



Regional Alliance for Resilient and Equitable Transportation

## MEETING NOTES

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**Wednesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020**

**10:00am-12:00pm**

**GoToMeeting Call-In**

**Participants:** Aaron Morrow (Community Advocate), Alex Hatcher (Center for Independence), Ann Kennedy (Paratransit Services), Ann Marie Jehle (King County Metro Accessible Services), Belina Van (Catholic Community Services), Brock Howell (SNOTRAC), Chris Bekkouri (Bethany at Silver Lake Nursing Facility), Christy Grant (Snohomish County Human Services), Devin Konick-Seese (City of Kirkland Human Services), Ellen Montanana (City of Bellevue Emergency Management), Jill Watson (Emergency Management Coordinator City of Seattle), Jon Morrison Winters (Aging and Disability Services), Marianna Hanefeld (WSDOT), Maribeth Crandell (Island Transit), Mark Smutny (Sound Generations), Mike Ryan (Emergency Management Coordinator King County Eastside), Monica Gosh (WSDOT), Pat Kenney (American Red Cross), Randy Fay (Snohomish Emergency Management), & Sam Nigh (SHAG)

**Staff Support:** Bree Boyce, Nathan Emory & Staci Sahoo

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### WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

It was then noted that the [WSDOT Consolidated Grant](#) call for projects would be released on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. The group was reminded that those on a four-year grant cycle do not need to reapply at this time.

Many partners also provided updates during this time. Mike Ryan stated that they are looking into behavior affects that COVID is having on individuals and that more information will come on that topic. Christy Grant talked briefly about her deployment with FEMA and working on stay at home kits. Next, the group discussed how Metro Access had extended their food assistance program but that at the end of August they would stop moving food and focus more on passenger movement.

The topic then changed to the Impact Summary. The group decided that, for now, it is best to continue with the Impact Summary on the current weekly schedule. It was also noted that RARET is holding bi-week partner meetings in both King and Pierce Counties.

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### PRESENTATION: SNOHOMISH COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Next Randy Fay, from Snohomish County Emergency Management, spoke about how COVID has changed operations. Randy began by talking about what was happening before COVID. Saying that many counties in the area were doing a low-level activation around opioid issue before the pandemic struck. With this activation followed quickly by COVID the big concern now is staffing fatigue. In Snohomish county the directors of the different departments agreed to give employee support to combat fatigue, but the event has lasted longer than anticipated and that support has dwindled. With lack of funds, furloughs, and burnout, resources sharing has not happened in the same way. Now Emergency Management is looking to motivate other agencies to reengage.

Randy next spoke about his experience during COVID and how he has been working at a warehousing and distribution site since early March and is now moving to the planning section. Randy also stated that the site has distributed 6 million pieces of PPE in the last 4 months and is now serving up to 2,400 people. Food distribution has been housed in the warehouse and the county has been working to get those supplies to the community. As Emergency Management moves forward, they plan to use CARES Act funding to hire emergency workers through the end of the year and is also placing huge bulk orders to anticipate the resurgence of COVID. Currently these orders include 20 million for all different kinds of PPE.

It was also noted that Snohomish's plan for Cascadia Rising 2022 was not approved. Due to this they will not be participating in the exercise. The County is looking into completing their own local exercises instead, of course this depends heavily on COVID impacts.

Next Randy talked about the process for ordering personal protective equipment in Snohomish. Stating that approval has to go through Snohomish Health District. After the approval has been obtained orders are sent to the warehouse for distribution. The warehouse tracks product using the fleet management system that already existed in the county. After that, the Health District can see the inventory and agencies can make a request from that inventory. Then the agency requesting the PPE drives to the warehouse and receives supplies. The warehouse has the ability to resupply agencies once a week. It was also noted that the warehouse does have trucks that can be used to deliver large orders for hospitals, jails, sheriff's office, etc.

The primary emerging need is funding. Randy noted that the feeding grant they received may be burned through by the end of August. This is particularly a concern in terms of the ability to

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support low-income communities. The county is also is unsure what will happen with the warehouse and isolation site as they have been moved to the fairgrounds.

### **DISCUSSION: COVID-19**

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After the presentation the group moved to a more general COVID discussion. The first topic discussed was the impact that a significant loss in revenue will have. Many cities are having to look into changing staffing plan and leaving positions vacant. For example, Bellevue has to make significant cuts, even to public safety. The group also discussed the worry for many non-profit partners who rely heavily on donations.

The importance of disaster mental health was also quickly discussed as well as the long-term impacts on morale. It was noted, among the population at large, there has been a rise in suicide during this time.

Maribeth Crandell, from Island Transit, stated that services are returning to a more normal state and that they are giving out neck gaiters and seeing ridership starting to rise slowly.

It was also brought up that Access is doing a survey for COVID recovery to find out what Access riders are projecting their ridership to be after the state and county open up. This is aimed to better position Access to respond to rider needs.

The group then discussed the difficulties and uncertainty on how to plan for 2021. It was noted that feeding operations are funded through the end of the year but after that it is unclear. Senior centers are not planning to open in the near term except for individual services and funding streams are questionable

Another emergency management concern is how to operate in the current COVID environment if there is another disaster. Many people are worried about the delivery of essential services if another event happens alongside COVID. There has already been a lot of planning around incident stabilization efforts and what can be done in person or remotely. The current American Red Cross plan for sheltering operations is to first move individuals affected by disaster to hotels or dorms if available. They are recruiting volunteers for these efforts and identifying transportation options.

The discussion then shifted to the need for volunteers. With so many volunteers being older adults many agencies that rely on volunteerism have been hard hit. The group discussed the need to change the approach to volunteer recruitment during this time. For example, Sound Please contact Bree Boyce at [bboyce@hopelink.org](mailto:bboyce@hopelink.org) or 425-943-6751 for any errors or omissions in these notes.



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Generations' volunteer program has been decimated because of safety concerns. In addition to this, smaller mobility providers have really struggled with finding drivers over the last few months. Many drivers could not work during these times or have retired out of concern.

While many agencies are struggling to find volunteers, many Kirkland residents have stepped up to help. The city, in partnership with Sound Generations, set up a hotline where people could call in to request food delivery and sign up to be volunteer drivers as well. On the other hand, Community Van is looking for drivers to deliver food and can assist with delivery.

Also, the group wanted to keep in mind the importance of communicating what is available to the residents in different cities. New programs and resources are difficult to communicate, especially during this time. It was noted that Metro has good messaging on educational campaigns and that providers should coordinate on a uniform messaging on buses.

It was also discussed that Community Transit is conducting a study on the impacts on post-COVID ridership. Along with this, it was noted that Homage lost the contract for providing Community Transit's paratransit service to TransDev, so they're not doing any post-COVID planning for paratransit. In addition, Everett Transit is focused on planning to determine whether to merge with Community Transit for long-term financial sustainability of fixed-route service. Nearer term, Community Transit is planning to increase fixed route service to 85% of normal in September. Everett Transit is looking to increase service to 60-70% of normal in early 2021.

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### **DISCUSSION: CURRENT PANDEMIC CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRANSIT AND HUMAN SERVICES PARTNERSHIPS.**

Nathan provided an overview of [the article](#) and highlighted a few transit agency and human service partnerships. The general consensus of the group was that many agencies had stepped up during this time especially with food delivery. While volunteers have been in short supply many citizens have moved to assist. It was also noted by local emergency management that they have a group of volunteers called Citizens Corps that may be able to step in and assist.

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### PROJECT UPDATE: ROUNDTABLE PLANNING MEETING AND BI-WEEKLY COUNTY MEETINGS.

Nathan provided an update on the bi-weekly partner meetings that have been occurring between RARET and partners in King and Pierce counties. The RARET/King County Partner meeting is on Thursday from 9:00-10:00am and Pierce is on Wednesdays from 4:00-5:00pm. These meetings are an opportunity to discuss the unique needs of each county and make partner/resource connections.

Brock Howell then discussed his work with Public Health departments (State, King, Pierce, and, to a lesser extent Snohomish) and how they are looking into closing streets to create business districts so that more people could move more freely. The agencies have a draft guide and are looking to publish shortly. Currently, cities are nervous about the draw to these districts, as this model has been used for festivals in the past and can lead to overcrowding.

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### ACTION ITEMS

- Re-send information to Bethany at Silverlake for roundtable. (Nathan Emory)
- Request where to volunteer for ARC. (Nathan Emory)
- Hold discussions about educational outreach best practices. (Nathan Emory)
- SHAG partnerships email to Staci. (Sam Nigh)
- Add Mike Ryan's list of Emergency Management contacts for volunteers (Mike Ryan/Nathan Emory)
- Send Pierce and King invite to Sam Nigh (Nathan Emory)
- Send meeting question to Randy and Brock about Snohomish county bi-weekly meeting. Also look into draft version of closed streets plan that Brock will send this afternoon. (Nathan Emory/Brock Howell)
- Add to Belina Van and Ellen Montanana to King County partner meetings (Nathan Emory)

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### NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, September 23rd from 10:00am-12:00pm, virtual

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### CONTACT

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