Special Needs Transportation Committee

March 15, 2017 • 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
PSRC Board Room • 1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500 • Seattle, WA 98104

9:30 1. Welcome and Introductions – Jacque Mann, Chair

2. Public Comment

9:35 3. Reports from PSRC Committees and Boards and Update of SNTC Representation – PSRC Staff and SNTC Committee members
   • Jacque Mann, Transportation Operators Committee
   • Alex O’Reilly, Regional Staff Committee
   • Staci Haber, TDM Steering Committee
   • Gil Cerise, Regional Reduced Fare Permit Task Force (March 17 meeting)

9:45 4. Information: Update on WSDOT Evaluation of Consolidated Grant Regional Priority Ranking Distribution* – Gil Cerise, PSRC & Ryan Warner, WSDOT

10:05 5. Discussion: Update/Revision of Coordinated Plan Demographics – Jean Kim, PSRC


10:35 7. Discussion and Break-Out: Evaluating Coordinated Plan Needs, Gaps, and Duplications and Identifying Desired Outcomes* – Jean Kim, Gil Cerise, & Kimberly Scrivner, PSRC

11:25 8. Discussion: Local Coalition Reports / Emerging Issues

9. Next Meeting: April 19, 2017 from 9:30 am to 11:30 am in PSRC Board Room, 1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500, Seattle, WA 98104-1035

11:30 10. Adjourn

*Supporting materials attached
RTPO /MPO Focus Group 2/23/17
Meeting Summary

Attendees: Mike Oliver (PRTPO), Karen Parkhurst (TRPC), Gil Cerise (PSRC), Deb LaCombe (YVCOG), Nicole Campbell (CDTC), Judith Donovan (CWCWOG), Debbie Clemen (PRTPO), Phil Nollmeyer (Quadco RTPO), Mark Hamilton (SCOG), Ryan Stewart (SRTC), Dale Robins (RTC), Kinsey Larsen (NEW RTPO), Shaun Darveshi (Palouse RTPO), Andrea Weckmueller-Behringer (WWVMPO), Bill Fashing (CWCWOG), Mary Anderson (WCOG), Melinda Lee (TEDD), Len Pavelka (BFCG), Jan Olivier (Quadco)
WSDOT Staff: Nicole Patrick, Tom Hanson, Alan Soicher, Ryan Warner, Kathy Johnston, Sharilyn Howell, Shamus Misek, Evan Olsen, Doug Cox

Nicole Patrick opened the meeting by describing WSDOT’s Consolidated Grants program and the current regional ranking process. She described that the total number of ranking spots for each RTPO/MPO is calculated based on the number of people living within the boundaries of each RTPO/MPO (excluding urbanized areas – according to the OFM Highway Urban Area Population Estimates). The factors considered include: persons per square mile, total rural population, and total and percent of population under 18, over 65, with disabilities, living in poverty, and that are veterans. These factors use both raw numbers and statewide percentages. Using both of these data sets provides another balance point across the state because urban counties generally scored more ranking spots with the raw numbers of a vulnerable demographic while rural counties generally scored well using the statewide percentage. The number of ranking spots allocated to single county RTPO is capped at nine. Nicole then described that the total number of spots for each RTPO/MPO is then divided by three to derive the numbers of As, Bs, and Cs that each receives. These regional letter scores translate into additional points during the evaluation/ranking stage for projects submitted to WSDOT. This has traditionally been sufficient to fund projects that received a B or higher score in the regional ranking.

Nicole then invited meeting participants to describe the process they use to rank proposals at the regional level, and offer ideas for improvement for the distribution of ranking spots and/or the regional prioritization process.

Below is a summary of the ideas generated from the discussion.

- Need more intuitive methodology. While it does allow for a comparison of apples to apples across the state it seems more reflective of the number of providers in a region. It does not accurately capture the local need; rather it identifies the number and proportion of people of special populations. Single county cap of 9 ranking spots does not consider a county’s percent of the state’s population of special needs. Population ratio should be considered.
- Ranking spots could be allocated by county. For example each county gets 3 As, for multi-county RTPO/MPOs they would get 3 As for each county represented. Multi-county RTPO/MPOs retain discretion for how many within each county get an A regional ranking.
• What if there was no limit to number of As a region could use. Rather, each region would develop their own scoring criteria which the project would have to pass in order to receive an A ranking.

• The way that the current formula works, single county RTPOs have an advantage over multi-county RTPOs. In many cases, there are only a handful of projects coming from a single county, with all getting A scores. In the opposite extreme, we have some multi-county RTPOs with projects getting C and D scores. Is this equitable?

• Should there be a consistently applied baseline across all RTPOs/MPOs (in addition to any region specific criteria) for what attributes a project has to have in order to receive an A ranking?

• Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding goes straight to a region for distribution, no state ranking or involvement for project selection. Should this process also be implemented for the Consolidated Grants program?
  o WSDOT staff noted there could be some challenges with how this would work, particularly for the Federal Transit Administration funding that must be entered into their Transit Award Management System (TrAMS). Also, because there are five funding sources in the Consolidated Grants program that are designated for specific services and specific entity eligibility, it would be difficult for the state to determine how to equitably distribute funds from each funding source.

• Instead of regional letter scores (A, B, C), should regions just rank all of the projects according to local priority, and then this local ranking would factor into the overall state ranking?
  o Discussion: There is a stigma for some associated with projects receiving a letter score of D, reminiscent of a near-failing grade in school. Regions could hard rank the projects; there may be less of a stigma associated with being ranked #24 out of 30 projects. If this were the case, what mechanism would be used to compare a project ranked 24 in a multi-county RTPO/MPO against a project ranked #3 out of 3 in a single county RTPO/MPO? Another idea is for regions to separate projects into three categories of high/medium/low.

• Should 1 or 2 slots be reserved for projects that meet needs from the state perspective?
  o Discussion: No distinct opposition was voiced; several thought this made sense. Some regions have projects that cross region boundaries; they would like direction on which RTPO a multi-county project should go to for ranking.

**Other Items of Information**

• Notice of funding for HSTP updates will occur April/May 2017, with an effective date of July 1, 2017.

• WSDOT will distribute a map illustrating 2015-17 projects by region showing funding request vs. award and number of projects funded/ unfunded.

**Next Steps**

• Regional stakeholder meetings
• Recommendations for June 8, 2017 meeting
• Next round for GPAC September/ October 2017
March 8, 2017

For inclusion in RTPO/MPO stakeholder engagement activities pertaining to Consolidated Grant Program regional ranking methodology and ideas for improvement.

- Would you like to see WSDOT provide more guidance on ranking of projects or on WSDOT priorities?

- Would you like to see a system for distribution of ABCs that recognizes the number of service providers in a region?

- What type of data would provide a better basis for distributing ABCs amongst the regions if the current data isn’t working?

- Does WSDOT simply need to better explain how the current distribution of ABCs is determined?
MEMORANDUM
March 8, 2017

TO: Special Needs Transportation Committee
FROM: Jean Kim, PSRC
SUBJECT: Evaluating Coordinated Plan Needs, Gaps, and Duplications and Identifying Desired Outcomes

IN BRIEF
At the March 15th SNTC meeting, PSRC staff will present a summary of regional needs assessments (Attachment A) to inform the committee prior to the discussion session. We plan to begin engaging the SNTC in review and update of the needs, gaps, and duplications found in chapter 4 of the existing Coordinated Plan (Attachment B).

BACKGROUND
The current 2015-2018 Coordinated plan was published in May 2014 and PSRC will update the plan by fall of 2017, as part of the next Transportation 2040 update (scheduled for adoption in spring 2018). PSRC is planning to update the Needs, Gaps and Duplications chapter (Chapter 4, page 35-39, see Attachment B for an excerpt) of the Coordinated plan in coming months based on committee’s feedback and agency’s targeted public outreach effort. As presented at the January SNTC meeting, PSRC will focus on updating the chapter to make more actionable and oriented to connecting funding to the biggest regional transportation needs and gaps.

At the March meeting, PSRC staff will present summary of regional needs assessment and will facilitate discussion to hear committee’s input on emerging needs and gaps in our region.

DISCUSSION
PSRC is seeking the Special Needs Transportation Committee review and comment on the needs, gaps, and duplications chapter of the existing Coordinated plan. We are also interested in committee’s feedback on:

- What needs, gaps, and duplications are still relevant;
- What kinds of needs and gaps are missing in our existing plan;
- What are some desired outcomes associated with each need, gap, and duplication; and
- Additional resources for regional needs, gaps, and duplications.

For more information prior to the March 15th SNCTC meeting, please contact Jean Kim at (206) 971-3052 (jkim@psrc.org) or Gil Cerise at (206) 971-3053 (gcerise@psrc.org).
Attachment A: DRAFT Regional Needs Assessment and Survey Summary

In advance of the Coordinated Plan update, as part of the next Transportation 2040 update, PSRC staff conducted a review of existing needs assessments and County area plans to identify most up-to-date transportation needs and gaps in each County. Following is the summary of the review:

SUMMARY

King County

King County Area Plan of Aging 2016

- Conducted throughout 2014 and early 2015. 580 individuals completed the questionnaire.
- About 60 percent of those who completed the survey were between age 60 and age 74.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Three Needs of Older Adults</th>
<th>Top Three Needs of Adults with Disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness</td>
<td>In-home Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Housing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Transportation is limited in suburban and rural King County, though some suburban cities have additional transportation services to meet the mobility needs of its seniors and other citizens with limited travel options.
- Rural community members expressed several creative strategies to address the needs of elders in their communities.
- As identified through community engagement and outreach activities in suburban King County communities, public transit is limited or difficult to access outside of urban areas. Yet many health and social services are centralized in urban areas like Seattle. This places an economic burden on low-income communities of color, compromising access to social services and healthcare.
- Service providers in King County stressed that services for the disability community need to be appropriate for the person, delivered in the appropriate format and at the right time. Additionally, service providers should use adaptive and assistive technologies when developing information materials, and should offer community events in accessible formats.

KCMC Needs Assessment 2014

- Education and training resources are needed for individuals to have the understanding to navigate the system. These resources must be culturally and linguistically appropriate and relevant to the specific needs of the population.
- Safety and security are among the most frequently mentioned issues of importance to transportation users. Additional promotion of safety through training and information is needed. Investments in physical infrastructure such as upgrades to sidewalks and other infrastructure improvements may create a safer environment for individuals traveling to and from transit stops and their final destinations.
- Cost and convenience were final transportation barriers that were noted.
- Lack of convenient services was also noted as a challenge that could be considered a spatial, temporal, or infrastructure gap.

KCMC Action Plan (excerpt)

Goals:
1. Broad based community representation and participation on the Coalition
2. Transparency and open communication between system providers, funders and users
3. Enhanced mobility for the entire community
4. Coordination, efficiency and availability of transportation services that meet the specific needs of people who are transportation disadvantaged
• **Initiative 1. Access to Healthcare:** Improve access to medical care via transportation resources and services for residents in King County.
  o **Strategy 1.4** Explore alternative ways to pay fare on paratransit to improve accessibility and customer experience for people with disabilities using paratransit to access medical appointments and other services.

• **Initiative 2. Veterans Transportation:** Improve the mobility of veterans in King County.
  o Strategy 2.2 Network with veteran services agencies and provide travel education and resources to their staff and clients.

• **Initiative 3. Emergency Management Coordination:** Increase the availability of life-sustaining transportation services available to vulnerable populations in an emergency.

• **Initiative 4. Education and Outreach:** Increase education and outreach to under-served communities.

• **Initiative 5. Suburban and Rural Access:** Ensure convenient, affordable, sustainable transportation in suburban and rural areas of King County.
  o **Strategy 5.1** Coordinate with King County Metro, local jurisdictions and other partners to expand demand-response service and other alternative transportation services in suburban and rural areas.

• **Initiative 6. Livable Communities:** Improve mobility to enhance the quality of life in communities throughout King County.
  o **Strategy 6.4** Work with cities and other stakeholders to improve pedestrian infrastructure and expand non-motorized transportation options.

• **Initiative 7. Access to Work and School:** Improve access to employment and education.

---

**Solid Ground Community Needs Assessment 2014**

**Emerging Issues:**

• **Funding challenges are leading to service cuts,** Organizational consolidation creates transportation challenges as service providers’ satellite locations close.
  o Opportunities: Pursue new funding strategies and alternative service delivery. Innovations in service delivery could include new transit modes, better utilization of private-sector services, car-share, and various models utilizing volunteer drivers.

• **Infrastructure is insufficient and deteriorating,** contributing to increased congestion. Lack of funding options has led to an increased reliance on user fees such as fares and tolls, which creates an additional cost barrier.
  o Opportunities: Identify new funding for maintenance and repair, coordinate our work with Transportation Demand Management efforts, explore fee exemptions/reductions for special needs populations.

• **Increased need due to demographic changes,** including seniors aging in place and an expected increase of individuals with low vision or hearing loss, returning veterans, continued influx of immigrant and refugees, and millennials delaying driving or choosing not to drive.
  o Opportunity: Develop specialized approaches to target outreach to specific populations.

• **Technological innovation** holds promise to close gaps, but could create others.
  o Opportunity: Promote inclusive technologies and innovations that increase access. Examples include mobile-app based Transportation Network Companies, transit user apps, data interoperability systems, and assistive technologies such as driverless cars.

• **Increasing understanding of the importance of equity and social justice in transportation policy,**
  o Opportunity: Coordinate our efforts with equity and social justice initiatives.

• **The cost of living in core areas well served by transit is increasing and low-income households are being displaced to suburban and rural areas.**
  o Opportunity: Continue to emphasize the importance of geographic equity and develop projects to address issues and challenges in suburban and rural areas.

• **Our awareness of our vulnerabilities to natural or man-made disasters is increasing.**
  o Opportunity: Coordinate with on-going emergency management efforts focused on inclusion of vulnerable populations.
City of Bellevue Human Services Needs Update 2015-16

Gaps identified:
- More affordable and accessible transportation options to employment and training centers.
- Coordinated, accessible transportation options for people with disabilities.

Seattle Children’s Community Health Assessment Report 2016

- Lack of transportation, difficulty navigating the healthcare system and long wait times continue to be barriers to accessing care. Immigrants and refugees who are culturally isolated are particularly vulnerable. Community health workers and patient navigators play a crucial role. Specifically, community members report a lack of access to dental and mental health care and believe hospitals can play a role in improving access.

Shape the Future of ACCESS Transportation (Phase 1 Engagement) 2016

- 600 people completed the survey, approximately 200 phone calls, emails, and letters were received with comments on ACCESS service.

What does Access not do so well and should be changed?
- The scheduling/routing of rides
- Concern about being on the vans too long
- Lack of reliability of service, not arriving on time
- Poor or lack of communication about arrival time or at pick up – especially stressful when dispatch can’t be reached and there is a problem
- Need for more coverage and/or span – e.g. Redmond Ridge, Duvall, Vashon
- Cancellation policy issues, inflexibility for riders and drivers
- Inconsistency of driver quality, call center – inconsistency between providers, more training needed, more ways to value staff and reward positive performance
- Driver cross-cultural communication
- Fares are too high
- Transfers

Ideas for improvement
- Online reservation system would be great
- Ability to make reservations using different technology and communicate more effectively in real time about trips – e.g. “text/app confirmations of pick up or drop off times, tracking each van, providing driver with pictures of passengers s/he is picking up”
- More flexibility and adaptability of drivers to respond to real time travel needs of passengers
- Different scheduling and routing technology is needed
- Better follow up on complaints and questions – have a separate entity handle complaints; better system is needed so people don’t get passed around different places and should re-tell their story
- Would like different forms of payment – to use ORCA and can have fare deducted from the ORCA card; to pay with credit card or have a fee that doesn’t involve change

Kitsap County

Kitsap County Area Plan of Aging 2016

- Total 720 respondents, 418 (58%) live in the major metropolitan areas of Kitsap.
- 5 are under 50, 36 are 50-59, 320 are 60-74, 198 are 75-84, 85 are 85+.
- Transportation:
  - 538 drive where they need to go (75%)
  - 198 ride with friends or family (28%)
  - 77 use community transit (11%)
  - 74 ride the bus (10%)
  - 26 use a volunteer transportation program (4%)
  - 23 use a taxi (3%)
  - 430 can get around in their community without a car (60%)
Respondents had the following concerns about their community:

- Poor/no sidewalks (129 respondents, 18%)
- Physical ability (122 respondents, 18%)
- Few amenities near their home (78 respondents, 11%)
- Personal safety (60 respondents, 8%)
- No crosswalks (47 respondents, 7%)
- Poor lighting (37 respondents, 5%)

- 77% of respondents are able drive their car or get around on their own.
- 68% of respondents have access to public transportation but only 25% use it.
- 27% of respondents don’t use transit because it is not convenient or it takes too long.
- 31% of respondents have a disability that limits one or more of their usual daily activities.
- 74% of respondents can do activities of daily living by themselves, or have enough people to help them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Five Needs of Older Adults</th>
<th>Top Five Needs of Adults with Disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Personal Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities/Companionship</td>
<td>Physical Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Housing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

City of Bremerton Consolidated Plan and 1-Year Action Plan 2015

- Community meeting was held in April, 2015 and twenty-three people attended:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 3 challenges in our community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation connectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of economic diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aging infrastructure and housing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kitsap Interagency Coordinating Council Head Start/ECEAP Partnership 2016

- Changes to public transit (Kitsap Transit routes) since the recession in 2008-2009 are most likely to affect those who rely on public transportation during their work commutes or for accessing childcare, health care providers, and community services.
- As reported in the 2014 Comprehensive Assessment, staff from the Early Head Start/Head Start program reported that several families had to turn down space in the program due to transportation difficulties and that absences due to transportation continued to be a challenge. Some families have shared vehicles between multiple family members, but limited bus access and the cost of gas are the main contributing factors to transportation challenges.

Pierce County
PCCTC Vision 2030 and Strategic Plan 2015-2020

- Strategic Goal #1: Close Transportation Gaps
  - The availability of transportation options declines significantly once outside of the Pierce Transit service area, specifically in Key Peninsula, DuPont and military bases, and east and south Pierce County. The lack of transportation options, both within and outside of the PT service area and across county lines, is listed as a significant barrier to accessing employment, education, and other resources.
  - Veterans and military families frequently struggle to find transportation to services during business hours. Many military families have access to only one car and the service member uses it to drive to work. Spouses left at home are therefore unable to get to the base to access services.
  - Children are often unable to participate in after-school programs because of their parents being unable to drop them off or pick them up.
• **Strategic Goal #2: Connect the System**
  - As of 2015, people are still unaware of current transportation services. Most people are aware that Pierce Transit offers fixed route service, and SHUTTLE service for people with disabilities, but are not aware that Pierce Transit only covers part of the county. Many are also unaware that other transportation options are available throughout the county.

• **Strategic Goal #3: Close Awareness Gaps**
  - Transportation options have been consistently underfunded and disincentives for coordinated transportation persist (i.e., restrictions on programs to share rides). Federal, state, and local policymakers, as well as the medical and social service programs, seem to be either unaware of the multiple benefits of transportation access, or assume that the public transit authority has the funds to handle all the transportation needs in the county.

**Pierce County Area Plan of Aging 2016**
- The ADR Community Survey consisted of 35-Qs available in an online format and in hard copy.
- A total of 67 individuals completed while an additional 75 people provided input through forum voting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Three Needs of Older Adults</th>
<th>Top Three Needs of Adults with Disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation (49.3%)</td>
<td>Transportation (54.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care (38.6%)</td>
<td>In-home Personal Care (35.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness (31.4%)</td>
<td>Health Care (34.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-home Personal Care (31.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Forum participants were asked which services they would prioritize if Aging & Disability Resources experienced a 15% increase in funding. Their responses included the following:
  - **Volunteer transportation** (65.4%)
  - Adult day health (55.8%)
  - Nutrition programs (36.5%)

- Three-quarters of survey and forum respondents reported they could get around by driving their own vehicles, but nearly half of respondents reported that they rely on friends or family for transportation from time-to-time, and 12.5% reported that they use Pierce Transit’s Shuttle (paratransit) service or another accessible form of transportation.

- Many County residents also report that their neighborhoods are not accessible, pedestrian friendly, or situated close to amenities such as grocery stores, pharmacies, and physician offices. 46.6% of respondents stated that they cannot navigate within their community unless they have access to a car.

- Participants reported eating smaller portions or skipping meals during the past year because they couldn’t get to the grocery store (18%) or meal sites (9%). In response to the question if Aging and Disability Resources service budget was increased by 15 percent, which of the three services would you prioritize for an increase, respondents said: Nutrition Programs, Adult Day Health, and Volunteer Transportation

**Human Services Needs Analysis Report 2014**
- One of the seniors’ unmet needs is low-cost transportation options. The city of Lakewood identifies social isolation as a growing issue for the elderly and people with disabilities, including Veterans with disabilities, due to limited access to affordable transportation.

**City of Tacoma Human Services Strategic Plan 2015-2019**
- A low-income person has greater difficulty accessing available opportunities due to structural barriers, such as lack of affordable housing, inadequate transportation options, and lack of affordable child care. This is especially true for racial and ethnic minorities and those with language barriers.

**Pierce County Needs Assessment Project Survey Results 2015**
- 921 surveys collected, was available in six languages
- 25.7% of respondents use public transportation
- 2 services significantly harder to access for County Residents over Tacoma Residents: Job Training and Public Transportation
- Free shuttle services were one of the most important services
- Non-English households less likely to use available services including senior services, mental health services, disability services, cash assistance, job training, etc. However, individuals in color rated these services more important than their Caucasian counterparts.
- Pierce County residents less likely to use transportation services compared to Tacoma residents (Tacoma residents utilize transportation services 1.7 times more): could indicate lack of awareness of the services available within Pierce County
- Older respondents use transportation services more

**Snohomish County**  
**Snohomish County Area Plan of Aging 2016**
- Over 780 surveys were completed online.
- Approximately 15% of Snohomish County residents live entirely outside the Everett Transit and Community Transit service boundaries.
- In Snohomish County, there are an estimated 2,686 persons age 60 and older living in rural areas. While there are many benefits to living in rural areas, older adults residing in these communities often experience challenges in maintaining their homes and accessing services due to their geographic isolation.

**SNOTRAC Coordinated Transit-Human Services Plan 2030 Vision 2015**
- **Goal 1.** The community recognizes coordinated, multi-modal transportation is important and is willing to pay for it
- **Goal 2.** Transportation service gaps are eliminated
- **Goal 3.** Everyone is aware of and has easy access to transportation services
- **Goal 4.** Barriers to pooling funds and grouping trips are eliminated

**Current reality and gap analysis**
- Growing senior populations and people moving to rural, more affordable parts of the county that are without public transportation service contribute to the growing demand for more transportation options.
- Transit agencies usually serve the areas with highest population density, which leaves many in rural and isolated areas with limited transportation options.
- In addition, transportation services throughout the county struggle to cost effectively meet the demand for weekend and late night transportation services, as well as transportation between cities.
- Current policies and contracts restrict providers from serving outside of their territory, which results in another transportation gap – the ability to conveniently cross county lines or access destinations that are not a “qualified” trip.
- It is very difficult to keep the information in the databases accurate, and riders are confused about which resource to use for information.
- Furthermore, poor bus and pedestrian access exists in the county including lack of accessible paths to bus stops and long walks between mobility options (e.g. airport to Sound Transit station, Everett Station Sky bridge).
- Parking spaces for wheelchair accessible vehicles is inadequate at medical facilities, and bus shelters are not available where they are needed most (e.g. cancer treatment clinics).
- Each funding source for publicly-funded transportation services has different rules and restrictions which result in single passengers on multiple vehicles going to the same place, as well as unnecessary long trips for passengers.
- Complexity of meeting the requirements of multiple levels of federal, state, regional and local governments.
Chapter 4
Needs, Gaps, and Duplications

Federal law requires that the Coordinated Plan identify needs and gaps in the special needs transportation network. The needs and gaps outlined below were assessed throughout the planning process through outreach to transportation providers and local mobility coalitions. In addition, subject matter experts on PSRC’s Special Needs Transportation Committee provided insight into the needs and gaps throughout the special needs transportation network. The intent was to inform the creation of strategies that will guide transportation and information service providers in overcoming these gaps. These strategies can be found in Chapter 5 of this plan — “Mobility Tomorrow.”

Needs

Transportation needs differ among special needs transportation populations – senior, youth, low-income, and individuals with a disability. At the most basic level, all residents of the central Puget Sound region need to access daily necessities without an undue financial or time burden. However, each individual’s unique transportation needs are shaped by a variety of factors, including but not limited to where they live and work, personal or cultural obligations, and medical conditions.

Through consultation with human service transportation providers and local mobility coalitions in the region, the following transportation needs have been identified for the central Puget Sound region’s special needs transportation populations:

• Safe and convenient access to appropriate transportation options.
• Affordable transportation options.
• Reliable transportation.
• Safe and secure transportation.
• Reliable public transportation outside of peak hours.
• Clear information on available transportation options.
• Convenient trip planning.
• Reasonable travel times.
• Culturally relevant information resources.
• Accessible transportation infrastructure.
• Seamless connections between transportation services.

Gaps

Gaps in the special needs transportation network have been identified as falling into one of the following five categories: spatial, temporal, institutional, infrastructure, or awareness. This section of the Coordinated Plan explains
each gap in greater detail and identifies the specific gaps in the central Puget Sound region. Each gap was either identified through outreach to local mobility coalitions or was carried over from the previous Coordinated Plan.

Spatial Gaps

Spatial gaps refer to locations that are underserved, or not served at all, by transportation services. To be cost-efficient, public transportation service is oriented towards serving the region’s urban centers and major employment centers. This type of service provision creates spatial gaps in suburban and rural locations where transit service is either unavailable or inadequate to meet the daily needs of special needs populations. For special needs transportation populations, these gaps can be especially disruptive as alternative transportation options may not be available.

**SPATIAL GAPS IN THE CENTRAL PUGET SOUND**

- Transit service reductions have made it increasingly difficult to connect rural clients and riders to areas well served by fixed-route transit. This problem is particularly evident in Pierce and Snohomish counties.
- Transit service to destinations outside of major activity centers is inadequate to meet the needs of special needs populations.
- Direct transit service between medical facilities in the region is lacking. This is especially problematic for patients who need to travel between multiple medical facilities in one day.
- Fixed-route transit service operates primarily on a north-south orientation. As a result, east-west travel is cumbersome for transit-dependent populations and may require multiple transfers.

Temporal Gaps

Temporal gaps are caused when transportation service is not available at times when it is needed by special needs transportation populations. With public transit’s commute-hour focus, a substantial portion of the region’s transit service does not operate early enough in the morning or late enough in the evening for low-income individuals on alternative work schedules.

**TEMPORAL GAPS IN THE CENTRAL PUGET SOUND**

- Transportation options are inadequate outside of peak hours — very early in the morning, middle of the day, after 7 p.m., and on weekends.

Institutional Gaps

Institutional gaps are caused by the rules, regulations, and requirements that govern transportation service provision. Many institutional gaps go unnoticed by riders and clients, yet can inadvertently create obstacles to their mobility. Institutional gaps are not always clearly defined and can take many forms.

**INSTITUTIONAL GAPS IN THE CENTRAL PUGET SOUND**

- **Connection with ferries** is difficult for paratransit vehicles. Because they do not get priority boarding, paratransit vehicles often miss ferries during peak times, which can result in riders missing appointments. Furthermore, due to a lack of communication between transportation providers and the ferry system, coordinating docking time with a pick-up on the other end is difficult.
- Paratransit systems generally do not provide same-day service, which means riders must always plan trips in advance and cannot be spontaneous about travel.
Complimentary ADA paratransit service is funded locally through the transit district’s tax base. Since this service is federally mandated, without a separate funding base, ADA paratransit service both competes with funding for fixed-route service and adds to the cost of providing fixed-route service. This can result in decreased fixed-route service in order to maintain the minimum level of ADA paratransit service and discourage expansion of paratransit service beyond the minimum to comply with the ADA laws.

- **Common standards** do not exist among agencies, including but not limited to vehicle safety, driver training, and driver licensing.

- Transportation providers and brokers use **different scheduling, dispatching, and reporting software**, making information sharing difficult.

- Transportation providers do not group trips or offer **shared rides among different special needs populations**. This can result from eligibility requirements preventing shared trips, perceived increased liability, or an agency’s concern that funding will be jeopardized if they transport someone who is not their client.

- Statewide cost-sharing allocation formulas are lacking.

- Fixed-route transit service reductions are forcing individuals with special transportation needs onto higher-cost transportation services.

- It is challenging for new projects to compete for funding. As a result, new projects that effectively respond to recent changes in the special needs transportation landscape (e.g., transit service reductions) may not get off the ground.

- Cross-county trips outside the PSRC region are difficult due in part to a lack of coordination among service providers.

- Transfer between different special needs transportation services is cumbersome and may result in additional wait time for a customer to complete a trip.

**Infrastructure Gaps**

Infrastructure gaps are areas where a lack of physical or technological infrastructure prevents individuals from accessing needed transportation options. Infrastructure gaps can take the form of a major roadway acting as a barrier to accessing daily necessities, a lack of sidewalks adjacent to transit stops, or intersections not meeting ADA standards.

**INFRASTRUCTURE GAPS IN THE CENTRAL PUGET SOUND**

- Transit facilities and bus stops without **accessible walkways and safe crossings**.

- **Sidewalk ramps** that are not level or too steep.

- Bus stops and other transportation waiting areas lack benches.

- Bus stops lack adequate **weather protection**.

- Rural and suburban roads are unsafe for pedestrian and wheelchair users.

- Special needs populations have limited **access to new travel information resources**, including mobile and web-based applications.

- Public spaces lack amenities for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

- **Pedestrian crossing times at signalized intersections** are not long enough for seniors, children, and individuals with mobility impairments.

- Lack of affordable, accessible, or lift-equipped vehicles for people who are disabled, but who are not eligible for Medicaid or ADA paratransit services.
Awareness Gaps

Learning how to access and utilize transportation options can be a daunting task for individuals unfamiliar with all transportation programs and services available in the region. Gaps in awareness occur when individual riders and social service agencies are not fully informed on available transportation options. While awareness gaps can take many forms, they all stem from a lack of information.

**Awareness Gaps in the Central Puget Sound**

- **Language and cultural barriers** prevent riders and clients from accessing transportation options.
- Traveler information technologies are too advanced or are too difficult to acquire for some users.
- Social service agencies do not always have adequate information regarding available transportation choices for their clients, particularly if transportation is not offered by the social service agency. This may result in referral to less efficient transportation options than those that are actually available.
- Fixed-route transit, rideshares, and vanpools are marketed to commuters and not to special needs populations. Furthermore, funding is not available to meet the demand for specialized paratransit, volunteer and other community transportation, and hence marketing is not encouraged.
- Rural communities are not aware of available transportation options due to limited funding available for marketing and coordination.
- Misinformation and unfounded fears create a negative perception of transit among older populations.
- Decision makers do not have full knowledge of where special needs populations reside in their community and may not be fully aware of their mobility needs.
- Special needs populations are not aware of all available information resources.
- Multiple efforts to provide transportation option information online.

Duplications

Demand for transportation service is increasing among special needs populations, competition is growing for limited funding opportunities, and substantial cuts to fixed-route transit service have occurred throughout the region. Each of these facts makes it increasingly difficult for special needs transportation providers to meet demand for their services. In some cases, duplicative services fill gaps where available options are inadequate to meet demand. However, there are instances where removing duplications could improve delivery of special needs transportation service. Various funding sources restrict different transportation services to specific populations for specific purposes. This results in service duplication and redundancy in multiple areas.

**Examples of Duplications**

- Vehicles from different agencies may be traveling in the same corridor at the same time, but may be offering different services or serving different populations and cannot pick up additional riders.
- Schools, transit agencies, and Medicaid brokers operating separate but similar training programs for drivers.
- Schools, transit systems, and other transportation providers having their own in-house maintenance programs for vehicles when they could take advantage of economies of scale by combining resources.
- Brokers, transit systems, senior programs, and other agencies each having their own call center for people to call to arrange for transportation instead of having a one-stop shop.
- Each transportation system has different eligibility requirements. A person who may qualify for more than one type of service may need to apply for several different programs with each having different requirements and processes.
Regional Examples of Addressing Needs and Gaps

Beyond the Borders — Pierce County

Beyond the Borders is a free transportation service provided by Pierce County Community Connections. Older adults, individuals with disabilities and people with low incomes living in rural Pierce County may be eligible for transportation from home to their destination or to the nearest bus stop and back. By providing trips to and from rural Pierce County, Beyond the Borders fills many of the spatial gaps created by transit service reductions in rural and suburban areas.

Community Travel Tips — King County

Community Travel Tips is a project of the King County Mobility Coalition, developed to raise awareness about how to use public transportation in King County, through YouTube videos and printable guides on King County’s website. Both resources are available in 13 languages to help new public transportation riders learn how to ride the bus, pay for the bus and light rail, and use other ways to travel. Community Travel Tips helps overcome gaps in awareness by providing information on using public transportation in formats that are accessible by many of the region’s LEP populations.

Transportation Assistance Program — Snohomish County

The Transportation Assistance Program (TAP) provides a special needs transportation safety net for older adults and people with disabilities outside the DART service area. TAP clients are picked up at their door and delivered to their destination, or transferred to another transportation provider – DART, Everett Paratransit, or ACCESS. By connecting people to services, health care, senior centers, shopping, recreation and more, TAP addresses spatial gaps that exist in rural areas of Snohomish County.

Life In Motion — King County

Life In Motion is a project of the King County Mobility Coalition, developed to raise awareness about transportation options in King County and to encourage people to get out and about. Life In Motion helps connect people with the most appropriate transportation option for them, whether it be fixed-route transit, demand response services, or volunteer transportation.

“Life in Motion” — King County