

RARET/ETPN Tabletop 2024 Follow-Up Document

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Event Overview: The Regional Alliance for Resilient and Equitable Transportation (RARET), hosts an annual tabletop event in King County Washington. RARET aims to address coordination problems around life sustaining transportation during emergency events with a focus on those with access and functional needs. This hybrid tabletop event allows partners from around the Central Puget Sound and beyond to tackle scenario-based transportation challenges in a no-fault collaborative environment. The aim is to identify gaps and build relationships which can help address them.

Scenario Overview: In this 2024 event, the scenario had a seismic focus. A magnitude 9.0 earthquake has struck the Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ), causing very strong shaking across the Pacific Northwest for five minutes. The epicenter was located approximately 70 miles off the Oregon coast. Preliminary evaluations indicate widespread roadway and bridge damage along the coast and I5 corridor. Significant flooding, liquefaction, and structural collapses are evident. Communications infrastructure (cell service, internet, landlines) across the region are damaged and coverage is spotty. Some urban fires have ignited but are largely under control within a few hours.

Transportation Challenges: Participants were presented with two main transportation challenges in the context of this seismic event:

- 1: an evacuation of a skilled nursing facility
- 2: individual transportation needs from a shelter

Each challenge had its own details and provided individualized examples of riders. They are presented as happening simultaneously to promote a discussion about trip prioritization.

Lessons Learned

Having joined in group discussions and listened to summaries of their collaborations, RARET has distilled some primary lessons to be shared from this exercise.

Early Warning Technology

- Summary: Using the early warning system, ShakeAlert, can provide precious forewarning of seismic events. Additionally, if connected via a technical partnership, there is an opportunity to receive automated responses that result in less damage to lives and organizations.

ShakeAlert is a taxpayer funded early warning system that can offer critical time to prepare in the immediate moments prior to impact of a seismic event. ShakeAlert is functional at two levels. One is personal, using the information produced from ShakeAlert sensors applied to alerts from apps like MyShake, which send alerts directly to users' phones. This is built into Android devices and can be downloaded on the Apple App Store for iPhones. The other level is a technical partnership. The ShakeAlert team can meet with various organizations to outline the process for automating certain responses should a seismic event be detected. Examples of this automation have included automated PA announcements, automatically opening firehouse doors, and automated slowing and stopping of trains.

Relevant Links:

[ShakeAlert Hyperlink](#)

[ShakeAlert Technical Partners Resources Hyperlink](#)

[MyShake App Hyperlink](#)

Relationships & MOUs

- Summary: 1.) Widespread disasters can spread resources thin; relationships with local transportation resources can streamline responses to those with time-sensitive needs when the time comes. Facilities and local emergency management, where possible, should build relationships, both informal and formalized through MOUs, with local organizations and groups that have access to transportation, particularly those with wheelchair-accessible vehicles or those with access to all-terrain capabilities.
- Summary: 2.) Facilities should understand their plan for communicating emergency needs during a seismic event; building a relationship with local emergency management can help address this need.

Seismic events can cause widespread disruption. Regional resources may be split between multiple priorities and infrastructure damage. A strong link between facilities and local emergency management, as well as local emergency management with transportation resources in the area, is a vital step in relationship building. At the regional level, understanding where different transportation providers are, and their capabilities, can help solve problems across a wide area. In the Central Puget Sound, county emergency management's relationship with Mobility Management, specifically RARET, the King County Mobility Coalition (KCMC), Snotrac, and the Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition (PCCTC), can help utilize transportation resources of all sizes. Collaboration with mobility management can also help fashion tools or resources that can be useful during emergencies if pursued ahead of time.

Information Gathering and Sharing

- Summary: 1.) Gathering information about client transportation needs is critical to allocating scarce resources. Understanding the correct mobility solution for someone's needs ensures scarce resources are not misallocated. Having a clear chain of communication delivered through proper channels is critical.
- Summary: 2.) Understanding the types of mobility information transportation providers require in advance saves valuable communication time.

Gathering information to solve transportation problems requires specific prior knowledge to ensure it is done optimally. Understanding the client's needs is a clear first step. An example of this is making effective use of limited wheelchair accessible vehicles by understanding which clients are ambulatory enough to take non-wheelchair accessible vehicles with minimal physical assistance. Moving as many clients as possible with non-specialized vehicles will reduce strain on the vehicles in higher demand. Knowing what transportation providers need to know ahead of time ensures that you will not have to make repeated requests to gather additional information. For example, if you know that a transportation provider has a maximum wheelchair width their cabulances can accommodate, knowing that limit in advance ensures your first request for transportation assistance comes with all the information that provider needs. Transportation providers have myriad eligibility requirements and physical limitations. If the relationship with transportation providers rests with emergency management, getting in touch with their mobility managers is a great way to establish familiarity. In the Central Puget Sound, RARET aims to build an Emergency Transportation Provider Network (ETPN) with providers who are clear about their flexibility during emergencies and open to providing non-public information directly to emergency management.

Transportation Provider Capabilities

- Summary: A transportation provider's ability to respond is not solely dependent on the number of vehicles they have but is also affected by where their drivers are located during the disaster and how many can be mobilized. The severity of the disaster and the time of impact can dramatically change a provider's ability to respond.

In blue-sky, or non-emergency conditions, the current transportation landscape already makes low, or no-notice transportation requests a challenge to fulfil. An emergency event exacerbates some of the factors, particularly regarding staff availability. From transit agencies to small private transportation providers, a common theme in the post-COVID years has been the struggle to recruit and retain vehicle operators. While much work has been done, there is not typically a deep bullpen of drivers on standby to field sudden requests. During an emergency event, especially if it is a night, a weekend, or a holiday, the lack of available drivers could mean scarce resources are even more difficult to secure. To secure one's own access to these resources most effectively, requests for transportation support should be submitted with as much lead time, and

relevant information, as possible. If the request is submitted with too little time to prepare, there may not be a solution to get a driver in the vehicle.

The Role of Volunteers

- Summary: Mobilizing local volunteers may be an effective stopgap measure for problem solving ahead of more specialized resources becoming available. Building relationships with volunteer groups ahead of time can be useful. But caution should be exercised to ensure volunteers are safe, controlled, and accountable.

Staff shortages both in transportation and at the facility in the seismic scenario was noted by participants. Groups explored different avenues for finding volunteers to shore up certain gaps. Volunteer groups with training, such as amateur radio operators and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), were noted as very helpful resources. More unconventional options explored in discussion were an independent living community assessing which residents were still effective drivers who could use personal vehicles to move ambulatory non-driving residents and connecting with local biking groups as messengers should communications be non-functional. Volunteers can be overeager and undertrained, so having firm control of your area and a clear chain of command to exercise control of crowds is necessary so a client's needs are addressed as safely and orderly as possible.

Client Tracking

- Client tracking is a vital component of safe and effective transportation response, especially with large groups and multiple destinations. Forms and procedures for tracking should be crafted, practiced, and used.

Client tracking is an essential piece of this response. This scenario presented dozens of clients and multiple destinations. Knowing who is going where, when, and with whom is paramount. A client lost or misplaced can have life threatening consequences. Forms and procedures around client tracking should be practiced ahead of time by facilities and clearly explained to any organization rendering assistance. Anyone on the scene who is integrated into the transportation process should be informed of any necessary tracking steps, be familiar with any forms or procedures they need to engage with, and double check the information of all assigned rides. Clear client tracking is also beneficial when working with smaller transportation providers who need to seek reimbursement from disaster response. Knowing whom they moved and how far could be critical information to secure appropriate compensation. Non-transportation partners have a vested interest in

ensuring provider compensation as well since their financial survival, and ability to respond to future incidents, may depend on it.

RARET's Event Takeaway

With these findings in mind, RARET believes it is possible to solve transportation problems in this region during a seismic event like the one simulated. Regional collaboration seems to be in a good position, with counties and transit agencies having good foundational relationships and history of collaboration. However, what needs improvement is local connections that can provide aid while a regional response is unavailable or stretched thin. Connections to smaller transportation providers and local groups can be absent or unknown, and in an event of this size, even groups like RARET, who may have relationship with these organizations, might not be reachable. For this reason, a key area of focus should be fostering relationships and building tools for emergency management to better understand what transportation resources are available. RARET's Emergency Transportation Provider Network project aims to build one such tool. Reflecting on the exercise, RARET sees a path forward to boost regional readiness as attending partners clearly identified gaps to improve upon and understood how to effectively apply their existing expertise and resources.

Summary Action Items:

- Organizations should explore how seismic early warning technology can increase their resiliency.
- Building pre-existing local relationships is key to an effective response, facilities like skilled nursing facilities may struggle to build a network on their own. Localities should strive to form effective triangular relationships between facilities, emergency management, and transportation providers. Support from mobility management and county-level organizations can assist with this.
- RARET will continue to work with partners on the Emergency Transportation Provider Network Project (ETPN) to build a mobility management tool for emergency managers to easier navigate transportation resources and relationships.
- Those who will need to organize transportation for clients should learn about the required information local transportation providers will need to arrange a trip. Client mobility needs should be fully understood to ensure the right solution is sought for them.
- Facilities should have rehearsed methods for client tracking and a clear plan to communicate relevant information to partners they will coordinate with, especially transportation providers.

Event Attendance:

Event Attendance (In-Person): 25

Tony Hester (CFI), Tim Alton (Hearthstone), Mariel Wooley (Disability Empowerment Center), Kristina Sawyckyj (Accessibility Subject Matter Expert), Kathy Brasch (Carnation-Duvall Citizen Corps), Rowland Brasch (Snoqualmie Valley CERT Ham Radio), Tom Sharp (King County Office of Emergency Management), Ian Watson (Homage), Gabriel Lotto (University of Washington), Lou Ann Ballew (Kiwanis), Lisa Kraft (Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning), Mike Bailey (Wesley Homes), Joel Smith (Skyline), David Heyer (Columbia Lutheran Home), Jim House (Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning), Wyatt Godfrey (Pierce County Department of Emergency Management), Brock Howell (Snotrac), Cynthia Coffin (Disability Empowerment Center), Lloyd White (Homage), Debbie Hunt (King County Office of Emergency Management), Chris Bekkouri (Bethany Silver Lake), Lisa Sargent (City of Issaquah), Diane Reese (Hopelink NEMT), Victor Londono (Hopelink NEMT), Cassidy Thorne (Disability Empowerment Center)

Event Attendance (Virtual): 34

Amy Cloud (Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management), German Parodi & Shaylin Sluzalis (The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies), Erik Cleveland (Columbia Lutheran Home), Zane Murray (Skyline Seattle), Neal Cleveland (Columbia Lutheran Home), Catherine Rawsthorne (Whatcom County Health and Community Services), Hiba Issa (Skyline Seattle), Joe Sperry (Judson Park), Jesse Gilpatrick (Center For Independence), Todd Holloway (Center for Independence), Lawrence White (Covenant Shores), Oliver Zurita (Providence Marianwood), Tyler Verda (Snohomish County Human Services), Jeff Abrams (Accessibility Subject Matter Expert), Cecily Joque (Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department), Pv Jantz (FEMA), Stephen Valenzuela (King County Metro Access), Richard Freed (DSHS), Stacy Mesaros (Hearthstone), Darren Branum (Community Transit), Pamela Cokash (Kin On HCC), Laura Hofmann (Leading Age), Sophia Lopez (City of Seattle), Rachael Gerdis (Covenant Shores), Elizabeth Cox (Snohomish Health Department), Jennifer Alcantara (Bothell Healthcare), Kaila Newton (Bothell Healthcare), Rebecca Carpenter (Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management), Andrea Pratten (Judson Park), Stacy Parizek (Northwest Healthcare Response Network), Liz Clement (WA Department of Health), Sadie Martinez (Colorado DHSEM), Ausha Potts (Pierce Transit)

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