



King County Transit Advisory Commission

Aug. 18, 2020

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Teleconference: Zoom meeting

Commission members in attendance: Lin Robinson, Jacob Struiksma, Cheryl Harrison, David Johnson, Pete Rubin, Angela Theriault, Ayan Mohamed

King County staff: Michelle Huynh (Metro, Community Relations), Cindy Chen (Metro, Community Relations), Tristan Cook (Metro, Community Relations) Kim Kinnison (Metro, Transportation Planner), De'Sean Quinn (Metro, Strategic Planning Manager), Natalie Westberg (Metro, Transportation Planner) and Maha Jahshan (Metro, Community Relations)

Guest: Gale Shinozaki

Current TAC chair Pete Rubin opened the meeting.

The group approved the consent agenda, which consisted of meeting minutes from July meeting. The group also approved appointing Jacob Struiksma as the chair, and Aaron Morrow as the vice chair.

Metro gave an update about TAC applications and recruitment. Metro received 20 applications, and several TAC members volunteered to review applications by Aug. 27. Most of the applications came in from people who saw the recruitment ad through social media.

Policy Updates: Service Guidelines and Upcoming 2021 Service Reductions

Presenters Tristan Cook, Community Engagement Planner, Kim Kinnison, Transportation Planner, and De'Sean Quinn, Strategic Planning Manager, gave a presentation to discuss potential changes to Service Guidelines, blended presentation that talks about guidelines for reducing service, and share planning for 2021 reductions.

The Service Guidelines are being updated to align with the Mobility Framework recommendations and Equity Cabinet priorities. One of the key guiding principles of the Mobility Framework is to engage deliberately and transparently. Many different policies guide Metro's approach to engagement including Service Guidelines, the county's Equity and Social Justice plan, Metro Strategic Plan and professional associations for public engagement. Metro's Have-A-Say program signifies a commitment to meaningful two-way dialogue that is customized, equitable, informative, transparent and responsive.

Proposed updates for the engagement section of the Service Guidelines include:

- Update the existing goals with the Have-A-Say goals and add a focus on long-term relationship building in communities.
- Centering equity and focusing on priority populations and design strategies that increase engagement from priority populations.
- Mobility boards represent people who have been left out



- Partner Review Board – would have jurisdictions, nonprofits, institutions
- Community as co-creators – resourcing partners to design/implement, coordinated across Metro and the county, partner transit agencies. Meet people where they are. Engage early. Focus on long term relationships.

TAC members had several questions and issues to discuss with presenters. Members also had some feedback about the way information was presented.

- Major employers were not identified as a key population.
 - Metro is communicating regularly with employers, and surveying employers during COVID. Partner Review Boards are part of engagement processes, which include major institutions and employers when looking at service restructures.
- Members expressed disappointment and frustration about the way information was presented in a PowerPoint. The materials were sent out less than 24 hours in advance. Members prefer to have the presentation be more of an extemporaneous dialogue, since the information is too dense to absorb without adequate advance notice to review materials.
- How do you see this commission continue to play a role in this work?
 - The policy updates team will continue to update TAC and come to meetings regularly to get feedback on the updates and the long-range vision. The current schedule is to submit the updated policies in mid-2021.
- It would be useful to have specific examples about the proposed changes, including why the specific changes are needed or what they are responding to. For example, why is the specific change necessary and what have people said before about not engaging?

In response to the discussion questions: How can Metro demonstrate openness to shared decision-making and co-creation? What strategies should Metro use to reach people with the greatest barriers to participating in public engagement? What is important an engagement report to provide transparency about our decisions for the community?

- Appreciated the term co-creator because it keeps the emphasis on all parties being in this together. Getting out into the community and being where people already are is the most effective way.
- Building relationships is critical to co-creation. What isn't working now? What do people want to see more of?
- Want a word doc of all the materials instead of PowerPoint.
- There are a lot of existing groups and venues that Metro should participate in. The National Federation for the Blind meets the third Saturday; Metro needs to reach out to more organizations serving people who are blind, and present materials in non-visual ways.
- Metro needs to reach out to people with disabilities, people with low incomes and those without jobs that rely on Metro. The focus should not just be on employers and big companies.



Service Guidelines – Service Reductions

Metro will be reducing service in 2021 and using this as an opportunity to incorporate the Mobility Framework principles into the reductions and prioritize equity as a specific factor in the updates. A new tool called the Opportunity Index Score illustrates where needs are greatest and looking at the routes to see how well they connect areas of needs. In this planning process, Metro is refining strategies and the engagement approach to meet a deadline in March 2021 for the Council. Metro staff briefly described the engagement, which will be area-focused and walk people through the network to get their feedback.

Questions from the commission included:

- What do we mean by areas of unmet need?
- Timing will be tricky for when employees go back to work (2021).
- Need to discuss how to pay for service; if service is tailored to people who are essential workers or priority populations, then people who aren't getting as much service may not want to pay for service that doesn't serve them.
- People w/ disabilities live where existing transit is, and use it to get to where they need to go. Do not want Metro to cut service; there should be more effort on finding additional funding.
 - *Staff noted that this is an important point, and that there is a structural issue with funding that will be highlighted in these policy updates, which will need a regional solution.*
- Employees returning to work will slowly increase ridership. Seniors and people with disabilities were petrified to use transit during COVID, and have to be careful when they ride the bus. Some organizations like Lighthouse for the Blind came back slowly, month by month; we may need to consider cutting service based on what we have learned during this time. The DeafBlind community has experienced a lot of isolation during this time. During this time before a vaccine, we need to be considerate and equitable in how we make decisions about infrastructure.

Members had some ideas for equity-focused virtual engagement including:

- Virtual events are easier, and more people can attend.
- Transit Riders Union and there are other independent transit advocacy groups
- How is the deafblind community involved in community engagement efforts? Sighted community maybe able to use virtual platform?
 - Metro could work with Lighthouse for the Blind to make sure everything is accessible and in the appropriate format. Lighthouse for the Blind is not representative of the whole deafblind community and there is diversity within the community. DeafBlind Service Center is another good organization.
 - We will partner with communities where they are, through community-based organizations. Providing materials for people to give out. Phone meetings. We cannot do anything in person but work w/ those already in community.



- Some of the organizations that Metro should reach out to include the National Federation for the Blind, American Council for the blind, and the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library.
- Vashon Island needs service because buses don't serve the medical center and food bank during the day. There are pockets of need in certain areas and should not be missed. The food bank is a lifeline for thousands of people.
- More flexible alternative services across the county needed.
- Engage with employees themselves, not just the employers. Many employees are put in the position of being "essential workers" and need transit to get to and from work as well as other mobility needs outside of work.

Metro staff shared the next steps, which include starting stakeholder engagement, working with the Regional Transit Committee and coming back to the TAC. The TAC will have an opportunity to give feedback in October about the September 2021 service reductions. How will you engage with people without internet access, how do they have a voice?

Motion to adjourn.