

Notes from Kenmore Senior Center Listening Session

August 1st, 2016 and September 12th, 2016

Kenmore Connection with Mayor Baker

Kenmore Senior Center

Attendees: Brett Schock, Staci Haber, and about a dozen older adults

At the Kenmore Connection events on Monday, August 1st and September 12th, roughly a dozen older adults discussed concerns and opportunities in the Kenmore community, with transportation and mobility playing a major role in the conversation. Many of the participants drive their personal vehicles in the local community, with several relying on friends and family to take them around. Few, if any, relied on public transportation for most or all of their trips.

There were a few main concerns identified throughout our two discussions. A lack of available parking at park and rides was stressed as a barrier to taking public transportation, particularly for those who want to travel to Seattle. Parking spaces are often taken by commuters who leave their vehicles the entire day.

Many participants confirmed their dislike for driving into Downtown Seattle and prefer alternative transportation options when making the trek. At least one participant takes the 522 at the Lake Forest Park park and ride. If lots are full, attendees said they park "in the back area," presumably in a non-designated parking area. Another attendee said the parking lot is full by 6:30am, so they are unable to take the 522. The Kenmore residents felt the transportation system is geared towards the commuter, both in public transportation options and park and ride availability. These residents requested more emphasis should be placed on transportation options for people who need to travel at off-peak hours.

While many of the community members consider themselves active and mobile, they emphasized the importance of transportation alternatives for individuals who cannot drive a personal vehicle. There was a request for more bus service along Simonds Road given how built up the area has become and creating a busy street to navigate. Also Briar Road.

In addition, some older adults feel reluctance to park underground or in large parking structures. This relates to the importance of social trips for many older adults who have a higher risk of feeling isolated. There should be transportation options for these social trips as well!

Senior neighbor is unable to ride Metro Access since vehicles cannot load and unload at the women's house. Another example

Participants mentioned several community resources to receive local news and information, including the website "NextDoor" and the social media site "Kenmore Neighbors".

Other issues that were brought up included:

- An attendee considers them self a good walker, but does not take the bus since the bus stop is ~3/4 mile away and there's a slightly steep hill;

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- Sensitive to smell so is unable to take the bus

One participant acknowledged the amount of bicycles around Kenmore and nearby trails. There was some discussion of whether seniors are able to walk trails like the Burke-Gilman Trail, as they are perceived to be primarily bicycle trails. There is an interest in older adults using these paths for recreational walks. Juanita Bay Park was also considered a frequently used trail by seniors whereas the Totem Lake Park trail was described by one attendee as "dangerous", presumably for the uneven surfaces.