The Regional Alliance for Resilient and Equitable Transportation Workshop IV
After Action Report

Summary

This document will go over the Regional Tabletop that took place on June 6 2017 and the results of the workshop feedback survey. The summary provides big ideas learned from conversations, questions, and feedback.

Regional Tabletop Exercise

The Regional Alliance for Resilient and Equitable Transportation Workgroup held a Regional Tabletop on June 6th 2017 focusing on coordination in Snohomish, King, and Pierce Counties. The concept and focus of the workshop was around promoting coordination with other local emergency managers, human service agencies, and transportation providers.

The workshop was a five hour event where people convened and discussed coordination and barriers with the whole community concept. This was accomplished through providing attendees with an adverse weather scenario and questions to prompt discussion.

Purpose

The primary purpose for the workshop was to promote coordination within Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties. Each attendee was given the adverse weather scenario followed by questions focused around communication and coordination. The scenario prompted attendees to coordinate the evacuation of the International District in Seattle to Snohomish and Pierce Counties.

Critical to the success of the workshop is developing and maintaining a positive relationship with emergency managers, human service agencies, and transportation providers in Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties. We were able to accomplish our primary mission of actively engaging emergency managers, human service agencies, and transportation providers in a setting to discuss barriers related to adverse weather.

Big Ideas Learned

- We learned there is a strong desire for continued networking opportunities and community relationship building with other local providers, coalition members, and local emergency managers. Along with this, attendees also mentioned the need for regular problem solving workshops, mock exercises, classes, and drills with this community. Attendees really seemed to appreciate the chance to meet and interact with local resources and coalitions.
• The tabletop exercise focused a lot of conversation around limited English populations and effectively addressing those populations with a clear, perceivable message. Many transportation providers do not ask preferred language in the intake process, which limits the ability to send out messages other than English.
• There is confusion around the recall of jurisdictions. There is no clear picture around who is responsible for what. Attendees made assumptions on who should be doing what.
• Transportation providers voiced their concerns around receiving external resources. Especially fuel and road access information.
• There is a need for real-time information and where to go for that information as a one-stop-shop.
• Communication channels exist, but stakeholders can quickly suffer from warning fatigue so there is a need to balance information with measurable impact.
• There is a need to share plans. We’ve learned there are a lot out there but few people have seen them or are aware that they exist.
• There is a need for a common operating picture.
• Transportation providers would like read-only accessibility for Web EOC to stay up-to-date and aware of the situation.

Survey Results

After the workshop, we asked participants to complete a survey composed of seven questions. The first question was “Overall, how satisfied are you with this event?” The options for Question 1 were: very satisfied; satisfied; somewhat satisfied; neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; or somewhat dissatisfied. 24% of participants were very satisfied; 57% were satisfied; 9% were somewhat satisfied; 10% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 24% somewhat dissatisfied.

Surveys from previous workshops showed 5% or less were dissatisfied to any extent. Based on this previous measure, we had a 19% increase in dissatisfied participants. This is believed to be partially attributed to the fact the conversation strayed into the weeds on multiple accounts. Diving into the weeds made the conversation hard to follow and may have brought confusion.
The second question was “How comfortable did you feel asking questions?” The options for Question 2 were: extremely comfortable; quite comfortable; moderately comfortable; slightly comfortable; and not at all comfortable. 100% of participants answered the survey felt some level of comfort asking questions. To break it down, 29% of participants felt extremely comfortable; 52% felt quite comfortable; 14% were moderately comfortable; and 5% were slightly comfortable or not at all comfortable.

For the most part, the responses received for this question are in-line with responses received from previous events. Participants who selected “slightly comfortable” made notes that they were introverted or new to the transportation sector. We received feedback from a participant that felt others missed opportunities to speak-up and share their input.

This question asked, “After this workshop, I feel better prepared to provide service in an emergency.” The options included: strongly agree; agree; somewhat agree; neutral; somewhat disagree; and disagree. The survey showed 19% of participants strongly agreed; 24% agreed; 33% somewhat agreed; 14% were neutral; 5% somewhat disagreed; and 5% disagreed. Overall, 76% of participants felt better prepared to some degree.

Previous responses to this question have yielded a 90%-95% agreement. A possible reason for this drop could be attributed to the conversation diving into the weeds. While we gained valuable information relating to communicating with LEP populations, we did not touch on our questions relating to communication between agencies or how to utilize local mobility coalitions. Therefore our objectives were not met.
The following question asked, “What counties do you provide service in? (check all that apply).” The response options included: Snohomish; King; Pierce; and Other. We had a lower attendance from Pierce county providers but attendance from participants who serve other areas. These other areas include: Thurston, Yakima, Kitsap, Clallam, Jefferson, Mason, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific, Benton, Franklin, Whatcom, San Juan, Skagit, and Island County. These areas were served by a Medicaid broker and WSODT. Overall, there were 7 attendees who serve Snohomish County; 15 who serve King County; 2 who serve Pierce County; and 3 who serve other areas.

At previous events, this has often fluctuated. In the past, we have offered an event in each county and that has helped even the representation from each county. Having only one event in a central location may have harmed the attendance.

The final question we asked all attendees was “What organization/company do you represent?” the options for this question included: Transportation Service Provider; Community Based Organization; Emergency Management and Preparedness; or Other. Our highest levels of attendance came from Emergency Managers. Attendees who chose the “Other” option included those representing non-profits, mobility management, Medicaid brokers, State Independence Living Council, and local DOT. This diverse range of attendees allowed for conversations to come from multiple points of view. Overall, there were 5 Transportation Service Providers; 3 Community Based Organizations; 10 individuals from Emergency Management and Preparedness; and 4 individuals from “Other” organizations. The attendance aligned with the individuals we sent invitations to.
Next Steps
Overall, attendees found the workshop helpful but did not find it to be our best event. We did not meet all of our objectives. The conversation did not hit or shed light on how local mobility coalitions can play a role in the coordination and communication during an event. We've missed a valuable opportunity to spark collaboration with the local coalitions. Comments received from participants attributed the greater dissatisfaction to the drifting conversation.

Additional comments we received include:
- “This meeting highlighted the need for coordination – while it was good to hear from stakeholders, being able to identify the intersections of planning, redundancies, and communications would be helpful."
- “The discussion seemed to dive into the weeds of specific responses without an overarching who-does-what.”
- Recommend having break-out groups to allow coming up with joint answers and reduce redundancy.

We’ve learned that there is a need and a strong desire for real-time information. Not only have participants said they need to know right away when an event happens, but that it would also be helpful to know the approximant duration of the event (i.e. road closure). While RARET has had a good run providing workshops and events, there is value in creating/providing something tangible. A next step for RARET may be taking a step back and seeing what we can provide that will help bridge some of the gaps we’ve brought to light.

At the end of the tabletop, we asked participants what they’d like to see in the coming two years. Suggestions from participants for future trainings and topics included:
- Expectations of transportation providers by the public;
- In a declared emergency, how do transportation providers interact with DEMs;
- Liaison training;
- ICS classes;
- Shared technology;
- Deep dive into individual resources for transportation and what they can provide;
- Evacuation exercises;
- Networking opportunities; and
- Coordination between public and private agencies.