



Appendix Q

Public Comment and Citizen Access Results

Sound Transit collected public comments from July 27, 2006 until September 15, 2006. The draft plan was presented via email to stakeholders for comments, Sound Transit participated with the Puget Sound Regional Council and local coalitions in three traditional public meetings in Pierce, King and Snohomish County in August 2006, and Sound Transit sponsored a televised meeting called Citizen Access. Following are the comments collected throughout these processes.

Presented first are the Citizen Access results, second is the summary report from the public meetings, and third are general public comments collected through various means. The regional workgroup reviewed the comments, made revisions to the plan to ensure identified needs were included, and ranked strategies based on the Citizen Access polling.

Citizen Access

Citizen Access is a new and innovative approach to citizen engagement utilized by Sound Transit to gather public feedback on the current 5 year regional special needs transportation coordination plan.

Methodology

Citizen Access utilized three different types of citizen participation approaches. Forty-four people (81 percent of registered participants) took part in an electronic town hall meeting at the Seattle Central Community College.

A second group of participants took part in the meeting from home by watching Citizen Access on television, broadcasted live on KTWB TV22, and voting with their touch-tone telephone. Twenty-nine of the fifty-four registered participants utilized this method of participation.

A third way to participate was to fill out an on line or phone survey after the program. Eight people utilized this method. All of the participants ranked and prioritized the draft goals and strategies.

A separate evaluation of this public feedback method was conducted. While much can be done to improve the process, such as including more non-structured discussion, there is tremendous potential for the Citizen Access model to expand the number of voices in the public input process, especially for those with transportation challenges.

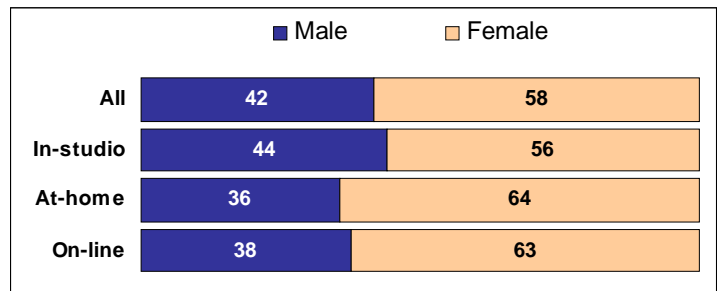
While traditional public meetings can range from 2 – 20 participants with an approximate cost of \$250 to \$2500 per person, the Citizen Access model has the potential to reach thousands of people. In this example, 81 people participated and an estimated 6,000 households watched the program. The estimated cost for Citizen Access amounted to \$13 to \$926 per person/household, depending whether or not the potential viewing households are included.

Participants

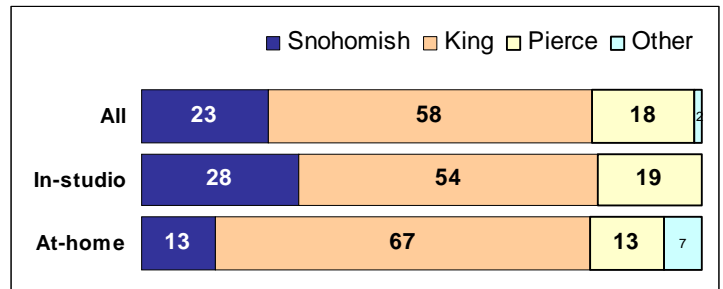
Of the eighty-one participants, fifty percent were “baby boomers” – between the ages of 30 and 59. Nearly 60 percent of the participants listed more than one reason for their transportation challenges, including a combination of income, age, and/or disability. One quarter listed all three reasons as a challenge. Seventy percent of the participants have used specialized transportation services, with 43 three percent using it on a weekly basis.

Demographic Profile of Participants

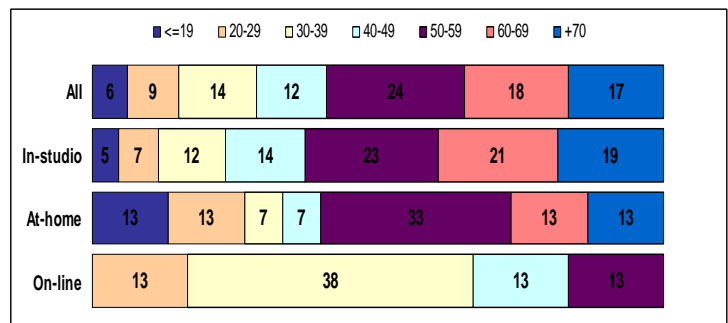
Gender



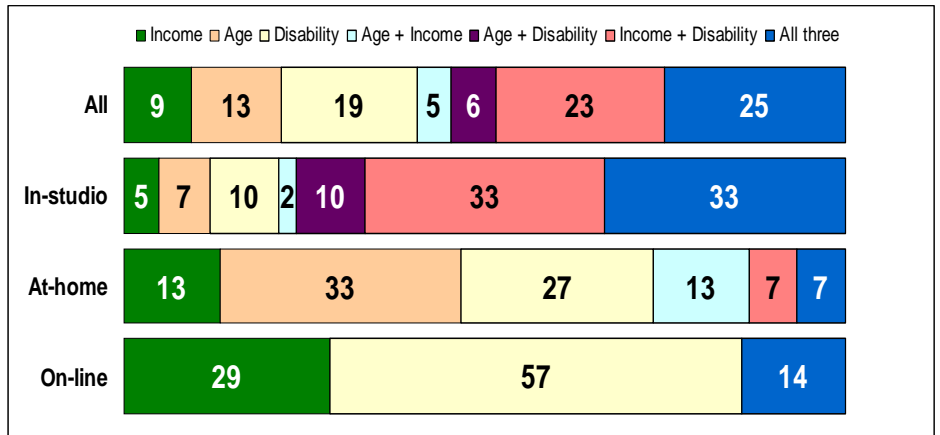
County of Residence



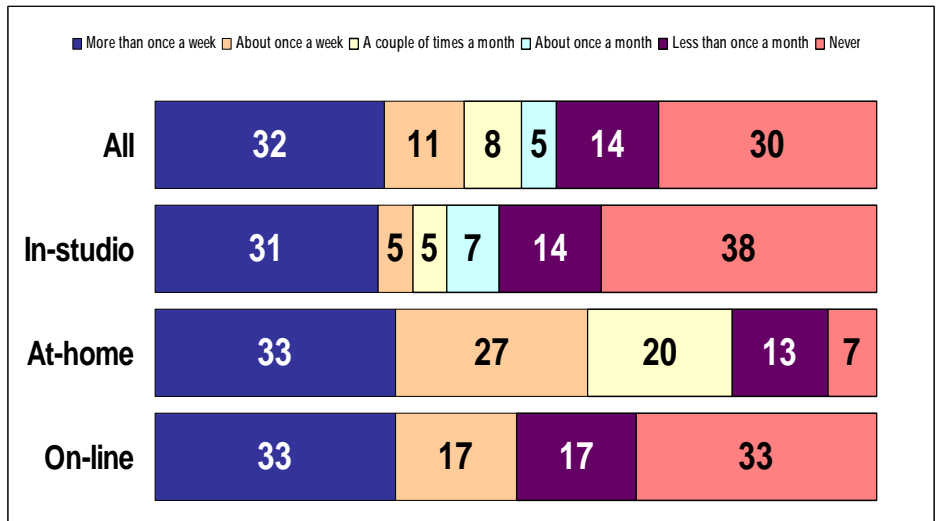
Age



Transportation Challenge



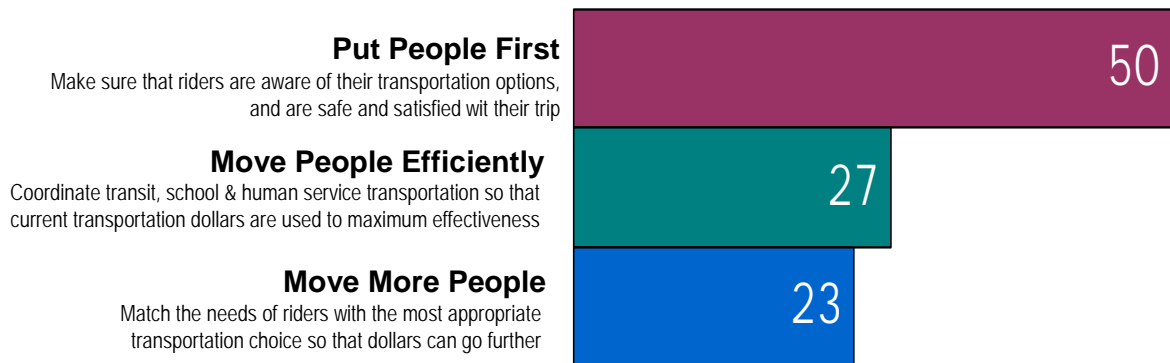
Use of Specialized Transportation Services



Other Citizen Access Results

Citizen Access participants ranked their highest priority goal areas, and then rated the effectiveness of the strategies identified for the top two goals. Put People First and Move People Efficiently ranked as the top two goals. Better connections and infrastructure changes ranked as the most effective strategies for those goal areas.

Which Goal Is Your Highest Priority



Strategies to “Put People First”

How Effective Are the Following Strategies:

Very effective Not at all effective

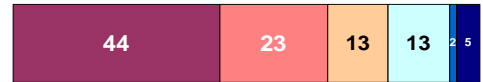
BETTER CONNECTIONS

Increase and improve transportation connections to & within the regional transportation systems for everyone



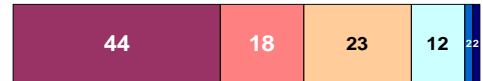
SEAMLESS FARES

Work toward a coordinated fare structure that makes it easy for a rider to pay for regional travel among the different transportation modes, including specialized transportation



BETTER AMENITIES AND PLANNING TOOLS

Improve functionality & use of existing regional transportation stops, trip-planning websites, and ride & vehicle share programs



Which one would you say would be the most effective?

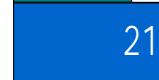
Better Connections



Seamless Fares



Better Amenities



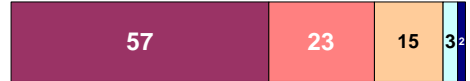
Move People Efficiently

How Effective Are the Following Strategies:

Very effective 2 3 4 5 Not at all effective

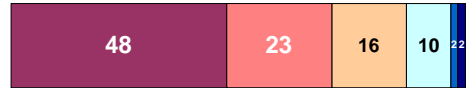
INFRASTRUCTURE CHANGES

Develop planning, operational, and reporting tools that encourage dialogue, identify where common standards apply, and clarify opportunities for coordination



INTEGRATED PLANNING

Incorporate special needs transportation plans into state, regional and local planning efforts that have an impact on the ability of people to engage in the community



MAKING PROVIDERS AVAILABLE

Encourage development of provider networks to all groups



Which one would you say would be the most effective?



Coordinated Human Services and Public Transportation Plan

Public Outreach

SUMMARY REPORT

August-September 2006

The Regional Coordinated Human Services and Public Transportation Plan is a joint effort between transit agencies, social services agencies and school districts in Pierce, Snohomish, King and Kitsap counties, and the Puget Sound Regional Council. This plan has been drafted to improve transportation services for people with special needs, especially coordination between different transportation systems.

To achieve these goals public input was sought in a number of ways. PRR was retained to assist with direct public outreach to transportation service providers and the general public in the four-county area through the organization and facilitation of four public meetings between August and September of 2006. Additionally PSRC was presenting the coordinated plan at various community meetings and meetings with public officials. An electronic town hall meeting was also held and televised on KCTV in September.

Outreach meetings were held at public facilities in King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap counties as follows:

King County

August 22, 2006
6:00 to 7:00
Sound Transit Board Room
Seattle

Pierce County

August 24, 2006
5:30 to 6:30
Freighthouse Square
Tacoma

Snohomish County

August 31, 2006
6:00 to 7:00
Everett Station
Everett

Kitsap County

September 5, 2006
6:00 to 7:00
The Eagles Nest-Kitsap Fairgrounds
Bremerton



Meeting notices were sent to local newspapers to be included in their community calendars. Flyers were also produced and distributed to all of the transit agencies for public display and notification. A press release was also sent out to the local media outlets.

Approximately 20-25 people attended the four meetings. Participants were primarily local government officials, transit agencies and public transit users. The meeting format included presentations by PSRC and the local transit agency followed by a facilitated discussion about the proposed plans. The agenda for all four meetings closely follows the King County outline below:

6:00 p.m. – 6:10 p.m.

Welcome and Overview

*Jennifer Ryan, PSRC
Michael Miller, Sound
Transit*

Introduction and purpose. How do the plans fit together

6:10 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.

Facilitated Discussion

Rita Brogan, PRR

Review and discuss goals, objectives and criteria used to set

- Workbook
-
-

6:45 p.m. – 6:55 p.m.

Local and Regional Project Overview

*Margaret Casey, King County Aging and
Disability Services*

*Linda Wells, King County Department of
Housing and Community Services*

- Identify projects from King County area agencies/jurisdictions proposed for inclusion in PSRC Regional Coordinated Plan
 - Identify preliminary project ideas proposed for inclusion in King County Coordinated Plan, next steps in King County process
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Closing Comments

6:55 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

During the facilitated discussion several issues were raised by some of the service providers and general public participants including concern about reductions in service or cutbacks on routes. One person asked if the “Beyond the Borders” service would be expanded. Agency and government attendees also weighed in with their comments and observations. Detailed reaction to the coordinated plan and the local plans are outlined below.

Seamless fares and traveling between modes as well as between counties with consistent signage and more transfer points was mentioned as an important issue. Connectivity was a common theme at all of the meetings. Being able to cross counties using paratransit services was mentioned a number of times.

Coordinating services and matching routes with actual usage was mentioned. It was also stated that there needs to be “more opportunities for coordination between providers”. Developing a single smart card that could be pre-loaded for Medicaid, transit, DSHS, etc. was suggested as way to help with coordination

Some people were concerned with the lack of services and infrastructure. One person stated “The more options the better”. Another said “We need more buses and more connections.”

Someone suggested that it might be a good idea to consider alternative technologies that might be more cost effective. Most attendees agreed that the costs to the user need to be reasonable but most understand that resources are limited.



Some of the barriers and opportunities for improvement included better access for older people in rural areas who want to access the services. Managing rider expectation and making better location choices were also mentioned.

It was also mentioned that there needs to be something done for moderate income people who need help but don't qualify for assistance. There needs to be some flexibility. Finding out what other parts of the country are doing might be a good place to start looking for ideas. There should also be some sort of "bridge" service available between reliance on public assistance for public transportation and independence.

Educating the public, especially young people and kids, about public transportation and what's available and how to use it was something mentioned. Someone stated that "people aren't even aware that they can participate in this process". Developing and training people for a "bus buddy" program was mentioned as a good example of how to educate the public.



Someone suggested that it might be a good idea if providers and transit agencies rode the buses so they knew and understood how the system works and see for themselves where improvements might be needed. Some of the transit agency officials said that is something they already do.

At one of the meetings a visually impaired gentleman mentioned problems with public transportation specific to the blind. He said, "The blind can't always tell which buses are coming". He also emphasized that it is very important for the drivers to call out the stops. He also said that on some of the buses you can't understand what the driver is saying over the speaker system. It is very important for the visually impaired to have a good speaker system on board every bus.

The meetings ended with time for attendees to talk one on one with transit agency personnel and other service providers about specific, individual needs. The possibility of presentations to specific targeted groups such as seniors was also discussed.

Other Public Comments

Issue Recognized

1.	I think there should be more connections on Sunday for people who go to Church and don't have a ride and normally have to walk and for disabled people this could be very hard.	Page 14
2.	Audience needs to be polled to understand minority views. These can be most productive in seeing challenges in implementations.	Citizen Access Evaluation Report

3	<p>Too bad there was really no time or interest in people's own input, comments. It was a really set agenda – you just wanted us to weigh in on already-decided agenda, priorities, etc.</p> <p>I just wish there would have been time for more individual discussions. It would have been more interesting and lively.</p>	Citizen Access Evaluation Report
4.	I really hope they can have one fare on all transit.	Page 14
5.	<p>I am 64 years old, born blind and had cerebral palsy since birth. I have been in a wheel chair ever since I can remember. I rely on DART, ACCESS, and Para Transit 95% of the time to get me to work and 100% of the time to connect me socially to the community. While I am grateful that the system exists I feel that it is grossly under-funded and that profoundly affects me. I'll give you an example. I give inspirational and educational speeches all over Snohomish and King County. Last week I made arrangements to be picked up at 8:45AM to be taken to a 9:30 AM speaking engagement 10 minutes away. I wasn't picked until 9:45 AM. Nobody notified me that the ride was going to be late. Unfortunately I lost the opportunity to speak and earn my honorarium. Thankfully I have been rescheduled for another date.</p> <p>Now these things happen and I understand there are many forces at work that make scheduling difficult. But what is galling to me is that if the situation is reversed and I am held up by unforeseen events, I run the real risk of being stranded someplace in the county or left at home and unable to earn a paycheck.</p> <p>For the most part the people I deal with everyday, the DART schedulers and drivers, are sensitive to my needs but can be inflexible and bureaucratic in working with me when some creativity and common sense could make my day so much easier and productive. Again all these problems could be solved with better funding which would alleviate some of the pressure the DART and Para Transit people have to deal with.</p>	Page 14
6.	<p>I have both M.S. and increasing arthritis. That combination makes it VERY difficult to stand. Overheating is also a problem in the summer. I would use the bus A LOT MORE if each stop had seating and a cover from the bright sun of summer.</p> <p>People with physical challenges need to plan for the worst case duration of wait when deciding which travel mode to use. There is nothing worse than being caught in a situation with no options when your physical limit has been reached. I think the elderly have the same issue. If the risk of discomfort is too high, I simply avoid public transit.</p> <p>We (the Community Council and Metro) have worked hard in the Wallingford neighborhood to get more shelters and seating. It helps so much! Thanks.</p>	Page 14

7.	<p>The Alki Ave/Harbor Avenue corridor has NO service on Sunday. A lot of non-drivers live here and we are Isolated.</p> <p>Help us. A bus or shuttle with a #53 type schedule could at least get us to Avalon Street or the Alaska St Junction so we would have options.</p> <p>Also, the West Seattle Water Taxi is FANTASTIC. I feel like my quality of life has improved with the city access and the efficient shuttles.</p> <p>And, keep transit affordable. Fixed income is really that. No salary increase on my old age horizon.</p> <p>Keep me healthy. Help me get places. My mind is active and my body is still cooperating. I use Sound Transit... a couple weeks ago a friend and I went four days to the special activities at the Tacoma Museum of Glass. We took the Water Taxi to downtown, walked up to 3rd Ave., caught the Sound Transit 594 to the Tacoma Transit area, and caught the light rail Sound Transit to the WA. Museum/UW area and then over to the MOG. Great return also. Thanks for letting me vent.</p>	Page 14
8.	<p>Little problems with DART:</p> <p>I used to call for my ride times 2 to 4 and get home around 5:30 or 5:45. Now there is an extra (new rider) making my ride longer. I set my ride times up for 2 to 4 and I get home a little later, 6 to 6:15.</p> <p>I have talked to the manager; he said the rides can be as long as for 1 and half hours. I was tired of long bus rides so I asked to be picked up earlier.</p> <p>I was scheduled to be picked up at 3:30 at Martha Lake Community Center. They gave me 4 o'clock. So the next week I tried again, but this time I scheduled for 3:15. They gave me 3:45 and did not get picked up until 4:30.</p>	Page 14
9.	<p>Drivers: I don't like to point fingers – but some drivers drive poorly. Some of them speed and I'm holding on to my chair. I do not have any problems with the women drivers. One time a strap came off my chair and the driver had the music on loud, I tried to yell but I have weak lung power, it took the second stop that is when I got his attention.</p>	Page 14
10.	<p>Scheduling: What should I do to get a shorter ride/at least under two hours?</p>	Page 14
11.	<p>Seatbelts: Sometimes they don't check the seatbelt to see if it is tight, I have to tell them it's loose.</p>	Page 15
12.	<p>It takes three transfers and four busses to make the four mile trip from Richmond Beach Rehab in King County to my MS support group in Snohomish County.</p>	Page 14
13.	<p>I would take the bus for regional trips instead of paratransit, but the type of vehicle requires people using wheel chairs to get on and off every time another wheel chair user gets on the bus.</p>	Page 14
14.	<p>It would be terrific if we had a single card for transportation rather than multiple cards.</p>	Page 14
15.	<p>Where do you call for transportation during an emergency (terrorism, natural disaster)?</p>	Page 15

16.	Please do not raise the bus fare. Leave it where it currently is.	Page 15
17.	I live in the South Everett area and have my own business. Transportation is the biggest barrier for me. The trips are much too long. This makes it difficult to run my business.	Page 14
18.	Seamless fares are fine for specialized transportation. Seamless equipment is very much required. Having to change at every county line is hard on people and equipment and increases the time of travel significantly.	Page 14