
Opportunity: Promote inclusive technologies and innovations that increase access. Examples include mobile-app based Transportation Network Companies, transit user apps, data interoperability systems, and assistive technologies such as driverless cars
5. Increasing understanding of the importance of equity and social justice in transportation policy.
Opportunity: Coordinate our efforts with equity and social justice initiatives. Continue creating an inclusive environment for diverse participants in Coalition activities.
6. The cost of living in core areas well served by transit is increasing and low-income households are being displaced to suburban and rural areas.
Opportunity: Continue to emphasize the importance of geographic equity and develop projects to address issues and challenges in suburban and rural areas.
7. Our awareness of our vulnerabilities to natural or man-made disasters is increasing.
Opportunity: Coordinate with on-going emergency management efforts focused on inclusion of vulnerable populations.

Appendix A: External Sources

Metro Rider/Non-rider survey

Link: <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/am/reports/2013/2013-rider-non-rider-survey.pdf>

Date: July 2014

Summary:

King County Metro's periodic survey to track customer awareness and perceptions about Metro services and programs; measure market share (percentage of households in the region with one or more rider/s); identify and track demographic characteristics, attitudes, and transit-use behaviors among commuters and other riders; and gain insights on topics that are current focuses of Metro's service, marketing, and communications efforts.

Insights:

The Metro Rider/Non-rider Survey focuses mainly on topics like riders' perceptions of safety and how riders get alerts and information from Metro, a concern of mobility challenged populations as much or more than non-mobility challenged groups.

Puget Sound Educational Service District Early Head Start, Head Start, and ECEAP Programs Community Assessment

Link: <http://www.psesd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/PSESDCommunityAssessment.pdf>

Date: May 23, 2014

Summary:

The Puget Sound ESD Head Start/Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) Community Assessment provides data about regional student populations and their families. Much of the demographic analysis and other information provides a picture of mobility challenges for students and families, particularly in regard to access to school and similar services. The assessment also contains a chapter on housing and mobility opportunities, which contains a geographic analysis of "transportation and mobility opportunity."

Insights:

- Tukwila, Federal Way, and Fife School Districts each have over 25% of children under the age of five living in poverty (2008-2012 five year estimates).

- “Moderate” to “High” transportation and mobility opportunity is found at the northern and southern poles of King and Pierce Counties, with a few isolated “Very High” pockets of opportunity in Bellevue, Federal Way, Lake Washington, Renton, and Tacoma School Districts.
- Areas of the Auburn and Kent School Districts have some of the lowest transportation and mobility opportunity in the study area, as do the urbanized communities further east along the Interstate-90 corridor.

King County Mobility Coalition Discussion

Link: <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/kccsnt/meetings/2014/minutes-05-20-2014.pdf>

Date: May 20, 2014

Summary:

In anticipation of the completion of the 2014 King County Special Needs Transportation Assessment, the King County Mobility Coalition hosted a discussion of needs and gaps in the transportation system at the Spring Coalition meeting on May 20, 2014.

Insights:

King County Mobility Coalition members noted the following as transportation “needs”:

- Individuals need education and training on how to use transit, including navigating different transit systems.
- Increased access to web or app-based travel tools
- Outreach to underrepresented populations, including immigrants, seniors, homeless individuals, and people with limited English proficiency
- Transit and community transportation riders need to feel safe and security, especially individuals using mobility aids that may require additional securement.
- ORCA access points and additional marketing and education about ORCA
- Transportation “gaps” that were identified included:
 - Few options for travel across county borders
 - Some bus stops do not allow ramps to be used.
 - Gaps in the built environment, e.g. suburban development patterns
 - Information gaps, including information about future plans for the transportation system.

Emergency Planning with the Disability Community Forum

Link: http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/preparedness/VPAT/~/_/media/health/publichealth/documents/vpat/GapsStrategies.ashx

Date: May 13, 2014

Summary:

A one-day conference at which emergency planners and others in the government and services sectors were invited to come together with members of the disability community around Emergency Planning.

Insights:

The following are gaps that emerged from the Forum related to transportation:

- Transport of medically fragile individuals is a problem if/when first responders are unavailable.
- Reduction of Metro fixed routes creates less capacity to transport.
- There is less capacity to transport supplies (including durable medical equipment) and equipment.
- There is a lack of staff/drivers to support transportation needs.
- Specialized transportation needs are not always adequately communicated.

PSRC Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Link: <http://www.psrc.org/assets/11596/CoordinatedPlan2015-2018.pdf>

Date: Most recently updated in May, 2014

Summary:

The Puget Sound Regional Council Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan provides useful statistics, provides descriptions of different agencies and organizations who provide transportation services including public transit, human services agencies, community or faith-based groups, non-profit transportation, indirect transportation services, and transportation brokerages/private transportation services.

Insights:

Transportation needs differ among special needs populations – senior, youth, low-income, and individuals with a disability. At the most basic level, all residents of the central Puget Sound region need to access necessities without an undue

financial or time burden. However, each individual's unique transportation needs are shaped by a variety of factors, including but not limited to where they live and work, personal or cultural obligations, and medical conditions.

Through consultation with human service transportation providers and local mobility coalitions in the region, the following transportation needs have been identified for the central Puget Sound region's special needs populations:

- Safe and convenient access to appropriate transportation options.
- Affordable transportation options.
- Reliable transportation.
- Safe and secure transportation.
- Reliable public transportation outside of peak hours.
- Clear information on available transportation options.
- Convenient trip planning.
- Reasonable travel times.
- Culturally relevant information resources.
- Accessible transportation infrastructure.
- Seamless connections between transportation services.

Gaps in the special needs transportation network are identified as falling into one of the following five categories: spatial, temporal, institutional, infrastructure, or awareness. Spatial gaps refer to locations that are underserved, or not served at all, by transportation services. Temporal gaps are caused when transportation service is not available at times when it is needed by special needs transportation populations. Institutional gaps are caused by the rules, regulations, and requirements that govern transportation service provision. Infrastructure gaps are areas where a lack of physical or technological infrastructure prevents individuals from accessing needed transportation options. Learning how to access and utilize transportation options can be a daunting task for individuals unfamiliar with all transportation programs and services available in the region. For a full list of gaps identified by PSRC, see the Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan, May 2014 update, pages 35-38.

Overlake Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment

Link:<http://www.overlakehospital.org/app/files/public/2770/Community-Health-Needs-Assessment-2014-Public.pdf>

Date: 2014

Summary:

The Overlake Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment contains numerous identified needs that relate to health concerns. Transportation, mobility, and physical access to health care are identified as central concerns. The document identifies specific ways in which these concerns play out and the degree to which they impede people's ability to improve their health and that of the community.

Insights:

Access to health care, including transportation access, is one of seven "significant health needs" among Overlake patients.

Transportation barriers and access to affordable housing were the top community concerns expressed by key stakeholder interviewees. Transportation was identified widely as a major barrier for people to accessing services and resources in the community, including health care, given that services are spread across a large, "sprawling" geographic area and costs associated with both public transportation and use of cars can be prohibitive.

Transportation is one of the most frequently identified challenges to obtaining health care services. Specific challenges related to transportation include:

- People do not access preventive or routine care due to transportation barriers.
- Transportation is difficult in Bellevue as there are a lot of people and families with only one car or no car, and the bus service for getting around town is expensive and problematic. Maintaining a car and paying for gas can be prohibitively expensive.
- Services are spread out over a large geographic area in East King County, which also includes some rural areas that do not have the same resources as are found in the more urban areas.
- Bus service on the Eastside is limited. Bus routes are not at convenient times and it can take a long time to get to one's destination, as places are not located on straight paths. People sometimes do not live close to bus stops, which is particularly a problem for those with mobility problems or those using the bus with kids in tow.

- Transportation is difficult for older adults who cannot drive and have to rely on family members or public transportation for rides.
- Language barriers can prevent use of public transportation, especially for languages other than Spanish where there may be no one to help with translation.

Concern about the distance and need for assistance for seniors and others with mobility issues to get from the new East Link Light Rail station to Overlake Hospital facilities was identified as one of the five most common comments survey participants submitted as “final thoughts.”

Bellevue Human Services Needs Update

Link: http://www.ci.bellevue.wa.us/humanservices_needs_update.htm

Date: 2014

Summary:

This biennial update documenting human service needs in the City of Bellevue focuses on understanding what people need, and how those needs are changing over time. The report provides a broad vision and context for understanding human services needs. Transportation is one of a number of issues identified.

Insights:

- Older adults may need additional services and assistance as they age in place, and may not have the resources to pay for them given the high cost of living and the decreasing value of their retirement assets and savings.
- Transportation is a major access issue for older adults. About 13% of Bellevue residents over 65 do not have a vehicle. Requests for volunteer transportation rides are on the rise.
- King County Metro’s Access program fills some of the need for door-to-door service for eligible people with disabilities, but continues to have gaps for many customers.
- Elder and Adult Day Services (EADS) report a growing need for transportation for clients. The lack of transportation limits the number and types of outings clients can take while participating in programs at EADS.

Housing Connections Project Focus Groups

Link: Not Available

Date: 2014

Summary:

In 2014, four focus groups were held at Catholic Housing Services (CHS) facilities and Senior Housing Assistance Group (SHAG) facilities in order to identify transportation and mobility needs and gaps. The focus groups provided insight on special needs populations as CHS houses formerly homeless families, and SHAG houses low income seniors.

Insights:

One consideration identified by seniors is the importance of terrain in limited mobility options. At one of the housing facilities, vehicles equipped with lifts are unable to stop right in front of the entrance due to the steep slope of the street, and the bus stop is up the slope. This presents challenges for residents who use a wheelchair or walker.

Another identified need is for a more comprehensive educational packet of mobility choices in the area for seniors with larger font and an emphasis on medical transportation options. Residents also feel that there is a lack of disabled parking spaces surrounding the facility.

Among the needs identified by the residents in CHS housing is paying for children to get to out of area schools or private schools.

King County Metro Low-Income Fare Options Advisory Committee Report

Link:<http://www.kingcounty.gov/~ /media/transportation/LowIncomeOptions/king-county-low-income-fares-advisory-committee-report-061613.ashx>

Date: June, 2013

Summary:

The Low-Income Fare Options Advisory Committee convened in 2013 to consider options for adopting a low-income bus fare. The low-income fare has been designed to assist transit dependent populations and work in tandem with other programs supporting those groups. The committee report primarily focuses on those who are mobility challenged due to financial constraints.

Insights:

- 27% of riders on Metro make under \$35,000 per year.
- 480,000 people in King County (24.4% of total county population) live at 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Over the past 40 years, the cost of riding public transit has tripled for low-wage workers.

North King County Mobility Coalition Listening Sessions

Link: Not Available

Date: 2013

Summary:

The North King County Mobility Coalition held “Listening Sessions” at two King County Housing Authority Senior/Disabled housing facilities in order to allow residents to communicate their transportation challenges and concerns.

Insights:

King County Housing Authority residents described their trips using a variety of transportation modes and noted a number of obstacles to safe and comfortable travel including lack of sidewalks or sidewalks that are not accessible; potential for mode conflicts including the threat of vehicle/pedestrian collisions; vehicle congestion that slows trips in North King County; difficulty transporting groceries; and connections to services and shopping are not facilitated by our current “hub-and-spoke” transit route alignments, which focuses North King County routes into downtown Seattle.

King County Veterans Transportation Needs Assessment

Link: Not Available

Date: 2013

Summary:

In 2013, two graduate researchers at the University of Washington’s Evan’s School of Public Affairs conducted a transportation needs assessment for King County veterans. This work was made possible, in part, by a Federal Transit Administration Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative grant that was awarded to Hopelink.

Insights:

King County is home to a large veteran population that has high rates of

unemployment, mental/physical disability, homelessness, and poverty. Therefore connecting veterans with necessary social services is crucial.

Disadvantaged veterans are dependent on quality public transportation for their needs. This points to the necessity for timely service, clear information sources and a number of cost-reduction strategies designed explicitly for vulnerable veteran populations using public transportation;

The VA Medical Center in Seattle's Beacon Hill neighborhood is a primary destination for many veterans in the county. Therefore, increased resources devoted to improving transportation to and from the VA medical center will greatly benefit this cross section of the veteran population.

There is no single strategy that will best target the veteran population with useful transportation related information in King County, rather a number of campaigns utilizing a number of different outreach methods is optimal to reach the many subpopulations of veterans.

Overlake Transit Community Engagement Project

Link: http://www.psrc.org/assets/10505/Hopelink_Final_Project_Report.pdf

Date: 2013

Summary:

The Overlake Community Engagement Project was a joint project of Hopelink and Futurewise with the collaboration of the cities of Redmond and Bellevue and the transit agencies Sound Transit and Metro. The funding for the project came from the Puget Sound Regional Council Growing Transit Communities program. Strategies were used for community engagement within the context of broader goals to increase participation in the public process and understand better how low income people, immigrants and refugees can participate and feel valued in the public process. There was a focus on equity and a goal of a renewed conversation for stakeholders as Sound Transit and the cities continue planning for the station areas for a new investment in rapid transit in Overlake and on the Eastside.

Insights:

Residents raised a number of issues and provided feedback during the course of the project. The people in the targeted populations who are low income, immigrants or refugees are overwhelmingly pro transit. If anything they would like to see a stronger investment in buses and there was a high degree of excitement for rail. There is strong support for increasing the amount of housing and for an investment in parks and open space.

South King County Transportation Needs Assessment

Link: Not Available

Date: 2012

Summary:

In 2012, an Evans School researcher partnered with the South King County Mobility Coalition to conduct a transportation needs assessment specific to South King County.

Insights:

The researcher found that residents in South King County own and use private vehicles to get around disproportionately compared to residents in more urbanized areas, perhaps due to built environment factors. Nonetheless many special needs residents in South King County do rely on public transportation and other community-provided transportation options,

Key access barriers related to transportation include:

- Cost, either for owning and maintaining a vehicle or paying for rides
- Travel time
- Logistics and convenience, such as the timing or location of transfers, or having to carry things onto a bus
- Limited service hours
- Confusing or challenging eligibility standards for range of different services
- Language and cultural barriers
- Availability of information
- Safety and security
- Limited service in specific corridors

Cost is among the major constraints facing transportation providers and citizens and that controlling costs will require finding innovative and often community-based solutions. Agencies would benefit from increased coordination and communication to make the system easier to understand and use.

Eastside Transit Communities Exchange Forum and Conversation Cafes

Link: <http://www.eastsideeasyrider.org/projects-reports/>

Date: 2012

Summary:

The Transit Communities Exchange Forum took place at the Highland Community Center in Bellevue, Washington on February 29, 2012. The Forum was hosted by the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative (EERC). Additionally, Five Neighborhood Conversation Cafés were hosted in the cities of Mercer Island, Bellevue and Redmond in partnership with the Alliance of People with Disabilities, King County Housing Authority, Jewish Family Services, Sea Mar Community Health Centers, and Somali Youth & Family Club.

Insights:

Most participants expressed a strong desire and need for information sharing related to the planning process and equitable transit communities.

Current Challenges:

- Insufficient supply of low-income and family housing (4+ bedrooms).
- Long travel times due to traffic congestion and transit connection wait times.
- High cost of public transportation.
- Access to information in alternative languages or formats.

Future Needs:

- Accessible sidewalks and better street lighting.
- Low-income and senior housing near major employment centers and transportation hubs.
- Reliable, safe, fast and affordable public transportation services for all.
- Transportation information in multiple languages.

Immigrant and Refugee Elders Transportation Project

Link:http://metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/kccsnt/pdf/immigrant-and-refugee-elders-transportation-project_summary.pdf

Date: 2011

Summary:

The King County Mobility Coalition's Immigrant and Refugee Elders Transportation Project (the Project) focused on Bhutanese, Burmese, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Russian, Somali and Ukrainian elders. We used community conversations and surveys to gather data and learn from immigrant and refugee elders. We collaborated with six community organizations to facilitate nine community conversations and administer surveys. Two surveys were used, one for elders and the second for providers working with refugee and immigrant populations.

Insights:

Our analysis of the community conversations and surveys suggests four common themes:

- Lack of travel knowledge and awareness of existing services limits use of public transportation by refugee and immigrant elders. This includes buses, light rail, King County Metro Access, and human service transportation providers. Elders shared that they have limited knowledge and awareness of existing transportation resources. In addition, they do not know where to go or how to access information on available transportation resources.
- Language barriers dissuade elders from using transit services. Many participants have limited proficiency in English which directly affects their ability to travel independently. The elders reflected on their fear of getting lost and not being able to ask for directions or use printed material because it is not in their native language. In addition, many elders reported a low literacy rate, which prevents them from reading material even when translated into their native language.
- Financial difficulty limits how often and what kind of transportation services elders use. Most respondents shared that their income is limited, while bus and King County Metro Access fares continue to increase.
- Community organizations play an important role in sharing information with refugee and immigrant elders and should be used to distribute transportation resource information as well. Participants noted that some organizations have community newspapers, radios stations and television channels to publicize information; meeting areas for transit training; and staff to translate available information—all of which should be used more often.

Lack of knowledge, language barriers and financial difficulties prevent many refugee and immigrant elders in King County from using public transportation. Community organizations play an important role in getting information to these elders. Our analysis indicates that elders want to learn more about transportation services available to them, but they do not know where to go for information and do not have access to printed materials, trainings, videos and workshops in their native language. In order to better serve these immigrant and refugee elders and increase their use of public transportation, an action plan is needed to guide the development of culturally and ethnically appropriate marketing, media and outreach transportation resource materials in King County.

North King County Mobility Coalition Needs Assessment

Link:http://www.nuhsa.org/Resources/Documents/NKCMC__NA-Analysis-Report_FINAL.pdf

Date: June, 2011

Summary:

The North King County Mobility Coalition (NKCMC) conducted a needs assessment in May 2011 to evaluate service gaps among transportation providers and identify ways to increase community residents' use of existing transportation services. NKCMC sent out 10,000 mailed surveys with the goal to collect 2,000 responses at a response rate of 20%. NKCMC strived to get a representative sample of specific population segments including: older adults (age 55+), children and youth, people with disabilities of all types, people with low-incomes, people with limited English proficiency. It should be noted that this survey was limited to residents of the five major cities in the North King County Subregion (Bothell, Kenmore, Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, and Woodinville).

Insights:

The Needs Assessment contains strategies to address Needs and Gaps around the themes of awareness, accessibility, availability, and acceptability.

Awareness:

- Increase awareness among older adults for Hyde Shuttle, Northshore Senior Center, and Volunteer Transportation to improve usage, ensuring that eligibility criteria are clearly stated in case people do not know they qualify
- Distribute brochures broadly
- Send out a direct mailing
- Increase online searchability by posting information across multiple websites about the services



Accessibility:

- Evaluate submitted addresses that respondents stated are not covered by current routes when planning for service area coverage
- Provide assistance services to help residents apply for services

Availability:

- Make information about services readily available in the community
- Provide materials in other languages/formats upon request

Acceptability:

- Seek funding to reduce or eliminate ride fees for those individuals that cannot afford the service

Appendix B. Funding Transportation Projects

Lists of projects funded through the Puget Sound Regional Council's allocation of Federal Transit Administration Special Needs Transportation funds, a grant process directly advised by members of the King County Mobility Coalition, are maintained by PSRC and available, going back to 2006, on their website here:

<http://www.psrc.org/funding/special>

Funding is also allocated by the Washington State Department of Transportation. Inquiries about WSDOT funding should be addressed to Ryan Warner, WSDOT's Consolidated Grant Manager for the Puget Sound Region.

Contact warnerry@wsdot.wa.gov or 360-705-6918.

King County Mobility Coalition projects and the transportation projects of Coalition members have been funded through a variety of additional funding sources including PSRC's Growing Transit Communities Equity Grant program, a grant from the National Center on Senior Transportation, and grant from the Puget Sound Urban Area Security Initiative. For more details on Special Needs Transportation, please contact Jon Morrison Winters, Mobility Manager at JWinters@hope-link.org or 425-943-6769.