



King County

Transit Advisory Commission

MEETING AGENDA

July 17, 2018

King Street Center, Metro GM Conference Room, 4th Floor

201 South Jackson, Seattle

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

- 6:00 p.m. Welcome, introductions (new commission applicants)**
New commission applicants
- 6:15 p.m. Review/Approve 2018 Work Program & June 2018 Meeting Notes**
- 6:20 p.m. Discussion about how to use monthly updates with General Manager**
- 6:30 p.m. New Mobility Division update (with Q&A)**
Chris O'Claire
- 7:45 p.m. Other Business**
- 8:00 p.m. Adjourn**



King County

Transit Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

July 17, 2018

King Street Center, 4th floor

6-8 p.m.

Commission members: Judy Daufney-Stenberg, Gale Shinozaki, David Johnson, Jacob Struiksm

Staff: Cindy Chen and Betty Gullledge-Bennett

I. Introductions

- Current commission members and twelve applicants introduced themselves.

II. Updates with General Manager

Members discussed how to use the monthly updates with Rob Gannon.

- One member commented that there is no clear channel or process about how the TAC makes recommendations to Metro leadership and the General Manager. Members requested that a process be created.
- Members requested that meeting minutes be distributed to Metro leadership. Members noted that the goal was to make the TAC's input relevant to decision making by Metro. There needs to be a clear feedback loop, so that the TAC knows the feedback has been heard, even if the decision isn't in their favor. There must be a clear way to provide updates to leadership quarterly, and understand recommendations.
- A question was asked about how recommendations to Metro were prioritized. Staff is open to creating ways for feedback to be prioritized.

III. Update from Chris O'Claire, future Mobility division director

Chris introduced herself and gave a presentation about the new Mobility division. The Mobility division oversees customer information, market research, building and adapting products to the customers' needs. It will also oversee customer service, the planning of facilities, and integration with agency partners. The Mobility division will also cover Paratransit, rideshare and vanpool programs. Any new products that will be developed are also under this division.

As the fastest growing public transit agency in the country, Metro Transit will be working to provide innovative services, improve and expand high capacity fixed route serves, improve partnerships with regional partners to ensure seamless rider experience between services and improving employee engagement.

She expressed the interest of Metro Transit leadership to find more ways to engage with the commission. She suggested the TAC ask for actionable items to determine how best to respond to customers, which are represented by the TAC.

Q: What's the difference between DART and paratransit/access?



King County

Transit Advisory Commission

A: Paratransit/Access is a service where customers must go through a certification process to be qualified. Dial-A-Ride Transit (DART) are routes that are traditionally not effectively served by a fixed route for many reasons, whether due to low density, low demand or difficulty of running buses in that area. The bus will have deviated stops to pick them up. We are trying to get more Access riders to try out the DART service.

Q: Private employers like Microsoft have their own private shuttles. Is there any way Metro can work with them to be able to use their service?

A: We are working with employers to maximize their use of their shuttles or their own systems. We need to consider fares and the challenges with opening it up to public use. We are working on how to become a public mobility agency by trying out new services.

Q: As you build new technology, the data and permissions that they ask for can be very private and personal. There can also be security risks. How is that being addressed?

A: We are committed to providing our data but we don't think that government is the right entity to create apps. We are committed to making sure that personal information is protected.

Q: Are people with low vision helping test the apps?

A: Yes, we have heard from access task force about having people with low vision test new products and apps. We need to do more and promise to do more. Let me know if you are interested.

Q: You mentioned creating an app that could show the environmental impact of taking the bus. What's the importance of having that in an app?

A: Customers in the Puget Sound have a strong interest in their environmental impact and we know that some people do make decisions based on their carbon footprint. Speed and timing are critical factors for how people decide to travel, but we'd like to try and use the environmental impact as a way to change behavior too.

Comment: One applicant has worked on a mobile application used by the military that showed the environmental impact and carbon footprint. It was very effective.

Q: For people with low vision or visual impairments, automated announcement systems are critical. Due to construction, the automated announcements often do not sync up with stop changes which are sometimes caused by construction. Operators also lack knowledge about the stop changes. The newer buses, especially, have quieter announcements which makes me miss my stop.

A: This is an issue that we're aware of and working on as construction all over the city continues.

Comment: A lot of the new products being created rely on smartphone technology. This can often exclude people without access to that technology.



King County

Transit Advisory Commission

A: We did work with visually impaired customers when building the mobile ticketing app. We want to continue hearing more comments and now there is new technology where you can text to see when your bus is coming.

Q: The customer service center hours have been cut a lot. It is often difficult for people without cell phones or smart phones to be able to call, especially during business hours. Lost & Found also has limited business hours which prevents people from accessing this service. There should be more of an effort to accommodate different people's schedules.

A: The call center hours were cut during the recession and we acknowledge that it is not open long enough. We are trying to understand the needs of our customers.

Q: Why doesn't Access take me to certain areas of the county, or not have service on certain days? What are customers supposed to do?

A: Access is based off the fixed route system. If fixed route service does not serve a certain geographic area or does not serve it on a particular day/time, then we cannot serve that area. We always want to know more about demand, so please let us know if you want service that does not currently exist. There may be other Metro services available as a solution. This was a King County Council policy.

Q: There are areas of the county that are not served by Access or fixed route. What is being done to improve access for customers?

A: One of the biggest challenges is how our customers are affected by Access. It is a very expensive program to run and ideally we would like customers to take fixed route if possible. The program was audited recently, which resulted in another look at our schedules. We'd like to improve DART service as well.

Q: Is there any way to improve communication with customers on Access? My deaf-blind colleague waits for Access and has no ability to communicate by text with dispatch. The only available option is by an audio phone call, which can be a barrier for people. How are you planning to improve communication between deaf-blind customers and the service? TTY (teletypewriter) is now obsolete.

A: We need to meet this need and Access customers need to be able to text to know when their ride is coming. Our agency is committed to bringing Access up to parity with fixed route service. The Access program will get a new contract soon and we continue to make improvements in the meantime. Our on time performance is now at 92%.

Q: There is a big disconnect between the outreach work at Metro and this commission. I have been passionate about increasing first-last mile service and read about an advisory group in my town that Metro had put together. Despite being on this commission, I had no knowledge of this. Collaboration and communication with local neighborhood groups is really important. We have a long way to go in delivering transportation mobility in rural areas of the county.

A: You all represent your communities and Metro should be doing a better job of connecting you and the efforts going on in your communities and neighborhoods.



King County

Transit Advisory Commission

Q: I live in a smaller community and also represent my community. As a representative, what best practices are there for how to best represent your community's interests? How is information about Metro conducting outreach distributed?

A: Staff will look into ways to keep the TAC better informed about outreach activities in their communities.

Comment: First and last mile connections are really important, especially in the city of Seattle. The everyday person who wants to get to work often can't use transit because the bus does not serve them or they have to "hide and ride" which can be difficult. People won't support transit if they cannot use it.

Q: Is there any type of program to compensate customers if the Access vehicle does not show up?

A: There is a pilot program in the works to allow customers to schedule same day rides with rideshare companies. The difficulty with this is that it will not be accessible for all people. Some customers will still need to use Access.

Q: We should encourage people with disabilities to use fixed route. How can the buses be improved so that they work for people with wheelchairs? Sometimes the ramps on newer buses do not deploy. If someone reports the lack of ramp deployment, how long does it take for them to get a response?

A: All of the newer buses are moving to having a low floor, but ramps are still needed for the older buses. Every time the ramp doesn't deploy, it is documented automatically for repair. It is a performance measure. When a customer reports it, the response can take up to 2-3 days. Ideally, operators will know when the next bus is arriving.

Q: How are operators trained about how to work with people with disabilities?

A: Operators receive training, but it does not fully meet the needs of our customers' diversity. Operators do not receive the training they need to meet the growing diversity of our ridership. We are looking into training about safety, cultural barriers, safety and understanding.

Q: What are the performance measures and where can I find them?

A: The performance measures are on the website at the Accountability page. There is a monthly business review meeting and we make decisions based on the data. Each division uses data to help make strategic decisions.

O'Claire also gave an update on Metro's partnerships with Sound Transit, the Washington State Department of Transportation, local jurisdictions and the University of Washington as well as customers. Seamless service integration will require the customer perspective, and Metro wants the customer's ideas about how to plan service. Several ongoing efforts include:

- North Eastside Mobility project to restructure service when Sound Transit light rail expands
- Metro's capital division working closely with Sound Transit
- Paying community based organizations to do outreach in their communities
- Refurbishing the "magic bus" that can be taken to festivals and events around the county. M



Transit Advisory Commission

Group suggestions:

- Presence in neighborhoods all over the county. There should be more opportunities to engage outside of the usual channels because not everyone reads their mail.
- Conduct outreach at the destinations – such as the mall, or at work (with employers)
- Nextdoor (a social networking site for neighborhoods)
- Walk tours/bike tours – could be a good way to engage.
- Companies are creating virtual reality technology can help people with disabilities, or even help people visualize what a particular area will look like.
- Conduct outreach where people are waiting:
 - On hold with customer service
 - Busiest bus stops
 - Talk to people at bus stops; use smart pads.
 - Listening tent
- Social media (Facebook Live, etc.)

Q: What about resilience planning? How does Metro communicate with customers in case of an event?

A: Metro is equipped with different levels of service based on the event and communicates with several different methods.

Q: There should be more testing of wheelchairs and mobility devices of various sizes on buses. It would be good to measure the turning ratio and navigate how to fit into the spot on the bus without hitting other people.

A: In the past we have worked with wheelchair users to test out new buses. I recommend asking Dion Graham, Metro's ADA Services Administrator to come to one of the meetings.

Q: Automated announcements used to occur every hour.

A: Other customers wanted to focus on stops and didn't want the other information interfering.

Q: How does Metro go about conducting outreach with projects that are many years away from completion? Sound Transit uses outreach surveys that allow people to drop pins with comments on a map which is very helpful.

Q: Many immigrant families do not have access to internet because they are low-income, but they are some of the most important customers that should be giving feedback. Metro should work more with community centers, neighborhood associations to help facilitate those lines of communication.

A: I agree, and we also need to pay those community groups who serve these populations to do outreach on our behalf. Feedback can go to staff who will be working on this.

Q: What are the plans for expanding ORCA LIFT?

A: We're still trying to understand the barriers for ORCA LIFT. The program is effective but there are still some barriers. The 24-48 hour delay in loading money on the card is slow, and there are not very many



King County

Transit Advisory Commission

places to add money to the card. We are doing focus groups to ensure that we reach communities that need it the most.

Q: Can Metro improve the process of loading money onto an ORCA card?

A: We offer a regional reduced fare permit which is an ORCA card with a reduced fare. There are numerous ways to add cash including online, call center, a participating retailer like QFC or a ticket vending machine. With the next generation ORCA that we are working on, you'll be able to pay with the app.

Some of the innovative new products and pilots:

- Sharing employer shuttles
- Reserved stalls for carshare services at Park and Rides. We would like to maximize the use of the Park and Rides and eventually visualize a future without them.
- Starting first and last mile pilot program with a private contractor to bring people into the regional system who may not usually take transit (South Renton, Eastgate and Northgate pilots will launch in the next 6-9 months).

Q: There is a big gap in the city of Seattle for first/last mile service, despite the dollars that exist from the Seattle Transportation Benefit District.

A: Yes, within the city of Seattle there is money, and we do need to maximize the money. However we also need to ensure that we are keeping the needs around the county in mind.

Q: Can Transportation Network Companies (TNC) like Uber and Lyft or other rideshare companies demonstrate that they are a viable alternative for everyone, including those with disabilities?

A: Uber and Lyft are not coming to the table. TNCs do pay a fee that we collect and should use that money to improve access. We are looking into buying wheelchair vehicles for TNC companies, but they are not coming to the table so we are working with taxi companies first.

Comment: Accessibility on the light rail is still difficult; they are not taking people with mobility challenges in mind as they design the expanded light rail system.

Action items:

- Create clear processes for how the TAC gives recommendations to Metro, and the feedback loop and response from Metro – *staff*
- Share TAC meeting minutes with Metro leadership – *staff*
- TAC members with low vision want to help test new products and apps - *staff*
- Keep TAC informed about outreach activities in their communities - *staff*
- Best practices guide for representing the interests of TAC members' communities
 - *TAC members*
- TAC to determine what data they want to look at - *available from Mobility*
- Revisions to work program 2018 – *TAC to send feedback to Cindy*