

RTAP Workgroup Meeting Notes

1/16/26

10:30am-12:00pm

Attendees: Amy Biggs (SVT) Daeveene May (PCCTC), Mariana Hanefeld (WSDOT), Kirk Hovenkotter (TCC) Rhonda Ender (City of Carnation – city manager) Susan Paganella (Key Peninsula Community) Mike Birdsall (Hobart retired transportation planner/community advocate), Roz Novikova (Hopelink) Stefanie Warren (Key Peninsula Partnership for a Healthy Community), Cheryl Paquette (City of Carnation councilmember)

Staff Support: Heather Clark, Grace Georgitsis, Lyn McCarthy, Nicole Ross

Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements

- Grace begins the meeting by going over the meeting agenda.
- The first agenda item is introductions and participants in the meeting introduce themselves one at a time.
 - Grace Georgitsis (She/her), South King County Mobility Coordinator, Hopelink Mobility Management, ggeorgitsis@hopelink.org
 - Nicole Ross (She/her), Snoqualmie Valley Mobility Coordinator, Hopelink Mobility Management, nross@hopelink.org
 - Heather Clark (She/her), Program Manager of Coalitions, Hopelink Mobility Management, hclark@hopelink.org
 - Lyn McCarthy - King County Mobility Coalition Program Supervisor emccarthy@hopelink.org
 - Rhonda Ender (She/her). City Manager, City of Carnation.
Rhonda.ender@carnationwa.gov
 - Amy Biggs (She/Her), SVT, Director, abiggs@svtbus.org 425-888-7001
 - Stefanie Warren, Assistant Director of Key Peninsula Partnership for a Healthy Community (she/her)
 - Daeveene May, Pierce County Human Service, PCCTC, he/him,
daeveene.may@piercecountywa.gov
 - Cheryl Paquette, she/her, Carnation City Council Member,
Cheryl.paquette@carnationwa.gov
 - Marianna Hanefeld (she, her), WSDOT Tribal Liaison, RTAP Manager, marianna.hanefeld@wsdot.wa.gov, 425.777.0557
 - Roz Novikova, Hopelink Mobility management team, TRL -
RNovikova@hopelink.org

- Susan Paganelli, she/her, Key Peninsula Partnership for a Healthy Community, Exec. Director, Transportation is one of our 4 focus areas as we have very little of it. director@kphealthycommunity.org
- Mike Birdsall, greater Maple Valley area resident, retired transportation planner, mike_birdsall@yahoo.com
- Staci Sahoo (she/her), Hopelink Mobility, ssahoo@hopelink.org
- Kirk Hovenkotter, Executive Director of Transportation Choices Coalition

Project Overview

- The Rural Transportation Advocacy Project (RTAP) is a King County Mobility Coalition Project and is funded through the National Rural Transit Assistance Program
- Project Goal: Provide tools and resources to help those living in rural areas in King County effectively advocate for transportation resources in their community
- Project Deliverables
 - Promotional rack cards; to be handed out at both events and in Mobility Coordinators' (Grace and Nicole's) outreach
 - Snoqualmie Valley/North Bend event; scheduled for March 14th, 2026, at North Bend City Hall. Will include panel discussions, educational presentations and/or activities, and time for networking.
 - South King County Event: this event will be in late summer of 2026, exact date and location TBD, and will build upon the event in North Bend.
 - Online resource; is meant to be an evergreen resource available to anyone who is interested in learning more about how to advocate for transportation solutions in their rural communities.
- Grace gives an overview of the project's timeline, listing when each deliverable will be completed and the work that will be done in the work group in the interim.
- Lyn mentions that the target audience for the project will be average community members who see transportation gaps and want to advocate for improvements.
- Lyn also points out that as part of the online deliverable we are aiming to develop a toolkit for people to use who aren't typically involved in organized transportation planning efforts.
- Amy Biggs asks who we will be working with to develop the North Bend event and Grace says that Transportation Choices Coalition (TCC) will be contracted to help develop the content for both events.
- Kirk mentions that March 14th is a Saturday which should open it up to more people who can attend, as the last event was on a weekday and was mostly attended by those who are already involved in transportation.

- Lyn mentions that Jamie Burrell is the contact at the City of North Bend to help organize the event.
- Amy mentions that the group should be mindful of participants' ability to get to and from the meeting. She notes that most successful meetings in the Valley tend to be in the evenings.
- Lyn suggests using the King County Metro Community Vans to assist with transportation to and from the event.
- Mariana mentions that for those involved who are not located in King County, these events are a good opportunity to become involved in a “train the trainer” model. How to become involved in advocacy. Make sure policymakers are aware of stories about people who need to get from Point A to Point B.
- Marianna asks for information about the Rural Transit Assistance conference, Lyn responds that she and Heather attended the conference in Austin, TX in December. Asked transportation planners, mobility managers, etc, “what do you need people to know?”
- Staci: (via chat) We can tap resources to pay for people to have transportation to get to the event, particularly if SVT or Community Van doesn't meet their needs. But we should also check the bus schedule to make sure it lines up with our venue and timing.
- Staci/Grace: we can make it part of the registration to request transportation assistance if it is a barrier in getting to the event.
- Grace also mentions that she and the Mobility team will make sure to include information on available transportation to and from in their event promotion
- Mariana mentions we could include targeted invitations to senior center newsletters, city announcements, etc - along with transportation support.

Feedback on Deliverables

Rack Card -

- Grace begins by explaining the purpose and content of the rack cards
 - Purpose: To be distributed at workshop events and coordinators' regular outreach
 - Content: the front of the card lists 5 talking points to influence decision-makers on issues of rural mobility and the back of the card has websites with resources and information on how to get started on rural advocacy.
- Grace also mentions that the Mobility team has already gotten feedback from the Snoqualmie Valley Mobility Coalition that we should use QR codes instead of URLs for the resources on the back.
- Lyn asks whether we should put information about the workshops on the cards

- Stefanie suggests we add a QR code that leads to a linktree with all of these websites listed
- Amy mentions that food access should be included in the talking point, and that this is an important concern in rural communities
- Mariana mentions that rack cards should be visually enticing, suggests we put all of the information into one or two QR codes to free up space for visuals on the rack card.
- Heather mentions that we will be working with the Hopelink Marketing and Communications team for visuals on the rack card
- Lyn mentions that the inspiration for the talking points came from the Mayor of Carnation mentioning that he would like a card with talking points to show to people coming into his office.
- Lyn also mentions that a catchy tagline can go a long way to getting people interested
- Amy mentions including FindARide.org on the card and encouraging people who can't find an option there to look into what options they can create in their community
- Rhonda shared the rack card with the city council and says they liked the talking points, but were curious about the source for the point that people who walk, bike, or use transit are generally happier
- Grace shares that she is not sure of the exact source but has definitely seen it listed as a statistic in multiple places, and says she will ensure to find sources to back up the talking points listed on the card.

Workshop Events -

- Grace moves on to explaining the workshop events.
 - Purpose: Give participants an opportunity to learn more about transportation advocacy and network with other rural advocates
 - Description: Two in-person events, one in North Bend and one in Rural South King County, each with time for an educational presentation and time for networking
- Kirk shares the link to last June's workshop event in the chat (<https://transportationchoices.org/snoqualmie-valley-rural-transportation-advocacy-101-event-recap/>) and Lyn Shares the link to the Blog Post about it on the KCMobility page (<https://www.kcmobility.org/kcmc>)
 - Lyn notes that the videos on both pages are available for partners to use as promotional tools

- Staci asks workgroup for tips on how to entice people to join for a weekend event
- Stefanie: Key to good attendance is good food
- Amy: in promoting, people want to be a part of defining the gaps. Give people the ability to get bent out of shape.
- Staci: Is there a way we can provide space for that in the event format? Maybe a map that people can contribute to and show where they want to see improvements?
- Amy: Riders have a different viewpoint. Maybe have breakout groups with maps.
- Kirk: maps are a great idea.
- Marianna: First event was a time crunch. We need adequate time for directed conversations. We want to give them talking points they can respond to. Informal conversation can be moved to “coffee time”.
- Heather: Maybe provide online format where participants can share information, frustration, contact information.
- Staci: we can share participants contact information out with their consent to reach out to one another after the workshop.
- Lyn: Invite people to join coalition work we do.
- Lyn: event participants could possibly join the workgroup for a feedback sharing session

Online Resource -

- Grace shares that the online resource is meant to be an evergreen and centralized place where people can go to find information about how to get involved in advocacy and organizing
- Susan asks if this resource has to be King County specific, and Grace replies that the plan is to make it specific to King County, but that a lot of the information will be relevant to other areas as well.
- Interconnectivity – Puget sound region. Can we broaden the area?
- Staci – this has been a conversation about transferability. We are focusing on King County but would like it to be useable in other areas.
- Marianna – broadening is a goal and this is a pilot that is focused on King County. We would like to take it to eventually take it to a national level and share it where it can be used in other rural areas. Perhaps Daeveene could work on an adapted page for Pierce County (for example). We would like it to have a broader base.
- Lyn shares [Volunteer driver Program Toolkit](#) in the chat as an example of a toolkit we would like to create and share in our online resource

- Daeveene: in my team, we do address rural transportation and how to address cross-county issues. I can use this to adapt and share with my 5-year plan. Daeveene is currently working on a travel ambassador program.
- Amy: At the policy level, things go slowly. When I first came into this, PSRC had nothing addressing rural areas. There are improvements that have been made. Rural areas with few existing options are now listed as a priority and this should enable better chances for funding moving forward.
- Amy encourages workgroup participants to engage with PSRC to ensure that strategy number six, which prioritizes rural concerns, is really high.
- Marianna: (via chat) to summarize - The end result of the curriculum is to make advocates out of riders, community members, city councils and others, so that they can influence local, regional and state planning efforts, so that the dollars can follow.

Next Steps

- Mobility staff:
 - Finalize rack card using the feedback gathered in this meeting and get it printed ahead of the events.
 - Finalize details for North Bend event
 - Begin planning SKC event
- Workgroup partners:
 - Review blog post from previous event to get an idea of how the workshops will look.
 - Promote the events and tell anyone who is interested in attending to reach out to ggeorgitsis@hopelink.org
 - Grace will keep a list of all those who want to attend and send them invitations to register once those invitations are available. Grace will also send registration information to workgroup members when it is available so they can distribute this information among their networks.
 - Attend the event and participate fully, and provide feedback on it afterwards to help us plan for the South King County event
- Heather: Targeted invitations to senior centers would be good. Heather also asks workgroup for other specific places we can send invites.
- Amy responds that we can reach out to the Snoqualmie Valley local advocacy team and get elected officials involved.
- Grace closes the meeting.