

YOUTH ACCESS TO TRANSIT: MEETING NOTES

Tuesday, June 8th, 2021

Zoom Remote Meeting

Attendees: Adrian Down (Port of Seattle), Alison Turner (City of Tukwila), Ashley Rhead (RHEADA), Aylin Cook (HopSkipDrive), Brock Howell (SnoTrac), Erik Seymour (HopSkipDrive), Jacque Mann (PSESD), Jean Kim (PSRC), Julie Burrell (Pastor Carey Anderson), Kim Pearson (PSRC), Kristine Edens (King County Metro), Lauren Rueger (HopSkipDrive), Maggie Moore (PSRC), Marie Marquart (Metro Travel Training), Pastor Carey Anderson, Penny Lara (King County Metro), Ryan Young (Sound Transit), Salwa Raphael (Hopelink Mobility), Sandee Ditt (Sound Transit), Sarah Boden (Beeline Mobility), Shanita Stewart-Burrell (CCS), Sol Dressa (Move Redmond)

Presenters: Dani Hurula (King County Metro) and Regina Mae (Youth for Equitable Streets)

Staff Support: Cassidy Giampetro, Bebhinn Gilbert, and Staci Sahoo

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting began at 1:05 PM.

Attendees were called on to introduce themselves. Cassidy reviewed the agenda and Zoom logistics with the group.

During introductions Marie Marquart asks about resources and recommendations for interpreter services for in person trainings. Cassidy invites Marie to reach out via email where she can share points of contact.

PRESENTATIONS: YOUTH FOR EQUITABLE STREETS AND KING COUNTY METRO

Regina Mae began the presentation for King County Summer Youth ORCA Pass Qualitative Research Report. This report was created in partnership between Metro and Youth for Equitable Streets. Youth for Equitable Streets (YES) received funding from King County Metro to complete engagement and research on youth use of transportation, and how they perceive the transportation system. The work was designed to highlight their experience and their unique viewpoints as transit users.

For the qualitative report, the group distributed a short application across several social media platforms and received 167 responses, from those they were able to interview 7 community members in detail about their experience and opinion of public transportation. The researchers wanted to hear from folks with diverse lived experience, wanted to center the experience of BIPOC youth and gender diverse individuals. The youth who were selected for interview represented communities across King County and were between the ages of 14 to 19. Several interviewed youth were also activists in their communities and saw transportation as an intersection and connection point to other community needs. Specifically, interviewees

mentioned connections to food access, access to jobs – economic mobility, and public transit as an arena for conversations around racial justice and equity.

Regina highlights the successes of this qualitative research, namely, that the entire project and design was youth led, including the media company used to support the research. Additionally, the high level of interest documented in the large number of interview applicants demonstrates the community interest in this topic and the saliency of these sorts of conversations. Youth are a significant portion of our transit using community, and they experience the system differently from their adult counterparts.

The research project developed a video highlighting the interviewees and their opinions and experiences using transit, Regina shares video with roundtable attendees.

Regina highlights the key takeaways which this qualitative work has gathered.

1. Fare Enforcement: majority of students held negative perspectives of Fare Enforcement officials, had been made uncomfortable by them, or had found them to be unnecessary.
2. Fare affordability: many youth prioritized fare free programs and many prioritized reduced/no fares for lower income youth. Many expressed support for a fare-free system, and an opinion that if fares do exist, they should be equitably scaled.
3. Identity: identity impacts the experience of using transit especially femme bodied people and BIPOC community members. Asian American youth who were interviewed expressed concern of rising rates of violence against AAPI community members.

Marie Marquart asks about how we can change the behaviors of people using transit so that instances of unsafety (harassment, threats of violence) are less frequent.

Dani mentions that they have connected with representatives from BART in San Francisco where they have recently begun a youth-led bystander training program to intervene in instances of violence. Attendees shared information on Hollaback and other bystander training programs and expressed interest in scaling out these educational opportunities.

Dani Hurula from King County Metro began presenting about the 2021 Summer Youth Program, a pilot program which provides ORCA passes for youth outside of the school year.

2018 to 2020 metro had the ORCA Pilot which provided passes for youth whose family classified as low-income. This pilot gathered data on existing barriers for youth use of transit, which include money and fare, unfamiliarity with transit or not knowing how to use certain resources, and perceptions of safety.

Dani notes that many school districts in King County provide ORCA passes for their students, however, these contracts are concentrated in North and East King County (City of Seattle and Mercer Island). Dani notes that 80% of low income students have no access to passes both during the school year and summer time. These students tend to be concentrated in South King County.

The Summer Youth Program has received funding for programs in Kent and Federal Way, and will be beginning a year-round pass program in Skyway for students at Renton High School.

Continued funding for Kent, Federal Way, Tukwila.

Dani notes that they are open to making connections in these service areas with school districts and community organizations who serve youth. Attendees are invited to share contact information with them.

DISCUSSION: YOUTH ACCESS TO TRANSIT

Seattle Department of Transportation

Ashley Rheed manages the safe routes to school with Seattle Public Schools, which offers training for elementary students to review walking and biking safety as transportation methods. She mentions that they are newly expanding to serve middle schools. This will allow for 6 years of safety training. She mentions that the connection between walking safety and transit is important, as many of the injuries we see to youth who are walking occur when they are connecting to transit.

Seattle school district is hoping to expand the use of School Pool in the district. School Pool is a program which connects students and families to trip pooling/carpooling resources. Seattle school district has recently created a Coordinator role which would support the promotion of this and other resources for families.

Ashley is interested in exploring ways to connect with ORCA programs to loop in the conversation in walking and biking strategies, attendees are encouraged to reach out to Ashley with connections.

Puget Sound Regional Council

The PSRC is the regional planning organization for the Puget Sound region (King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties).

The PSRC is underway on a regional transportation plan update (with the horizon year of 2050), which includes youth transportation in its coordinated mobility plan. Youth engagement has been centered on how they use the system today but also how they hope the system works in the future, and which priorities are centered in the future system.

Maggie has been engaging with youth to learn about their experience and priorities. To date she has met with youth councils in Issaquah, Pierce County, and Snohomish.

High level findings include the importance and role of walking in the youth experience of our transit system. For many younger community members using transit can be difficult especially if existing stops and routes do not match with their destinations. There is also a barrier related to the perceived safety of using transit alone.

When asked about the future system, youth mention the popularity of Light rail and train systems that connect region. Additionally, stewardship of natural resources and the environmental impact of our transit options are often named priorities.

Julie Burrell suggests reaching out to Redmond, Bellevue, Sammamish and Kirkland youth councils and school districts as potential connections for more responses. Salwa mentions the Empower Youth group of Snoqualmie Valley for that same reason.

Cassidy mentions the opportunity to reach out to family focused groups about their transportation needs especially with families that have young children, noting than many young children travel with their guardians.

HopSkipDrive

Erik shares about the organization of HopSkipDrive: a transportation network company which caters to children and older adults. Primarily they provide transportation to and from school for students who are in foster care, experiencing homelessness, live outside of their school district, or have limited mobility. Hop Skip Drive fills gaps for districts that are experiencing shortages of drivers.

HopSkipDrive is looking for more care drivers. Care drivers need to have caregiving experience along with appropriate vehicle and clean driving record.

ROUNDTABLE SHARING

The meeting now moves to a sharing out and update portion.

- Staci Sahoo highlights the work of the King County Covid Vaccine Helpline and related taskforce, which has recently expanded to the needs of youth.
- KCMC was funded through WSDOT for the One Call One Click program. This first phase will be primarily be software procurement and learning more about diverse use cases. This resource will become a trip planner and referral request program.
- Marie mentions that travel training numbers are beginning to increase.
- Sandee mentions that Sound Transit is reimagining their fare enforcement and beginning a youth program. Sound Transit is replacing their fare enforcement with the fare ambassador pilot. ST will be reporting back to their board at the end of the pilot with recommendations. Main difference will be that the ambassadors will not be acting as security, they will be checking fares but with an education model rather than a security enforcing role.
- Staci highlights the Snoqualmie Valley Transportation Summer Youth Program which provides free rides in the summer for folks under 18.
- Dani mentions that Metro will be releasing youth designed cards for each rapid ride line and that the youth card fee (initial cost of purchasing an ORCA pass) is gone as of June 1.

ACTION ITEMS

- Staff support to share out SVT Summer Youth Program flier to this network
- Staff support to share Staci's contact information as she will act as point of contact in interim staff transition.

NEXT MEETING

September 14th, 2021 from 1pm – 3pm, through Zoom

ACCESS TO WORK AND SCHOOL CONTACT

Staci Sahoo, *interim*

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