Eastside Easy Rider
COLLABORATIVE

Next Meeting: *Tuesday, September 29th from 1:00 – 2:30pm on Zoom*

Meeting Notes

Date: July 28th[s] 2026, 1:00pm – 2:30pm
Attendees / Presenters

1. Erin Funk
2. Heather Clark
3. Chitra Subramanian
4. Grace Georgitsis
5. Roz Novikova
6. Ari McKenna
7. Mackenzie Kneeland
8. Ysabel Yu
9. Scott Wallin
10. Christopher Randels
11. Kurt Ahrensfeld
12. Karen Hartmen
13. Bradly Brashears
14. Ellie Anderson
15. Evelyn Newman
16. Antoinette Smith
17. Candise Hutchko
18. June Palon
19. Thomas Valdriz
20. Mandy Wes
21. Phirum Lach
22. Marial Woodley

Staff Support: Chitra Subramania

Meeting Topics

- Updates on Fiscal Year 2027,
- City of Kirkland Transit Needs Assessment – Thomas Valdiz
- Disability Empowerment Center introduction – Mandy Wes

Disability Empowerment Center – Mandy Wes

- Mandy Wes introduces herself and the Disability Empowerment Center, highlighting their services and the importance of equity, inclusion, and choice for people with disabilities.
- Discussed the center's community presence, impact, and the vision of ensuring equity, inclusion, and choice for people with disabilities.
- The center works with individuals aged 14 and older, offering free services for physical, intellectual, neurological, and other disabilities.
- Explained the individualized services provided, including information referral, independent living skills training, peer support groups, and systems change.

Disability Empowerment Center Services and Goals

- Mandy details the center's core services, such as information referral, independent living skills training, and peer support groups.
- The center teaches people how to advocate for themselves and offers systems change through national community conferences.
- Mandy emphasizes the person-centered model, where participants create their own goals and meet with staff based on their choices.
- The center offers various services, including budgeting, cooking, energy management, and social activities, and works with caregivers and minors.

Disability Empowerment Center Contact Information and Events

- Mandy provides contact information for the Disability Empowerment Center, including the main line and email addresses.
- The center has offices in First Hill, the Together Center, and Arburn.
- Mandy mentions upcoming events, including an emergency preparedness workshop in August and a peer group on handling intrusive questions about disabilities.
- The center also offers a trivia game on technology and supports the Empowering People in Community group.

City of Kirkland Transit Needs Assessment – Thomas Valdriz

- Thomas Valdriz from the City of Kirkland introduces the Kirkland Transit Need Study, aiming to identify gaps in transit service and barriers to access.
- Thomas provides an overview of Kirkland's current transit services, including King County Metro, Sound Transit, Community Transit, and micro transit.
- The study aims to understand the role the city can play in improving transit service, considering the current service providers' thresholds and future growth.
- Thomas shares the main themes from public engagement, including limited or no service in North Kirkland neighborhoods, first and last mile connections, and the need for a local circulator.

Public Engagement Feedback and Transit Service Barriers

- Thomas discusses the feedback from public engagement, highlighting the need for improved safety, security, and comfort in transit services.
- The city is exploring ways to amplify messaging on existing services and broaden the culture of transit ridership.
- Thomas mentions the importance of improving the speed and reliability of buses and advocating for more transit service.
- The study aims to address the desire for direct connections to regional hubs and the need for a local circulator within Kirkland.

Challenges and Suggestions for Improving Transit Service

- Thomas shares the challenges identified in public engagement, including concerns with existing service speed, quality, and safety.
- The city is considering ways to support transit service providers and improve wayfinding for transit users.
- Thomas presents suggestions for future actions, including supporting transit service providers, amplifying messaging, and improving speed and reliability
- The city is exploring ways to advocate for new local transit service options and improve connections to regional hubs.

EERC FY27 Workplan update – Erin Funk

- Key workplan items: improve accessibility, rename EERC, "How to ride the light rail" video and speaking circuit geared towards older adults
- Determined interested partners and roles for video recording, recruitment, and speaking tour.
- Partners include: Choose Your Way Bellevue, Kirkland Senior Council, Bellevue Network on Aging, and EERC

Conclusion and Next steps

- Hopelink Mobility outlines the fiscal year 2027 work plan, including increasing accessibility and inclusion, refreshing the ERC name and branding, and developing a how-to ride the light rail video.
- The video project will involve Choose Your Way Bellevue, Bellevue Network on Aging, Kirkland Senior Council, and the ERC, with a focus on training older adults to train others..
- Participants discuss the importance of ongoing collaboration and the need for sustainable funding for transit services.
- The next meeting is scheduled for September 29, and participants are encouraged to share organizational announcements and resource fairs.

Discussion and Feedback from partners.

- Karen shares her role as chair of the advocacy committee for the senior council and mentions the legislative agenda for transportation to and from medical appointments.
- Lyn McCarthy from the King County Mobility Coalition shares a story map highlighting unique needs in transit services and the importance of first and last mile connections
- Mandy discusses her experience with transit services, including the challenges of using Red Link and the need for better design for people with disabilities.
- Antoinette Smith from the City of Kirkland emphasizes the importance of accessible transit for people with limited English proficiency and culturally diverse communities.
- Scott Wallin from Nourishing Networks Consortium shares his experience with public transportation and the importance of addressing transportation issues for vulnerable populations
- Roz from Hopelink Mobility discusses the gaps in transportation services, particularly for seniors and vulnerable populations.
- Thomas Valdriz provides additional context on the Kirkland Transit Need Study and the potential for electric shuttles and other micro transit solutions.
- Participants discuss the importance of normalizing transit use and addressing stigma around public transportation.

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For more information on EERC contact Erin Funk, visit our website or sign up for our distribution list

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