

Eastside Easy Rider COLLABORATIVE

Next Meeting: *Tuesday, January 27 from 1:00 – 2:30pm via Zoom*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83249846276?pwd=WXB1TUlZVUd5cEpBWUpTci82WkQvZz09>

Date: 11/25/2025

Participants: Erin Funk (Hopelink), Grace Georgitsis (Hopelink), Lyn McCarthy (Hopelink), Wesley Barga (Hopelink), Angie Kitheka (CCS), Antoinette Smith (City of Kirkland), Axton Burton, Bradley Breashears (City of Bellevue), Jamie Gruenberger (KCM), Kate Kaehny, Laura Loe (Hopelink), Phirun Lach (Sound Generations), Ramu Ayyaluru (City of Bellevue), Sam Orbach, Thomas Valdriz (City of Issaquah), Heather Clark (Hopelink), Ysabel Yu (Hopelink)

Staff Support: Ysabel Yu (notetaker), Heather Clark (facilitator), Lyn McCarthy (facilitator)

Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements

Hopelink Needs Assessment Results

Wes Barga

- Looks at community needs related to all Hopelink services, will try to highlight transportation relevant pieces
- Worked with Berk Consulting to develop this
- While required, tried not to treat it as a checkbox and do a deep dive to use in advocacy efforts and informs our voice
- Data comes from census, public sources, Hopelink service data, but also includes community voices

Results:

- Hopelink service areas have a significant degree of heterogeneity
 - Lot of different income levels in similar areas

- There is persistent and significant household income disparity by race and ethnicity
 - Still lots of people distributed across all brackets. All ethnic groups are still distributed across all brackets
- Incomes are rising but rising costs are leading to persistent rates of economic vulnerability
 - People are still being left behind
- Rising inflation and reduction in COVID era benefits have resulted in reduced income for lower income households
 - Lower 3 quintiles are seeing decline in household incomes (bottom 60%)
- Housing affordability remains one of the region's most destabilizing challenges
 - Unsure of the exact difference between severely cost burdened and moderately cost burdened, but emphasize the contrast between that and not cost burdened
- Job loss is the most reported factor contributing to homelessness
- Insufficient transit options inhibit access to vital services
 - When we look at changes in housing costs, one effect we saw 10 years ago, lower income areas were served by transit, but now, people are having less of a choice with where they live
 - Significantly more people are forced to live further away from transit if they're lower income
 - Burden from lower income and rising transit challenges
- Transportation barriers impose disproportionate impacts
- Food affordability challenges mirror broader cost of living pressures
- Food insecurity is a persistent and rising challenge

Questions and Discussion

- Anny: Were those predetermined choose all that apply, or open ended questions? Would love to hear more about this about the data. Domestic violence or partner violence didn't come up in any categories unless it's within the other
 - Wes: unsure, would have to look in data source
- Karen: Construction of new apartments in Kirkland, but amount of rent, even for low income is extraordinary and people can't afford it. On the survey, did people have an opportunity to put paragraph on particular subjects or multiple choice only?
 - Wes: report pulls information on lots of different data sources, including qualitative data (focus groups, surveys), cost burden data is from US Census. The message received was that rent is too high, but data sources couldn't break down the exact details of that.
 - Wes: one challenge is how timely the data is

Pride Across the Bridge Introduction

Axton Burton

- Mission/reason: Many of community members face barriers accessing resources. Provide resources for community
- All events are community crafted, knowing what the community needs and being accountable for actions. All events come from direct need. 250 events last year! All programs are free and physically and financially accessible
- Beyond events: focus on things outside of events (art, queer owned business directories, city council call to action)
 - Being able to have this information available easily is a wonderful point of pride
 - Work with community partners to make sure they show up in queer specific spaces but also all spaces that impact LGBTQIA+ communities
- The Big Book of All Things Queer
 - More languages printed out last month
 - Living document for queer community, friends, allies, medical providers
- Visibility matters
 - Art piece on Duvall City Hall carries a lot of story, QR code for the history
- Active across cities, schools and housing
- Transit barriers
 - Limited and isolated routes to reach events/resources/services
 - Cost, safety, knowledge
- Lots of ways to get involved!

Central Issaquah Station and Alignment Study Introduction

Thomas Valdriz

- Central Issaquah is planned to accommodate most of Issaquah's jobs and housing growth through 2050
 - Dense, urban, walkable feel
- South Kirkland Issaquah SKI link project
 - Connected to south Kirkland, through Bellevue
 - Kind of TBD, timeline may be pushed back or stay the same, a lot is up in the air
- Issaquah is a collaborator with Sound Transit (to advocate for community priorities)
- Proactive light rail station area planning

- What makes an area an equitable TOD?
- Most people drive/stay local
- Ultimately want a vibrant community hub

Questions

- Heather: connecting neighborhoods to the community hub. How to do that without existing services? What conversations are happening
 - Thomas: most conversations are about thinking about future development. Streets that aren't developed now will be developed later, along with transit, intersections. Not all development will happen at once, so hard to navigate, but is predicted. A grid is already planned, existing development agreements. Thinking about active transportation methods too.

EERC Workplan/Wrap Up

Erin Funk

- FY 2026 project timeline
- East Sound Transit Community Engagement Event summary, 49 attendees, 4492 surveys completed
- Bellevue service guide finished, Kirkland too, other cities will be developed

For more information on EERC contact Erin Funk, visit our [website](#) or sign up for our [distribution list](#)

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