Meeting Summary

Date: December 18, 2025
Staff Support: Ysabel Yu, Heather Clark

Participants

Anat Caspi (Taskar), Meredith Sampson (KC Metro), Jordan Hoover (KC Metro), Kelli Steele (CCS/Volunteer Services – Everett), Cate Lee (City of Shoreline), Shun-Jen Hsiao (KCLS), Chitra Subramanian (Hopelink), Justin Rossman (TriMet – Portland), Roz Novikova (Hopelink), Alan Budde (City of Shoreline), Mackenzie Kneeland (Hopelink), Brittany Chue Gutierr4, Erin Funk (Hopelink), Brock Howell (SnoTrac), Genevieve Jones (KC Metro)

Access Map and OS-Connect Overview

Presenters: Anat Caspi and Kunal Mehta

OS-Connect and Access Map are designed to center people and their real-world connections to essential destinations, particularly transit. The project emphasizes **connectivity and usability over sheer quantity of infrastructure**.

Data Collection and Scope

- Sidewalk inventory and accessibility mapping are **hand-vetted by humans**
- Data covers **133 jurisdictions** and includes detailed attributes such as:
    - Sidewalk inclines and slopes
    - Crosswalk conditions
    - Surface types
    - Tactile paving
    - Barriers (e.g., stairs, raised curbs)
- The platform can provide **personalized directions** tailored to individual mobility needs, including:
    - Avoiding steep inclines
    - Avoiding noise
    - Avoiding barriers
    - Landmark-based distances

Key Insights and Use Cases

- A 2021 WSDOT report attempted to assess access to frequent transit but lacked sidewalk condition data, limiting accuracy. OS-Connect fills this gap.
- Data reveals disparities, such as **greater sidewalk coverage in Bothell compared to Shoreline**, which can be used as an advocacy and planning tool.
- The concept of "accessibility islands" highlights how disconnected infrastructure increases travel burden for users.
- Visual data helps identify **where investments will have the greatest impact on connectivity and reach**.

Cross-Jurisdiction Considerations

Data has been collected across county boundaries (e.g., Bothell), allowing for cross-county travel analysis. While not all cross-county data is currently displayed on Access Map, the team is open to making it visible.

Funding Opportunities

- **SCLIO Grant applications are open**, with the next deadline on **February 1, 2026**.
- Applicants are encouraged to propose how they would use OS-Connect data in planning, advocacy, or service design.
- **Tier 1 applications** require a one-year timeline and budget justification.
- Support is available through **office hours (Tuesdays, 8–10 a.m.)**.
- Additional engagement opportunities include **OpenThePaths 2026 (February 26–27, 2026)**.

Contact: uwtcat@uw.edu
Access Map App: accessmap.map (web-based)

Discussion

- **Example applicant:** Kittitas County used an app to collect bus stop accessibility data and submitted it to OS-Connect.
- **Cross-county issues:** Data exists and can be shared more broadly upon request.
- **Technology access:** Access Map is an online application, not a downloadable mobile app.

Metro Flex Update

Presenter: Meredith Sampson

Metro Flex is part of King County Metro's strategic plan to pilot **innovative, flexible transit service models**. All Metro Flex services are launched as **two-year pilot programs** and evaluated for continuation.

Service Guidelines and Priorities

- Core priorities: **equity, access, and density**
- Evaluation metrics include:
    - Equity
    - Productivity
    - Efficiency
    - Availability of mobility options

Some areas, such as Issaquah and Bel-Red, are subsidized to meet equity and access goals.

Performance and Evaluation

- Performance data from **September 2024 – March 2025** was reviewed.
- The County Council has directed the **Juanita Metro Flex service** to continue for an additional two years.
- Pilot success is measured relative to the **lowest-performing fixed-route service areas** and considers whether riders have alternative transit options.

Factors Influencing Productivity

- Density of destinations and population
- Presence of a central transit hub
- Size and efficiency of the service area
- Street network design
- Marketing and public awareness

Large or geographically complex service areas can be harder to serve efficiently.

Discussion

- Cross-county border inequities were raised, particularly in areas like **Bothell**, which spans county lines.
- Steep inclines and poor pedestrian infrastructure can undermine service effectiveness even when transit is available.
- Participants discussed whether Metro Flex could serve **larger or rural areas** or operate during **high-demand periods only**.
- A specific example included seasonal or event-based demand, such as traffic to **Remlinger Farms**, where a shuttle connecting Carnation and Redmond Transit Center could be effective. Metro Flex was identified as a potential fit for this use case.

Outreach and Accessibility

- Metro Flex vehicles are wheelchair accessible.
- Meredith Sampson is the primary contact for detailed service questions

Roundtable Updates and Announcements

- OS-Connect will release **accessible, FIFA-specific information** via Access Map in preparation for upcoming events.
- A future KCMC meeting will include a **panel discussion on FIFA**, with coordination planned between Lyn and Anat.
- Two **RTAP events** are planned for 2026:
    - March: North Bend
    - August: South King County
- Participants were invited to contribute to a **StoryMap project** by sharing stories or contacts.

Action Items

- **Jordan Hoover** will connect with **Shun-Jen Hsiao** regarding Metro Flex materials for libraries and information on wheelchair-accessible vehicles.
- **Lyn** will follow up with **Anat Caspi** about participation in the FIFA panel at an upcoming KCMC meeting.

Next Steps

Next meeting is on February 26th, 2026 10:30am-12:00pm over Zoom. Calendar invites for 2026 will be sent in the following week.