



Regional Alliance for Resilient and Equitable Transportation

MEETING NOTES

Thursday, November 19th, 2020

10:00am-12:00pm

Zoom Call-In

Participants: Betsy Maxwell (Peter Kirk Community Center), Christine Bekkouri (Bethany at Silver Lake Nursing Facility), Jim House (Coalition of Inclusive Emergency Planning), Mike Dee (Lake Forest Park Citizen's Commission), Robert Blumenfeld (Alliance of People with disabilities), Jean Kim (Puget Sound Regional Council), Ann Kennedy (Pierce Paratransit Services), Karen Johnston (MV Transit), Mahi Zeru (Department of Health), Trisha Canzler (Pierce Paratransit), Belina Van (Catholic Community Services), Anne Marie Jehle (Metro Accessible Services), Ivan Tudela (Pierce County Department of Emergency Management), Aaron Morrow (Community Advocate/System User), Sam Nigh (SHAG), Mike Ryan (King County Department of Emergency Management), Chauncey Hodge (US Army), Jon Morrison Winters (Aging and Disability Services), Brock Howell (SNOTRAC), Linda Woodall (Eastside Friends of Seniors), Pat Kenney (Red Cross), Bill Hagen (Harborstone), Cliff Perry (Northshore Senior Center), Jeremy Trenhaile (Metro Accessible Services), Danielle Bailey (FEMA)

Staff Support: Bree Boyce, Dean Sydnor, Staci Sahoo, Victor Londono Quintero

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The meeting began at 10:00am and attendees provided introductions.

Bree Boyce announced that Hopelink is onboarding Dean Sydnor, as of 11/09/20, as the new RARET Coordinator. He is currently getting up to speed, feel free to reach out to him using the contact information at the bottom of these notes. Brock Howell then mentioned there is a SNOTRAC meeting 11/20 at 12:30pm. Jean Kim announced that PSRC and RARET are collaborating on the Inventory of Services Survey. The survey is open for 3 months and will launch in December. Reach out to Jean Kim for additional information at jkim@psrc.org. Jim House announced in chat that WASILC hosted a conference on November 17th & 18th: Planning Today for a Safer Tomorrow. He will report on the highlights soon, so stay tuned for that if you want to know more.

All partners are invited to take the [2020 Coalition Satisfaction](#) to provide feedback on how RARET can be improved, what projects to focus on, preferred method of engagement, etc.

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Regional Alliance for Resilient and Equitable Transportation

MEETING NOTES

2020 RARET ACHIEVEMENTS AND CURRENT PROJECTS

The first order of business was a recap of RARET's 2020 achievements. Highlighted first was the RARET response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the RARET Impact Summaries, Bi-weekly and Monthly Regional Partner Meetings, and the RARET Resiliency Roundtable meeting. Bree also noted that RARET hosted six workgroup meetings, five of which were conducted virtually, with an average participation that had risen to 23 up from 16. Additionally, RARET added 22 new partners in 2020, of which 9 are considered active. On top of that, RARET's newsletter mailing list has increased from 80 to 186. Bree finally stated that RARET had presented both regionally and nationally.

Moving to current RARET projects, Bree circled back to the Inventory of Services Survey being conducted by PSRC that Jean Kim had mentioned in the announcements. RARET typically facilitates post-event surveys to assess impacts on transportation providers and how they responded. This time, RARET is taking the opportunity to partner with PSRC on this which will provide valuable data. The survey will launch in December and be available for 3 months.

RARET also continues to produce COVID-19 Transportation Impact Summaries which highlight level of operations, which providers can assist with food/pharmacy delivery, resources, etc. These recently moved to bi-weekly and some partners have suggested they could be moved to monthly with the lack of change in operations recently. The most recent Impact Summaries can always be found on our website [here](#) and you can sign up for the newsletter distribution list [here](#). Bree shared that staff are considering how to leverage the [Find A Ride](#) website or other platforms to provide this information in a more passive way in the future which would free up much more staff time to focus on other efforts. Linda Woodall and Jon Morrison Winters concurred that monthly would be fine, but noted that extenuating circumstances may warrant occasional updates in-between.

Dean Sydnor then touched on Find A Ride 2.0, which will be live in December. The Hopelink operated [findaride.org](#) is getting a facelift and rework that should increase usability. Improvements include more regional options and a find my location tool. The resource list and search filters have also been repaired to full functionality, which should renew the usability of the site as a whole.

Recapping the Resiliency Roundtable, Bree stated that notes for the event are now posted on [kcmobility.org](#) (both on the [RARET Page](#) and [Resource Page](#)). Also, RARET received positive feedback on the event, with participants rating it 4.82/5 for satisfaction and 4.73/5 for

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Regional Alliance for Resilient and Equitable Transportation

MEETING NOTES

accessibility. There has been a declared interest in more events like this, as such RARET will attempt to incorporate additional networking and small group discussions into future functions.

Partner meetings are still being conducted at the individual county levels. The intention of these meetings are to maintain a pulse on the emerging needs of each county and to come up with solutions, share best practices, and make new partner connections. Pierce County's meeting is moved to monthly while Snohomish and King's meetings remain bi-weekly. Interested parties are encouraged to reach out to Dean Sydnor if you want to be included in the meeting list.

Finally, the Federal Emergency Waiver to Support Food Delivery is expiring January 20th, 2021. This waiver is what allowed transportation providers to offer non-passenger trips such as food and pharmacy delivery. RARET is compiling a fact sheet to illuminate the impact of this expiration, interested parties should expect that in the near future. RARET is unable to advocate so encourages other partners to use this fact sheet as an advocacy tool for the extension of this waiver.

WINTER WEATHER PREPAREDNESS

Bree next touched on winter weather preparedness. Attendees were asked "how are you planning for winter weather", "what are the gaps or potential needs," and "how can our RARET website or [Adverse Weather Driver Training Resources](#) pages be better leveraged?"

Jon Morrison Winters mentioned that Deborah Witmer in an earlier call had talked about the language surrounding winterizing and what that means in our current situation. He then questioned if there is more messaging we can do via something like one-pagers or social media. Additionally, how to get food and supplies are needed resources. Mike Dee noted the Severe Weather Shelter in Shoreline is in standby mode if the temperature drops to freezing. Transportation solutions to and from this facility are still in the works. He then linked the [Emergency Management Regional Hazard Mitigation](#) Plan in the chat. Mike Ryan mentioned we are expecting a cooler and wetter winter. Several years back, the mobility coalition put together a winter weather plan. That could be circulated. Bree also highlighted that during Snohomish partner meetings a gap for COVID positive clients was identified, and the county put out an RFP for providers. Ivan Tudela, offering the perspective of Pierce County, declared he is having discussions about winter shelter planning. They are largely centered around making them safe in a COVID environment in addition to working to identify temperature thresholds for warming shelters. RARET looking at the food waiver expiring amplifies the need to highlight available resources for people to use alternates (for medication trips, food, etc.). Flu drive through event at Tacoma Dome, a public transportation hub, combined with a mobile COVID testing team

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Regional Alliance for Resilient and Equitable Transportation

MEETING NOTES

(operating 6 days a week) could prove to be adaptable models for when the COVID vaccine is available. Lastly, Dean spoke on hospital discharges in a winter environment and how COVID could present additional hurdles from an NEMT perspective.

DISCUSSION: 2021 PROJECTS

Rotating to 2021 Projects, Bree began with the desire to balance COVID responses with “regular” RARET projects. Specifically, maintaining COVID response projects while proactively addressing emerging needs such as federal emergency waiver, cold weather shelters, and access to vaccines. A primary objective in 2021 is to establish the Transportation Provider Network. A step in this direction may be streamlining communication, perhaps through some sort of Slack or Teams channel. Another objective is to create an annual report or lessons learned document after each emergency. In the long term, preparations should be made to participate in the Cascadia Rising earthquake preparedness effort. Finally, RARET is also looking to conduct a Business Continuity Workshop, however the intention is to prioritize the transportation provider network first.

The meeting then divided into two breakout rooms to conduct a more focused discussion on the following topics:

1. What are the top needs that RARET should be addressing, specifically for vulnerable populations, emergency preparedness, and transportation? Consider these both individually and as they intersect.
2. Given these identified needs, what should RARET prioritize in 2021? Are the proposed priority projects in line with these needs?
3. Do you have other ideas you would like to see implemented?

Recap Breakout Room #1:

Much of the conversation centered around the need to solidify the Transportation Provider Network and promoting Find A Ride as a resource. Specifically the desire to inventory resources around the region, who the service providers are and what they offer, and to identify organizations that are willing to provide guidance, assistance, or communication and get the list together who are willing to answer questions and communicate. Topics such as Find A Ride and how to promote it as a resource were discussed in relation to this.

The group also discussed concerns of staffing needs particularly once there is a vaccine. COVID staff are already stretched very thin and there are concerns about the lack of

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Regional Alliance for Resilient and Equitable Transportation

MEETING NOTES

staffing if more temporary sites are opened. Also, vulnerable populations may find it difficult to get to a site where the distribution of vaccine will be, particularly if it's by county. This raised a lot of concerns about being able to staff multiple sites. The vaccine issue was also addressed through a transportation lens, it was noted the group should consider paratransit or public transit customers – maybe offering a warm and safe waiting room for them. It was suggested that the food delivery model may be able to be transferred to access to vaccines. It was also brought up that there may be a need to be able to refrigerate the vaccines themselves.

The discussion in this room ended with a brief discussion about isolation and mental health, as well as the specter of budget cuts impacting particular services.

Recap Breakout Room #2:

The room began the discussion from the perspective of transportation providers. The winter conditions bring a need for additional driver resources. Specific questions like what are the current road closures and if a patient cannot be taken home, where should drivers take them when they are in unfamiliar counties, were asked. Having resources to answer these questions would be invaluable for drivers. Multiple participants noted an increasing older volunteer shortage, some way to promote volunteer opportunities to younger audiences who are comparatively less vulnerable in the pandemic landscape would be highly desirable.

Cliff Perry noted that he is interested in getting involved in emergency transportation, but is concerned about the risk to his drivers. For that reason, they have mostly stuck to food delivery as it is safer. How can RARET help? How can they be connected with resources to get their vehicles and drivers to a place where it would be comfortable for them to help? Karen Johnston noted that they too face that concern for their 'tenured' drivers who also feel unsafe. Some of the steps that have been taken are plastic shields for the driver seat and back seats, altered capacity (started at 1, now 2-3, used to be 12). However, mask wearing remains an issue with clients, despite readily providing masks. Ann Kennedy noted that improvements in mask wearing were made when they changed the wording to mandate a face covering, rather than a mask.

It was noted that conversations like this would make a perfect case for the Transportation Provider Network, which could facilitate these conversations directly and with a short turn-around. Allowing partners to find solutions to challenges or engage in unfamiliar practices more easily by drawing on the experience of others.

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MEETING NOTES

NETWORKING/NEXT STEPS/FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Bree then moved to the concluding segment of the meeting, giving the attendees the opportunity to engage in small-group networking, participants broke off into three or four member chats to discuss the following and were encouraged to discuss their yearly successes as well as projects they are currently working on that they are excited about or challenged by.

After reuniting, attendees were once again encouraged to participate in the [2020 Coalition Satisfaction survey](#) to provide their anonymous feedback on RARET. Bree then provided some “food for thought” to continue the discussions beyond just this meeting:

- Do you/your org have an adverse weather policy or emergency plan?
 - If so, what is it and to what extent does it include transportation, equity, and accessibility? What changes should be made?
 - If not, how do you get started?

ACTION ITEMS

- RARET partners to complete 2020 Coalition Satisfaction survey [here](#)
- RARET staff to send out fact sheet for Federal Emergency Waiver for Food Delivery for a round of feedback and then dissemination.
 - Partners to share with RARET their impacts if they are using this waiver
- RARET staff to proceed with project planning for the Transportation Provider Network as a priority project for 2021 is to get this network established
- Partners to assess their winter emergency plans and identify gaps that RARET can assist in filling.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, January 27th, 2021 from 10:00am-12:00pm via Zoom

CONTACT

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