

**Wednesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**10:00am-12:00pm**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

Attendance: Sara Sisco (Hopelink) Rodney Chandler (Pierce County Transit), Chris Bekkouri Behany (Silver Lake SNF Everett) Judy Brown (UW Northwest Hospital), Todd Holloway (Disability Integration at CFI), Tom Sharp (King County OEM), Bill Hagen (HCU, BCM/BCP Coordinator), Tyler Verda (Snohomish County Human Services), Pat Kenney (ARC) Mona Steele (Homage Senior Services) Ausha Potts (Pierce Transit ADA eligibility assistant manager) Anne Marie Jehle (King County Metro Access), Bill Wagner (NCMM), Jim House (Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning), Jeremy Trenhaile (King County Metro), Daeveene May (Pierce County) Nick Solari (PHSKC), Lucas Smiraldo (staff liaison to Tacoma Areas Commission on Disabilities), Brock Howell (SnoTrac)

Staff Support: Bebhinn Gilbert, Bree Boyce, Heather Clark

### **Welcome, Introductions, & Announcements**

The meeting would begin with the customary introductions and agenda review prior to the meeting starting.

RARET Announcements would be the first topic covered, and they would be as follows:

- RARET Newsletter emails are being sent monthly, sending resources to [DSydnor@hopelink.org](mailto:DSydnor@hopelink.org) is highly encouraged.
- In Covid-19 news, [children 5-11 are now eligible for Pfizer boosters](#)

### **Pivoting to partner Updates**

- Jim House from CIEP:
  - At the June 1 CIEP Monthly Stakeholder call we will have Willie Nunn, Director of FEMA Region 10 with us. We meet on Zoom from 10-11am.
  - CIEP will have a Table Top Exercise on June 22 (all day) to discuss how this group of AFN experts can stand up and respond to disasters.
  - Also, there will be a pre-event player briefing and orientation on the tabletop exercise for community members not familiar with emergency management on June 8 from 1-3pm. We will have ASL interpreters and live captioning for all events. For more info email me at [jim.house@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:jim.house@dshs.wa.gov).
- Mona Steele from Homage: TAP can provide free transportation for Covid Vaccines in Snohomish County even for children. An adult needs to ride with. The family needs to provide their own car or booster seat.

## Pierce Transit COVID-19 Response – Rodney Chandler

The next topic would be a Pierce Transit Presentation courtesy of Rodney Chandler, who heads their emergency management efforts. This presentation would focus on the COVID-19 response Pierce Transit formulated while articulating lessons learned and best practices:

- Rodney began by articulating a timeline of the early stages of the pandemic.
  - December 2019 – virus first emerging. PT supported a review and update to emergency plans
  - January 2020 – private medication clinic exercise
  - March 2020 – declaration of emergency for procurement of public works, goods and services related to Covid
- From this, Pierce Transit met to review agency readiness and issued a telework directive. Collaboration would play a big role as they actively coordinated with county health department. Additionally, they would share weekly updates with partner agencies. A situation report was created and updated by 4pm weekdays.
- In the field, an increased frequency of cleaning and disinfection was instituted while operators provided with sanitizing supplies. However, at this stage supplies were a challenge (e.g. masks and hand sanitizer). Pierce Transit issued small disinfectant spray bottles to staff and limited how many people could be on a coach (50%).
- There would be continued consultation with health department as the April 6<sup>th</sup> mask mandate took effect. The agency had cloth masks available for employees. Pierce Transit was already requesting that passengers wear masks prior to mandate.
- May of 2020 would see predictions that pandemic could last 18-24 months. PT planned accordingly with this duration in mind.
- Rodney would cover some Innovations Pierce Transit would implement:
  - Spray bottles of disinfectant when hand sanitizer was not widely available
  - Cloth masks, created internally
  - Contracted a company to help disinfect buses
  - Installed simplified barriers to keep passengers distanced from operators
  - Return to work kits with PPE
  - Upgraded building air filtration systems
  - Implemented shadow buses (increasing number of buses to help with social distancing – shadow bus follows another to pick up excess passengers)
  - PT volunteers distributed masks to passengers
  - Temperature checks for staff
  - Partnered with Tacoma whole child partnership day camp program to provide free childcare to transit employees
  - Provided free mobile wifi hotspots to help students with remote learning

- Tried a disinfectant fogger, but it was not successful
- Arranged employee discussion with medical providers about vaccination
- Coronavirus information hub developed
- Partnered with state of Washington to provide free rides for testing and vaccination
- Hired full time emergency management professional
- On-board announcements for covid guidance to passengers
- Mask dispensers installed on buses – mask distribution continues
- Private medication center vaccination event for employees and family members
- The COVID-19 pandemic would alter the transportation landscape in the region, and service changes would be implemented to match this reality. This meant that Pierce Transit:
  - Considered possibility of staffing shortages
  - Closed some bus stops
  - Implemented social distancing on buses (placards on seats)
  - Suspended fare collection
  - Shut bus lobby down and reduced hours
  - Reduced staff by 25% using furloughs
  - Laid off 30 operators
  - And now are currently recruiting heavily – drivers going straight from training to full-time work

Across the board, ridership was impacted. But, as Rodney highlights, it is recovering across their fixed-route, Shuttle, and Sound Transit services.

Diving into best practices, Rodney highlighted a selection of moves that were done right:

- Keep 3 months of PPE supply on hand
- Use the PC DEM and TPCHD for resource requests and partnerships
- Daily situation reports
- One person designated as the subject matter expert for an event
- Maintain private medication clinic plan
- Utilize employee capacity to volunteer (big impact – making and distributing masks, etc)
- Using header signs, on-board messaging, social media
- Filter system with upgraded HEPA filters
- Bi-weekly meetings with EOC team
- Monitor local, state, and federal covid guidance
- Questions/Discussion

Rodney would also devote some closing moments to cover anything they would do differently. He would note two points, the first would be maintaining a stock of PPE

prior to the outbreak and the second would be “more aggressive” with initial actions, noting that one does not always have to wait for official guidance and should feel emboldened to respond more nimbly.

### **Transportation Provider Network Updates**

Bebhinn Gilbert, the leader of Hopelink’s King County Mobility Coalition (KCMC) would next present on a report published by Hopelink Mobility Management and KCMC on their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically the report focuses on the Coordinated Vaccine Transportation Helpline project which was created to facilitate rides to and from COVID-19 vaccine appointments.

- A taskforce was created when vaccinations became available and focused on transportation access and coordination
  - Wanted to ensure equity in delivery and service
- Coordinated Vaccine Transportation Helpline is launched based on taskforce feedback.
  - Piloted some aspects of One call/One Click project currently under development and provided an early prototype for the ETPN via a network of providers to help facilitate rides.
  - More than half of callers had less than 24 hours before their appointment when trying to arrange transportation
  - Lessons learned: Connect decision makers early on, response networks need clear definitions, consistent communication is key, Strong need for flexible, on-demand services

Bebhinn would open the floor to questions and comments briefly after the presentation:

- Nick Solari – thank you for the presentation and for the great work that has been accomplished. In public health, discussions about how to address problems – limited transportation options for people experiencing homelessness. When folks were outside of facilities, they were outside longer than they should have been. Disproportionally impacted. Thank you for this work.
- Dean – our transportation provider partners were vital. Service improved over time based on feedback

### **ETPN Update**

Before the roundtable discussion, Dean would dive into a brief section on the Emergency Transportation Provider Network Project (ETPN). After recapping what the project entails broadly, that is formalizing emergency transportation coordination efforts, he would update the group on the next steps. This would entail a June 24<sup>th</sup> Summit to launch the project

publicly and have partners meet to collaborate. More details on that summit would follow in subsequent communications.

### **Roundtable Discussion: Extreme Heat**

The roundtable discussion section would focus on extreme heat. To set the stage Dean would recap that over 100 individuals perished in heatwaves in the PNW last year and that this discussion aims to learn from what happened and prepare for future events:

- Dean – RARET learned that weekend timeframe was challenging, given usual weekday schedules and services – this helped inform snow event in December over the holidays
- Tyler – Snoco Human Services – have plans to address upcoming heat season. Will identify folks who are most at risk and what services they can provide. Will set up community hub with information about cooling centers. Reaching out to clean air agencies. Working on cooling fans and getting those where they need to go. Working to figure out how to retro fit centers that serve vulnerable populations (senior centers). Low income energy assistance program can provide portable AC units to those who qualify. Portable HEPA filters available as well.
- Jim House – CIEP – people who work with the public should learn basic ASL to assist people. “People who work with the public should learn some basic emergency gestures and sign language. Happy to provide a 1.5-2 hour workshop on this.”
- Nick Solari – National weather service heat risk forecast is available. If organizations are developing objectives and strategies, consider tying those to National Weather Service HeatRisk forecasts. Public Health - Seattle & King County plans to match our guidance/recommendations for the public and other responding agencies to HeatRisk hopefully starting this summer: <https://www.wrh.noaa.gov/wrh/heatrisk/> and [https://www.wrh.noaa.gov/wrh/heatrisk/pdf/HeatRisk\\_More\\_Info\\_Web.pdf](https://www.wrh.noaa.gov/wrh/heatrisk/pdf/HeatRisk_More_Info_Web.pdf) Lesson learned from their agency – there is more to risk and forecast – geography, time of year, acclimatization determine risk. Consider multiple factors into whether to open cooling centers.
- Tyler Verda – question to Nick – Considered tying their decisions to NWS forecasts – what should be our triggers? Nick – when one of those WWA’s is issued, heat advisory for example, when those are issued, those will be accompanied by a heat risk forecast. Reid is a good contact for questions: Reid Wolcott: [reid.wolcott@noaa.gov](mailto:reid.wolcott@noaa.gov)
- Tyler: our draft plan language currently says, "Following the issuance of any WWA product, the NWS HeatRisk map is used to understand the relative risk across King County as indicated by the experimental HeatRisk forecast. This forecast describes the level of risk to identified heat-sensitive populations in the community and actions to take to stay safe."
- Dean – people who live in their vehicles are isolated and at significant risk. How can we step up our outreach in these situations? What are best practices in reaching out to people who are isolated?

- Jeremey – KC Metro access – outbound messaging system. Sent automated messages out to their Access riders

**Next Meeting:** July 27<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am-12:00pm via Zoom

Regional Alliance for Resilient and Equitable Transportation (RARET) Workgroup Contact:

**Dean Sydnor**, RARET Coordinator

DSydnor@hopelink.org

(425) 429-5995

**Bree Boyce**, Program Manager

BBoyce@hopelink.org

(425) 943-6751

***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](mailto:mobility@hopelink.org) or by calling (425) 943-6760.*

***Title VI Notice to Public***

*Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Hopelink is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its transit services on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1.B. If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination under Title VI, you may file a complaint with Hopelink's Title VI Coordinator. For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact Hopelink's Title VI Coordinator at (425) 869-6000 or [TitleVI@hopelink.org](mailto:TitleVI@hopelink.org).*