

Find a Ride Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda

Monday, February 9, 2026 from 1 pm – 2:45 pm

Attendance:

Jeff Abrams, Phirun Lach, Dinah Stephens, Pran W, Greg Brey, Brian Vallene, Blake Matthews, Dean Sydnor, Nicole Ross, Ryan B. Johnson, Jenny Hayslip, Justin Deno, Karen Hartman, Kimberly Meck, Roz N, Gazel T, Kevin Chambers, Amy Biggs, Suleiny Altamirano, Alex O'Reill, Angie Kitheka, Kurt Ahrensfeld, Karen Hartman, Brock Howell, Dorene Cornwell, Trish Rasmussen, Brock Howell,

Staff Support: Laura Loe, Staci Sahoo, Heather Clark, Dean Sydnor

Meeting goals:

- 1) Partner Announcements 2) Project Updates 3) Inclusive Planning Breakout Sessions 4) Report Backs 5) Action Items & Next Steps
 - A. 1:05 – 1:15 pm Welcome & Committee Guidelines; Partner Announcements
 - B. 1:15 – 1:30 pm Project Updates
 - C. Laura Loe, Staci Sahoo
 - D. Phase 1 Updates: Accessibility Audit
 - E. Phase 2 Inclusive Planning updates, Compensation Plan overview
 - F. 1:30 – 1:50pm King County Metro Updates; Matthew Weidner
 - G. 1:50 – 1:55 pm Break
 - H. 1:55– 2:15pm Breakout Sessions

Summary:

The Find a Ride Advisory Meeting focused on the launch of Phase Two inclusive planning, addressing eligibility and accessibility issues.

- Key points included the introduction of a new online application for King County Metro's Access program, aiming to streamline the process and improve efficiency.
- The meeting highlighted the need for better language translation and digital equity, and discussed the challenges of accessing services, particularly for rural residents.
- The team also reviewed the progress of the trip planner enhancements and the importance of community feedback in shaping future improvements.
- Breakout rooms were used for detailed discussions on these topics.

Action Items:

- Complete: Email partners with the sandbox testing access and a version update summary for the trip planner (include updates, accessibility audit findings, roadmap and testing instructions) within the next month
- Post the Metro Access vendor link (Spare Labs) and related testing link into the meeting chat and/or email it to attendees; Encourage partners to test King County Metro's new online access eligibility portal and send feedback to the provided testing email address (MTD_AceTest@kingcounty.gov)

[King County Metro Access - Test - Rider Hub](#)

- Include links to the Ambassador training sessions

Travel Ambassadors: Hopelink partners with social service agencies and community organizations to provide travel training and resources to employees who work with a diverse range of clients. The trained social service workers then pass on these resources to their clients, empowering them with greater mobility and expanding their knowledge on reliable transportation options.

If you are interested in scheduling a free, comprehensive training for your staff to learn transit basics such as trip planning, how to pay your fare, alternate transportation options, and services for specific populations including older adults and people with disabilities, email us at Mobility@hopelink.org or call (425)-943-6760.

- Post the Community Transportation Navigator (CTN) open house link in the chat and share info about the CTN open house for community navigators

Community Transportation Navigators Program Overview : The Community Transportation Navigators (CTN) program uses a peer-to-peer approach to provide trusted transportation information and outreach education to hard-to-reach communities. This model empowers and encourages community champions to use their networks and ensure their local communities receive culturally inclusive information and resources.

<https://www.kcmobility.org/community-transportation-navigators>

Initial Updates

- Laura Loe introduces Staci Sahoo to speak about community compensation Chelsea Nelson to speak about the Washington, DC video project.

Community Compensation and Video Project Updates

- Staci Sahoo explains the community compensation process, including the application for a community compensation planning grant.
- Staci Sahoo highlights the criteria for eligibility, such as having a lived experience or a certain income threshold.

- Staci Sahoo mentions the importance of providing meaningful compensation to community members for their participation.
- Laura Loe shares updates on the Washington, DC video project, including the filming process and the involvement of community members.

Phase One Enhancements and Accessibility Audits

- sandbox testing site and the accessibility audit conducted by Anthro Tech.
- eight changes to the trip planner and the ongoing accessibility audit to uncover bugs.
- importance of meeting accessibility standards and the challenges faced by small agencies.
- need for a higher level of accountability and accessibility due to federal funding.

King County Metro's New Process for Access Certification

- Laura Loe explains the current process for access certification, including the manual tracking and paper-based application.
- Laura Loe discusses the new online application being developed by King County Metro to improve efficiency and customer convenience.
- Laura Loe highlights the goals of the new system, such as increasing customer convenience, streamlining internal processes, and increasing awareness of existing services.
- Laura Loe encourages participants to provide feedback on the new system and to test it with their community members.

Breakout Room Instructions and Inclusive Planning

- Laura Loe provides instructions for the breakout rooms, including the questions to be discussed: what is working in the existing eligibility systems, what needs improvement, and private health information storage and retrieval.
- Laura Loe emphasizes the importance of inclusive planning and community-led assessments.
- Laura Loe outlines the life cycle of specialized transportation, from discovery to service provision.
- Laura Loe encourages participants to think about examples from other systems and to provide feedback on the ideal system from their perspective.

Notes from Notetaker:

Program Updates

Staci: Community Compensation Update; currently using an honorarium system, applied for grant through the state for community compensation, received \$10,000 for community members for participating in phase 2. Some of the criteria are having a lived experience and fall under an income threshold, and are doing this outside of compensated work via an employer.

Laura: DC Presentation; one day event with one-month notice, Phase 2 funded projects all meet with members from the technical assistance center CCAM and two individuals from the federal

government. Informal conversations with other recipients to have a cohort experience. Wanted to film project based on positive reception to the presentation.

Laura: Video Project; filmed last thurs/Friday, featured community members and transportation providers (Hyde Shuttle and SVT), representatives from Snotrac, footage from Homage and the Zip Shuttle.

Laura: Phase 1 Enhancements; sandbox testing site showed about 8 changes we covered in our last meeting, but there may be more after the accessibility audit with Anthro-tech.

Brian: What date are you targeting? Two dates I have seen with the mandate with 2026 and 2027

Laura: the mandate for community transit is more expediated, I would follow the guidance from Dr Young about those targets. From our personal standpoint we want to do as much as we can with what we have even though we are under a different mandate.

Staci: this is an audit based on enhancements, getting into a pattern, trying to do a best practice and work toward compliance. Trying to exceed the standard set by the federal government.

Amy: We are going through the same accessibility standard, got our report back and it was comprehensive, what I understood is that the state is auditing us but we have to have a higher level of accessibility and accountability because we are getting federal funds. It might have something to do about your funding source.

Laura: WA is so supportive and on top of this from what I have heard from other states, we are a tech savvy state with a passion for accessibility.

Amy: one challenge is that it requires a level of staff and capability that can be harder for smaller agencies.

Laura: New Feeds; things are moving forward, if you see something that would lead to a major understanding with riders please nudge me to elevate it in the to-do list. Not all the feeds are 100% accurate at this moment. On-demand mixed with fixed route services can have some difficulty in being displayed, in the next six weeks we will hear about progress from deviated fixed route display.

Laura: partnership marketing; links to online transportation ambassador training. Demo's get lot of detailed questions about eligibility and fares, lots of which would be addressed to phase 2. We want to start these links with a MEO team member in King County, for Snoco and Pierce let us know how we can support.

KC Metro: Presentation prepared by Matthew Weidner, facilitated by Hopelink Mobility in this meeting due to Matthew's absence

- Access Certification Enhancements
- Application + documents + evaluation all required to gain access to ADA paratransit
- ADA paratransit services – Access

- Comparable to the level of service
- Does not attempt to meet all the needs
- Same days of the week, same hours of service, same service area, same trip time, no priority on trip purpose, no pattern or practice that would limit access such as excessively long trips or late trips
- Access Certification Process; the application
- Mostly unchanged since 1997
- 8-10 pages
- 100% paper
- Storing and tracking PII lacks functionality
- King County council allocated funds to Access Customer Eligibility
- Working towards User friendly online application with Better turnaround times and Store customer data in secure digital format for Increased customer convenience
- Streamline process between staff and contractors
- Increase awareness and usability

ACE Outcomes

- Efficiency and customer access improvements
- Serving more people across many communities
- Multiple users and concurrently use the web application

ACE Project Status

- Currently testing, aiming to go live Feb 23rd.
- 1st team training concluded
- Test Drive Link

Alex: Where the assessment site is has been a big barrier, even with Access picking people up and taking them back. A paper option remaining is still preferred by some. I understand that there is a lot of equipment that they have at Harborview, could they do satellite sites for assessments

Laura: This presentation more in the weeds on technical items, there will be paper options

Staci: Matthew suggested making this desire clear to the county council. There needs to be funds for it.

Amy: I've never really known this but... does EVERYONE applying to be an Access rider have to go to Harborview?

Laura: yes, including for recertification, this can be a barrier for rural riders.

Dorene: There is hope that people can book rides online but people have many different barriers, I like the idea of...[cut off] I think making people aware of the barriers has been really important

Laura: the access to health and wellbeing meetings can be great to advance policy improvements

Questions for Matthew:

Pran: for people who do not know English, how do they provider their information

Laura: working with the project vendor to have the full website translated, the paper application still available in different languages

Staci: does have built in language translation on the site, need to add each one individually.

Gazel: can Community Groups be trained to help applicants in their native language?

Staci: See the CTN open house and the CTN program

Brock: In trying to set up my Metro test account, I'm super annoyed by how I'm to type in my birthday.

Kimberly: Access for all is always an afterthought. Usually not until someone complains and then typically defined as too expensive. All to often they forget it is easier and less expensive to design it accessibly the first time through rather than have to go back and fix it (multiple times).

Kevin: given that this application process is now coming out right as we work on a similar project for the ICAM grant, I just did a quick run through with it, what degree might it work to use this tool as conversation starting point for what we want the ICAM version to be?

Staci: this is a really great point, the hack-a-thon in 2018 showed how good people respond to visuals to rip apart and build our own.

Phase 2 Feedback

Question: What is working in the existing eligibility systems (user, assistor, provider views all welcome!)

Anyone have an example of an existing eligibility process that is working well?

Question: What needs improvement in our existing eligibility systems?

Examples rooted in user profiles, transportation provider experiences, assistors helping others?

Challenge: We will have to balance retaining information and re-asking for the same or similar information multiple times.

Question: How do we balance various needs and concerns around private health information data retention, what would be an ideal system from your perspective (user, assistor, provider)? Any examples?

Feedback:

- Going in person to Harborview is a barrier
 - Very fearful. Less intrusive if offered on the Eastside
- Contract with CT to do the eligibility
 - Originally doing paper, which was slow. Still within the 3 weeks though.
 - Back to being in person. Challenges with a delay but it's gotten better.
 - Make that first call to the approval; it was quicker than paper.
 - Make those determinations and really do. Determine their disabilities. Perform the tests.
 - CT wanted to do in person. Make the determination versus read between the lines on paper.
 - Does not need to get a doctor's note. But used to be everyone.
- Temporary eligible?
 - Temporary access is possible.
- Greg. Very open in eligibility for DART. Who can ride for whatever reason. Service area restriction. "Oh I'm in a DART service area." But the other end of the trip has to be along the route.
 - Vast majority of requests are not the ones that we can fulfill.
- Greg: Experience when we worked with Spare - not download the app. Elderly. Preferred to call every time.
 - Confusing for old folks - from Karen
 - 2 factor authentication a barrier
- Spooked to give so much information. Hesitant to offer such personal information.
 - So invasive. Don't want to do this.
 - Nervous
- DART allows for Cross-street near their home. Acceptable for DART
 - Pseudonym is acceptable too. Happens sometimes.

- Have access to computers? Not a smartphone
- Stay in their home and afraid to go out - we need to help them.

Question: What is working in the existing eligibility systems (user, assistor, provider views all welcome!)

Anyone have an example of an existing eligibility process that is working well?

Answer: Sound Generations is a program that's working well, but only for people on the eastside. They have gotten grants to pay drivers. Sometimes the hours of operation are a barrier.

Note: Participant didn't speak to the eligibility requirements for this service.

Question: What needs improvement in our existing eligibility systems?

Examples rooted in user profiles, transportation provider experiences, assistors helping others.

Answer: Major barrier is that clients don't understand English well, or at all. They can't explain to the drivers or people coordinating the rides where they want to go, they don't understand the questions related to eligibility. Expense, affordability is also a barrier, clients don't want to ask family members for money to pay fares.

Challenge: We will have to balance retaining information and re-asking for the same or similar information multiple times.

Question: How do we balance various needs and concerns around private health information data retention, what would be an ideal system from your perspective (user, assistor, provider)? Any examples?

Answer: Employees doing intake need more training around what type of information is required to ensure that they are only asking clients for the minimum necessary. There is also a need to train/inform clientele as people are often giving out unnecessary information because they are used to that being the norm.

Question: What is working in the existing eligibility systems (user, assistor, provider views all welcome!)

- In some cases, eligibility systems do work when verification eventually leads to a ride or service, even if the process takes a long time.
- From the user perspective, the outcome may eventually happen, but convenience is often missing.
- From the assistor and provider perspective, there is clear effort and intent, but the experience does not always align with user needs.

2. Question: What needs improvement in our existing eligibility systems?

A recurring theme was **convenience**, or the lack of it.

Key areas for improvement include:

- Eligibility processes take too long and are not responsive to urgent needs.
- Systems often do not work well in rural areas.
- Language barriers continue to limit access.
- Many systems require users to go online, assuming access to the internet, free Wi-Fi, a computer, or comfort using a smartphone.
- Accessibility is often treated as a checkbox.
 - Accessible does not always mean usable.
 - Visual impairments are not fully considered when systems rely on timed codes, small text, or multi-step verification.
 - Image descriptions may exist, but diagrams, maps, and ranking tools are often not compatible with screen readers.
- Geographic equity remains a challenge, especially when eligibility is tied to rigid service boundaries.

Challenge: We will have to balance retaining information and re-asking for the same or similar information multiple times.

Question: How do we balance various needs and concerns around private health information data retention, what would be an ideal system from your perspective (user, assistor, provider)? Any examples?

- A secure, encrypted system that allows information to be shared once, with clear user consent, would significantly reduce user burden.
- There are already multiple secure ways to share protected health information in healthcare, yet transportation systems have not adopted comparable solutions.
- Overall, the discussion reinforced the importance of designing eligibility systems that reduce friction, respect privacy, and center dignity, usability, and equity.

Quick Report Outs

Group 1

- Friction constrains demand as a bottleneck
- 3rd party screener discussed

Group 2

- Fear about invasive questions
- CT, tradeoff of what you are making people do

Group 3

- Biggest barrier is language

- Training for employees to focus what information is necessary

Group 4

- Providing information multiple times can be frustrating
- Trust with organization, cumbersome nature of applying
- Placard applications have similarities

Group 5

- Convenience, language barriers
- Going online is not always viable for some, and how accessible they are varies

Group 6

- Levels of permissions for different purposes
- Action Items & Next Steps

Staff Support:

Laura Loe

Program Manager, Find a Ride

lloe@hopelink.org

(425) 941-6791

Chelsea Nelson

Sr. Manager, Find a Ride

cnelson@hopelink.org

(425) 457-9685

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the Mobility Management Team at mobility@hopelink.org or by calling (425) 943-6760.

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