King County
MOBILITY COALITION
Meeting Notes

Tuesday, November 17th, 2026 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM Bellevue City Hall, 450 110th Avenue NE, Bellevue

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

Presenters

Jesseca Brand, Community Engagement Program Manager, WSDOT
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Matthew Weidner, Senior Strategic Planner and Systems Analyst, King County Metro
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Sean Bouffiou, Records and Licensing Services Division, Dept of Executive Services, King County Sean.Bouffiou@kingcounty.gov

Co-Chairs

Anny Smith (City of Kirkland) AMSmith@kirklandwa.gov
Aaron Morrow (Advocate, Hopelink Board Member) AMorrow@hopelink.org
Lorrie Alfonsi (Accessible Services, King County Metro) Lorrie.Alfonsi@kingcounty.gov

Participants

Adam Halpern, (Jewish Family Services) ahalpern@jfsseattle.org
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Hannah Cecena (ORCA) Hannah.cecena@soundtransit.org
Mark Smutny (Civic Reinventions) mark.smutny@civicreinventions.com
Griffin Cole (Catholic Community Services) griffinC@ccsww.org

Hopelink Mobility Staff Support

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Ari McKenna (Program Supervisor, RARET) amckenna@hopelink.org
Grace Georgitsis (Program Supervisor, Find a Ride) ggeortsis@hopelink.org
Dean Sydnor (Program Manager, Find a Ride) dsydnor@hopelink.org

Announcements

- Welcome new KCMC members: Hannah Cecena and Erin O'Connel (ORCA)
- Nominations are open for the third co-chair and will be accepted through December 31st. Email Lyn McCarthy at emccarthy@hopelink.org.
- **Project celebration:**
    a. Inclusive Planning Toolkit revision/update
    b. Rural Transportation Advocacy workshop series. The result will be a rural advocacy toolkit (under development).
    c. Volunteer Driver Event – December 4th, Hopelink Bellevue, 10am–12:30pm (register)
- **Staci Sahoo – Medical Chaperone grant project:** Kaiser Permanente has provided a grant of $24k for our team to help address this barrier.

Community Compensation

Jesseca Brand, Community Engagement Program Manager, WSDOT

Why compensate community members

- Barriers to participation: systemic inequities, cultural/linguistic, transportation
- Compensation removes barriers
- Meaningful, inclusive community engagement

- Fosters relationships based in trust and respect
- Addresses historical harm

Legal framework and implementation

- WA passed a law in 2022: RCW 43.03.270 provides the legal framework
- Implementation required policy development
    - Internal buy-in and external buy-in
- Pitfalls
    - Answering vague language questions
    - Implementing before answers were available
- Initially did not include childcare, but now it is included
- Records require attestation and demographic forms
    - Pitfalls – what information is needed and how/where should it be stored? Attestation and demographic forms *can* be separated.

Accounting controls

- **Internal:** buy-in, policy deliberation, limitations
- **External:** documentation, and what it looks like with slow shifts in policy

Change management

- Created internal tools (SharePoint, best practice manual, and instructional video)
- New hurdles (adoption across the agency, bespoke supports)
- Most regions have now taken part in this process

How much?

- $57/hr has been adopted, based on King County cost of living (also the rate provided in Eastern Washington)
- Hired a consultant to manage the program
- Standard of practice
- Additional onboarding and cultural sensitivity is needed

Success stories

- Project- and plan-specific, as well as relationship building
- Seeing a shift in energy – each week provides a new group and new opportunity

Questions and discussion

- **Traci Adair:** $500k for how long?
    - **Jesseca:** Two years.
- **Traci Adair:** Were there requirements for how much was spent in community vs. consultant?
    - **Jesseca:** 2/3 and 1/3 was the thought, but we still need to analyze that.
- **Examples:**

  - **Olympic Region:** Youth doing walking audits and youth focus groups. Collaborative with school districts.
  - **Southwest Region:** Roundabout – needed more time with community for planning. Mini-grants and micro-programs.
- **Staci Sahoo:** What is the philosophy on organizations delivering compensation vs. people?
  - **Jesseca:** With CBOs, it becomes stepping into using them as a consultant vs. community. Better to implement as a mini-grant. Largely dependent on the type of work you are doing (focus group vs. something else).
- **Mark Smutny:** Please reflect on the impact on tribal and Latinx communities.
  - **Jesseca:** Tribal is government-to-government – we will not treat them as community compensation unless we have tribal government approval to do that. Have not had engagement with the Latinx community for anything to stand out in my mind.
  - **Mark:** Thinking of the Yakima Valley.
  - **Jesseca:** Communities have been very cautious about how and whether they share their information. We have moved to first name only for attestations for those communities.
- **Alex O'Reilly:** What form of payment? Check? Gift card? A bank account requirement can be a barrier for some.
  - **Jesseca:** Typically it will be cash-like. Bank transfer is one method. If no bank account, we offer a service for whichever gift/bank card works best for the individual. However, many cards charge a service fee, which needs to be accounted for. Do not feel comfortable sending people out with cash. Generally arranged through email. WA State can't choose a specific card/vendor.

KCMC Community Compensation Pilot

Background

- Successfully implemented community compensation in the 2018–2019 inclusive planning grant
- Identified as part of the KCMC 2023–2026 action plan
- Late 2025: received a mini-planning grant from WSDOT to pilot compensation
  - Due to federal requirements, cannot use federal funding for community compensation

Work to date

- Created community compensation policy and standard operating procedures
- Determined $57/hr
- Created a standard form
- Several use cases:
  - KCMC's Access to Health and Wellbeing storymap interviewees
  - Find a Ride's advisory committee – ongoing compensation for advisors

  - Find a Ride's prototype user testing (one-time)
- Updated community compensation resources in the latest KCMC Inclusive Planning Toolkit

Lessons learned

- Everyone eligible deserves compensation (no raffle)
- One participant shared feeling guilty for not speaking up enough in meetings
- **Ongoing compensation:**
  - Orientation is essential to avoid confusion about eligibility
  - Acknowledge fear of a participant going over the income allowed for SSI benefits, etc.
  - Limit the timeframe individuals can request compensation (60 days)
- **One-time transactions:**
  - Tremendous gift cards were more cost-effective than traditional Visa gift cards
- Plan ahead, but the amount of time given by participants will vary
- Our inclusive engagement was as big as the budget allowed
- Community compensation doesn't cost a lot when it's part of a broader project

Remaining questions

- Who has the final say in eligibility?
- What guardrails should be considered for work completed outside of meetings?
- Determine sustainability of this practice for our coalition

Next steps

- Continue to pilot compensation for Find a Ride Advisory Committee members and the next round of user testing
- Hear feedback from community members receiving compensation

Questions and discussion

- **Cynthia Coffin:** When does Find a Ride launch so we can use it?
  - **Dean Sydnor:** Find a Ride is in phased development. The current version is available to use and has an accessible trip planner and a provider list page. Future rounds of development include streamlining eligibility. Through this phase, we will determine what we want the final product to look like. We do not have an exact timeline, but are aiming for the end of 2027 for the next phase to be completed.
  - **Amy Biggs:** It also has the "one-call" feature enabled (transportation resources line).

King County's Personal Mobility Market

Matthew Weidner, King County Metro, and Sean Bouffiou, King County Records and Licensing Services

Matthew Weidner

- 20 years in demand-response – analyst, consultant, researcher
- What role should governments play when markets fail?
    - **Market failure:** an adverse outcome when the free market system fails to ensure the efficient distribution of goods and services
    - Externalities, information failure, market control (monopolies)
    - **Growth model of market failure:** something new enters the market and the market force enters society; there's an understanding phase where we see the market failures, then a containment phase where we introduce regulations to balance societal goods with market failures
- Responses to market failure
    - **Nuclear energy:** rapid response to a new technology; regulation minimizes potential market failure
    - **Telephony in the US:** Bell telephone system controlled the market; regulation broke it up
    - **Modern firefighting:** used to be a private business; as cities and fires got larger, unorganized brigades weren't able to fight fires and the benefit of private brigades shrank, so firefighting was eventually socialized
    - **Horse industry:** crisis when automobiles came along; Congress considered subsidizing the horse industry but ultimately decided to let it fail (no social benefit)
    - **Urban transit in the US:** used to be privatized; automobiles made it harder to sustain transit as a private enterprise, so society decided to socialize transit, and it is now the domain of governments to provide the service
- Personal mobility market failures
    - No such thing as a perfect market – only a theory used to understand market structure
    - Failures: accessibility, imperfect information, imperfect distribution, lack of universal design
- Wheelchair accessible personal mobility market
    - Not enough wheelchair accessible taxicabs; not available when you need it/you have to wait longer (Aaron Morrow)
- 79 wheelchair accessible taxis for 2.3M people
    - 1.5% of the population needs a personal mobility device, which means 28,000 potential wheelchair accessible TNC customers
    - **Ambulatory vehicles:** 22,485 permits in the personal mobility market, 84 customers per vehicle
    - **Wheelchair accessible vehicles:** 79 vehicles, 354 customers per vehicle
    - This makes it roughly 3.5x harder for customers with wheelchairs to access TNCs
- Market disruptions
    - High structural costs associated with wheelchair accessible vehicles
    - As government, intervene by countering high structural costs with monetary incentives

- Market information/resource discovery
    - To locate one of the 79 resources, you need to call several companies to see if they have a vehicle that fits your needs
    - How do we reduce friction in market discovery?

Sean Bouffiou

- For-hire transportation in King County: taxicabs, TNCs (Uber, Lyft), WAVs (wheelchair accessible vehicles, mostly taxis)
- 79 vehicles – TNCs refer riders to taxis; peak demand often exceeds supply
- WAV owners have increased costs, including vehicle acquisition, conversion, maintenance, insurance, and driver training
    - Riders cannot be charged a higher fare, which creates a financial burden for WAV owners
- King County program reimburses WAV owners the $0.10 fee charged for each trip
- Separate dispatch systems, no (or limited) network connections
    - Hoping to support shared access points that provide visibility into accessible services
    - A coordinated dispatch network will connect providers by a common technology platform
    - Providers can help connect customers to other providers with available vehicles
    - Service will be available through app, phone, website, or directly through a provider
    - Contracted with iCabbi to implement this coordinated dispatch platform, with emphasis on interoperability and access to resources
    - Success measured by whether wheelchair users are able to more easily access transportation, information, etc.

Discussion

- **Amin Shifow, Yellow Cab:** The issue is supply and demand
    - With 47 vehicles, Yellow Cab services approximately 85% of wheelchair accessible trips
    - The remaining 15% of trips are serviced by the remaining 32 vehicles from other companies, which are mainly airport transportation services
    - Yellow Cab completes 91%–94% of wheelchair accessible trips
        - Looking at trips cancelled after 15 minutes, most were customers with wheelchairs
        - No-shows after 20 minutes are also mostly wheelchair customers
- **Comment:** Supply still feels low – would more money in the pot allow for greater supply?
    - **Sean:** Want to grow the fleet to meet the demand, rather than increasing the number of vehicles if they won't be used
    - **Matthew:** Lots of friction in customers finding an available resource, which suppresses market demand. People can't find things when they need them, so they

give up on trying. Want to reduce the friction so we can see true demand, and so drivers will be incentivized to participate because they will see more demand.

- **From a licensing standpoint:** WAT licenses are for companies that only operate WAVs, while WAV licenses are for those who choose to operate WAVs but can also operate other vehicles

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Next Meeting: *February 16th* 2027, from 9:30 – 11:30 ZOOM
