

King County Mobility Coalition

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 15, 2022

9:15 AM to 11:30 AM

In Attendance

Members and Alternates: Belina VanCo-chair Don Okazaki Co-chair

Alaric Bien, Amy Biggs, Andes Kong, Caitlin Wasley, Cliff Perry, Dorene Cornwell, Jacque Mann, Jean Kim, Jennifer Covert, Jon Morrison Winters, Kari Ware, Kim Pearson, Linda Woodall, Marianna Hanefeld, Mark Smutny, Michel Cross, Robert Blumenfeld, Sam Nigh, Susan Carter, Suzy Miller, Tamar Shuhendler, Tammy Mason, Tom Hewitt, Traci Adair

Partners:

Alex O'Reilly (Community Advocate), Alison Turner (City of Tukwila), Beni (Community Member), Betsy Maxwell (City of Kirkland), Bree Boyce (Hopelink), Brenda Freeman (NAMI Eastside), Brock Howell (SONTRAC), Carrie Avila-Mooney (Sound Transit), Cheryl Kennedy (Volunteer Services SKC), Dan Hasty (City of Renton), Dean Sydnor (RARET), Dinah Stephens (City of Seattle/Age-friendly Program), Eldon Luo (SnoTrac), Emilia Jones (KC Emergency Management), Emily Watts (King County Emergency Management), Gracie Geremia (Lyft), Heather Clark (EERC), Ivan Tudela (Pierce County Department of Emergency Management), Jamie Burrell (City of North Bend), Joanne Donohue (Sound Transit), Judy Ingraham Brown (UW Medicine), Julio Perez (Hopelink Mobility), Kyle Bywater (Seattle Parks & Recreation), Laura Lee Sturm (SDOT), Lisa Hirohita (Kaiser Permanente), Mike Dee (Lake Forest Park Citizens' Commission), Mona Lujan (King County 211), Nadia Ali (NKCMC), Ryan Young (Sound Transit), Salwa Raphael (SVMC), Sol Dressa (Move Redmond), Sandy Phan (SKCMC), Sara Sisco (Hopelink), Tom Sharp (King County Office of Emergency Management), Veronica Bean (City of Auburn), Victor Londono-Quintero (Community Van),

Presenters:

Margo Iniguez Dawes (Seattle Department of Transportation), Matthew Kenna (WSDOT), Monica Ghosh (WSDOT), Tiffany Olson (King County 211)

Staff:

Bebhinn Gilbert; Staci Sahoo

Optional Networking

Every virtual quarterly meeting of the King County Mobility Coalition has a period of optional informal networking, from 9:15 until 9:30.

Welcome & Logistics

The meeting began in earnest at 9:30 AM. Cochairs invited announcements while attendees were introducing themselves in the meeting chat.

The shared announcements are highlighted here in bullet-list format:

- The Washington State Legislature has a new transportation package, Move Ahead WA, including \$600 million for specialized transportation and several other interesting legislative opportunities. Review this [hyperlinked article](#) to read about the package
- The City of Seattle has launched a debt reduction program available for low-income community members who have outstanding parking tickets. This [hyperlink](#) will lead you to the city's webpage on this program.

- LYFT has announced a Racial Justice and Alliance Grant, available for nonprofits and community-based organizations. The Grant is due March 4th and the application is [hyperlinked here](#).

Cochair Elections

Current cochair Don Okazaki's term has ended, and the coalition will be holding elections for his successor. Ballots will be sent out for members/alternates as a follow up to this meeting and our new cochair will be announced in the coming weeks.

Please note, Don will still be an active member in our coalition.

Consent Calendar

After a brief correction to adjust the spelling of a name, attendees approved November meeting minutes. Please remember, all meeting materials are available publicly on the King County Mobility resources webpage, [hyperlinked here](#).

Cochair Belina Van then introduced three new members of the coalition.

- Tom Hewitt is the ADA Coordinator with Seattle Department of Transportation. He is the new member representing the City of Seattle
- Devina Miller from Puget Sound Educational Services District is the new alternate representing School District Transportation Programs (not present)
- Christy Straglund from the City of Bellevue is the new member in the Eastside City Representative position (not present)

KCMC 2021 Achievements + 2022 Look Ahead

2021 Review

As this session is the first full Coalition meeting of 2022, Bebhinn reviews the work of the last calendar year. Bebhinn highlights the 2021 Needs Assessment, the launching of the One-Call/One-Click Project, the coordinating efforts around vaccine access, and the updates to the inclusive planning toolkit which has been updated for virtual meetings.

Regarding the vaccine access work, after a year of service to the community, Hopelink will begin closing down the COVID Vaccine Transportation Helpline effective Tuesday, March 8th. The helpline partnered with many transportation providers across King County to serve over 150 clients who received their COVID-19 vaccines. We will be sharing out more communication in the coming days, but we wanted to share this information with all of you and say thank you to all of you for your unwavering support. Please feel free to reach out to Sara Sisco or Staci Sahoo if you have any questions.

Questions regarding 2021 review

Brock Howell: Helpline numbers? Any changes if it was attempted again?

Sara: Roughly 150 total, we are working together to put a report together on it. Tuesday March 8th in the final day. In the process of reflection right now, lot of lessons to learn and aiming to apply them to one call one click. Sometime in the next few months that report will be shared.

Judy Ingram: Will the Helpline Transition to One Call One Click? Useful to clients with visual impairments to have a phone number to call

Sara: Kind of, the TRL will immediately fill the gap. The focus of TRL is much more information and assistance than ride facilitation like the Helpline. Will work with partners to communicate this by the end of next week.

KCMC Partner Satisfaction Survey:

The Hopelink Mobility team is taking a new approach to our annual satisfaction surveying process. Instead of all 7 of our Coalitions and Subcommittees at once, we will be surveying one group at a time. For the next month (February 15th through March 15th) Bebhinn will be surveying our King County Mobility Coalition partners.

[Linked here](#) is the satisfaction survey.

We are looking to learn from you all about your experience as a coalition partner. What aspects of our work are most valuable to you and what improvements can we make to our processes, projects, and goals. As part of this work, we will also conduct a handful of 1:1 conversations to hear from you directly about your experience.

Looking ahead to 2022:

Bebhinn reviews a handful of projects and projections for the upcoming year. Projects on the horizon for the KCMC include: continuing the work of One-Call/One-Click which will support improvements to accessible travel mapping in our region, creating an action plan for the next three years, and facilitating collaboration in the region.

The overarching themes of the next year or years include:

- Coordinating transportation resources during an era of tremendous change
- Our community's recovery from the last few difficult years

Bebhinn then invites attendees to share their thoughts on these and other overarching themes and community needs.

Conversation:

- Mike Dee: Lake City is being challenged by transportation changes. Availability of routes, resources, and clear communication about changes.
- Bebhinn: There are absolutely accessibility concerns with the changes we are experiencing right now.
- Alex O'Reilly: Lack of staff in all sectors make it difficult to run businesses. Hearing that some bus routes are being decreased due to lack of drivers.
- Mike Dee: any plans to help with Metro Connects?
- Bebhinn: Perhaps, but that would need to be something we hear from Metro.
- Amy Biggs: Urban/Rural divide; what are the barriers to getting more rural transportation? Marianna might have info on what is happening in other rural area??
- Margo Iniguez-Dawes add themes: more options for Access riders and people who aren't Access-eligible but are close

WSDOT Statewide Human Services Transportation Plan

The presentation shared by WSDOT is included in meeting follow up material and is available on the King County Mobility resources page under meeting materials. Please review those slides for details on the draft strategies. These notes cover nuance that was shared in conversation.

The Statewide Human Services Transportation Plan is currently open for public and tribal comment. That comment period is open through March 7th. [Hyperlinked here](#) is the engagement webpage.

Monica Ghosh highlights that the presentation and conversation today will highlight purpose/objectives of the plan, a review of strategies outlined in the plan, and presenters want to know of any fatal flaws in these strategies.

As this is a statewide planning document, once it is passed, it will influence future regional, county, city, and other jurisdictions' plans. This statewide plan will inform budgets and legislative priorities.

Major findings

High level major findings from the outreach and research process may be familiar with members of this coalition, they include:

- People with specialized transportation needs face continued barriers to access
- Mismatch between provider capacity and user needs for transportation create transportation gaps in both rural and urban areas of the state.
- People with specialized transportation needs do not always feel safe using the transportation options that are available in their area.
- Coordination between human service agencies and transportation providers continues to be essential

Goals of this plan:

1. Accessibility
Human services transportation (specialized transportation) is accessible and helps more people get to the places they need to go. This goal is addressing the question of getting to services and if the existing network and services get people to where they need to go.
2. Safety
This goal includes infrastructural components which would support accessibility – sidewalk improvements, lighting, shelters, etc.
3. Ease of use
This goal includes elements of simplifying finding and connecting to transportation resources. Monica also mentioned that this goal is supported by improvements to broadband access, as increasingly more specialized transportation services have web based access points.

Strategies:

Attendees were asked to focus their discussion and comments on three strategies:

1. Improve the influence of people with mobility barriers
2. Make it easier to use technology to plan, book, and pay
3. Improve access to transit and on-demand mobility

Matthew Kenna: Brock mentioned in chat that he is interested in created mobility and age friendly communities and the infrastructure investments to enable that.

Alex O'Reilly: Wanted to highlight the fact that some of the communities are going to need more frequent service even though they do not have a huge ridership. Older adults have anecdotally told her that there is not a critical mass of people but they still have essential trips that often are off peak hours. Hoping there is flexibility with strict standards, particularly with underserved communities.

Marianna: Responding to this; what you are talking about drives home the point on Major Findings and Conclusions identifies the importance of coordination between transport and human services. The work in spaces like this helps identify needs. The strength of mobility coalition in the means of how those needs are addressed. The state's goal is to say they are seeing what you see, that these needs should be addressed. I am not sure we can expect the state to mandate anything (maybe assist with grant money). Very important piece to highlight and shoutout to mobility coalitions for the work they do.

Matthew: point about addressing unmet transportation need. Accuracy is a challenge on how big the gap is and other specifics on it, hoping we have a more concrete answer this is. If anyone is interested in helping shape that work, we are putting together a small group to help steer that work.

Dorene Cornwell: One of the ways I look at this is through folks that are 100% transit dependent. The other point, if you build low-income housing half a mile from the new transit route there is an inherent gap being baked in there. Having vocal transportation advocates in planning meetings can help mitigate this at the planning stage, many points where folks can intervene.

Jean Kim: acknowledges the time it took to craft this. It would be great to see the plan before PSRC works on their regional plan to ensure better integration. Let's coordinate better going forward.

Monica: Good point, syncing would be useful.

Brock: I like the idea of creating a baseline service level, probably more of a qualitative statement. So much is happening around micro transit, which is kind of an evolution of paratransit, so many lessons learned there might be a role of WSDOT with case studies on when switching to a flex route would make sense. Might be beneficial model for rural areas. Just eliminated Alpaca, found it helpful when providing comment on Lynnwood's micro transit. Allowed a deeper level of analysis at the census block level, tools like that are super helpful for micro transit planning.

Same Day Transportation Resources: King County 211 & SDOT Mobility Project

The next section of the KCMC meeting covered two new same-day services that are available in our region.

King County 211

211 has mostly been a resource for information and referral services in the past. Have historically referred to transportation. Recently launched an in-house program as of January.

Ride United, currently a pilot program. Currently capping it at 1 round trip or 2 one-way rides to ensure resources last. Goal is to fill gaps in the community, serving folks who fall through the cracks and need same-day transport. Looking to serve those with non-emergency medical, job, housing, and food transportation needs. Eligible trips must begin in King County but not in Seattle. Live in Lyft service area, 18+ or with a guardian. Must follow mask mandate. Eligible trips are capped at a \$22 cost and paid in full by King County 211.

Questions

Staci: It has been running for a month, any examples of how it has been used?

Tiffany: for example, dialysis ride, ride to job interview when car broke down, etc. Have options where folks can have the ride called on their behalf, or they can be sent a link to facilitate their own trip after-hours or on weekends if needed. 130 Afghan refugees in Federal Way are a target population to put this service to good use.

Margo: 2 questions; how is this program funding, long term implications? Is there any other way to request service beyond calling? Eligibility criteria?

Tiffany: looking to extend funding from Ride United and Lyft, exploring what that will look like long term. Eligibility is 18+ or with guardian, complying with pandemic safety regulations, but no income checks. Looking to leave eligibility open as long as it is being applied to the aforementioned use cases. Looking to test the current pilot program before expanding.

Margo: could you explain the use case assessment?

Tiffany: relying on self-reporting for the time-being.

Caitlin: How does the \$22 dollar limit work, do folks need to use the Lyft app?

Tiffany: They must call 211 right now but no they do not need to use the app or even own a smartphone. Using the Lyft fare estimator to figure out the cost of the trip.

Caitlin: what happens if an estimate comes out to like \$25 dollars, can I pay the difference?

Tiffany: At the moment it would be ineligible, to keep things simple during the pilot it will remain this way, might look at being flexible with providing codes in the future for cases like that.

SDOT Mobility Project:

Inclusive mobility on demand running for the last year, the grant was to produce a pilot of a mobility on demand solution for older-adults and people with disabilities.

On-demand rides to destinations in their neighborhoods. Can have access to discounted trips via yellow cabs, Uber or Lyft. Vouchers and Digital promo codes a tool used to facilitate this. Imagining 4-6 vouchers per month based on access needs. Sent by email or mail. Any trip that starts or ends in Seattle is eligible, short trips encouraged, \$10-15 subsidy, connecting with transit encouraged, bigger subsidy (\$15-20) if that connection is made.

Plan to launch pilot in March to run through May. Pilot webpage will be communicated with this group so word can be spread.

Questions and Conversation:

Staci: How will this pilot respond to needs for wheelchair accessible vehicles?

Margo: This was one big reason why yellow-cab was involved as their fleet has accessible vans.

Judy: I have quite a lot of interaction with Uber/Lyft as a visually impaired person, will there be any driver vetting? I occasionally have issues with drivers not having accommodations in place.

Margo: Looking to make the providers aware of the accommodation requirements when taking these rides, aiming to allow the best way to communicate this with drivers. Also aiming to create a communication channel with SDOT for feedback to communicate directly with these services.

Judy: Where I live, I would put in text messages on how to find my pick-up location, and the drivers would create erroneous mask-wearing complaints on botched pickups.

Don: I want to follow up with you on this feedback as Metro is developing a program that is similar. Also noticed that some Yellow Cab drivers occasionally deny vouchers.

Briefings

One-Call/One-Click Project Updates

Staci shares conversations like the one we've had today, about eligibility criteria and how to make existing processes easier, are exactly why this project is being conducted. Technical workshop in March is coming up. Software vendor RFP will be launching in March. Last quick plug, transportation providers are being reached out to for information collection, if you are a transportation provider please be on the lookout for that communication. Beta testing likely in fall.

Puget Sound Regional Council Update

The Draft Regional Transportation Plan, which is updated every four years, is open for public comment. Comment period ends on February 28th. Visit the online open house for all the relevant details. [This hyperlink](#) will take you to the engagement website.

The regional plan includes an appendix, the Coordinated Mobility Plan, which details specialized transportation services and the needs and gaps in our region regarding these services.

Sound Transit Update

Driver shortages have led to some service reductions across the region. [Hyperlinked here](#) is an article detailing these temporary reductions. Working to find more operators and maintain the ones we have.

West-Seattle-Ballard environmental impact statement for Light Rail has been made available for comment.

Upcoming updates on fare compliance policies will be shared in the coming months.

King County Metro Update

Service reductions will likely continue in March, staffing shortages still primary barrier. Labor shortage and vaccine mandate are two known points of constraint. In the coming months, instead of service change updates, it will likely be an update of service reductions.

Subregional Coalition Updates

Vicotr London-Quintero introduces himself to the Coalition. He has been a member of the Hopelink Mobility team for nearly four years and has recently become the Program Manager of Volunteer Transportation. In this role he will work to coordinate and share best practices among and between volunteer transportation programs in the region.

Bebhinn then shared her thanks to Mark Smutny whose last day with Sound Generations was 2/15. He will continue to be a partner and advocate for a well-connected region.

Next Steps

- Next Meeting: May 17, 2022 from 9:30am-11:30am, remote

OUR VISION:

*A coordinated transportation network that allows all people to move freely
around King County and the Puget Sound region.*

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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