

## SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION STUDY: RESULTS OF FOUR STATEWIDE FORUMS

- **Input from RIDERS of Special Needs Transportation**
- **Input from AGENCIES involved in delivery, coordination and oversight of the System**

### First 2 forums:

1. how well is the special needs transportation system is working in the area?
2. identify greatest barriers / most important things to address in order to improve the system
3. identify stakeholder ideas for overcoming barriers

### Last 2 forums:

1. how well the special needs transportation system is working in the area?
2. identify greatest barriers / most important things to address in order to improve the system
3. stakeholder reactions to preliminary study recommendations / ideas

All forums also included an “open forum” asking attendees to *identify system strengths* and other *ideas that could help improve* special needs transportation services.

<p><b>Forum 1: Yakima County (Yakima)</b>  <i>May 5, 2008</i>            35 stakeholders; no “riders”            (155 invitees; assistance from People for People)</p>	<p><b>Forum 3: Lincoln County (Davenport)</b>  <i>September 23, 2008</i>            54 stakeholders; about 35 “riders”; several stakeholders from Spokane and Klickitat Counties            (60 invitees; advertisement in Lincoln Advertiser; People for People)</p>
<p><b>Forum 2: Snohomish County (Everett)</b>  <i>May 7, 2008</i>            +/- 60 attendees; 8 “riders”; several agency reps from Island and King Counties            (160 invitees; Snohomish County Special Needs Transportation Coal.)</p>	<p><b>Forum 4: Pierce County (Tacoma)</b>  <i>September 26, 2008</i>            38 stakeholders; 4 “riders”; a few stakeholders from Skamania and King Counties            (95 invitees; Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition (PCCTC))</p>

## HOW WELL DOES THE SYSTEM WORK FOR RIDERS?

### YAKIMA / YAKIMA COUNTY

RATING	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
Rides available <u>when</u> needed	2	6	13	3	0	3
Rides available <u>where</u> needed	3	15	6	2	0	1
Riders know how to get information needed to travel	3	10	12	1	0	1
System is responsive to rider input	0	2	10	6	0	8
Eligibility well understood	2	14	8	1	0	2
Connections between systems are efficient	5	7	4	3	0	7

### DAVENPORT / LINCOLN COUNTY

RATING:	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
Rides available <u>when</u> needed	14	6	4	1	0	5
Rides available <u>where</u> needed	15	5	11	4	1	4
Riders know how to get information needed to travel	21	4	3	3	2	3
System is responsive to rider input	11	1	8	7	6	3
Eligibility well understood	18	8	6	3	0	2
Connections between systems are efficient	28	7	1	0	0	3

### EVERETT / SNOHOMISH COUNTY

RATING:	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
Rides available <u>when</u> needed	0	14	18	4	1	8
Rides available <u>where</u> needed	3	20	15	1	1	7
Riders know how to get information needed to travel	2	19	15	2	2	8
System is responsive to rider input	1	15	15	6	0	13
Eligibility well understood	9	21	9	0	2	8
Connections between systems are efficient	9	17	11	7	0	5

### TACOMA / PIERCE COUNTY

RATING:	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
Rides available <u>when</u> needed	0	2	10	10	0	2
Rides available <u>where</u> needed	0	10	12	6	0	2
Riders know how to get information needed to travel	0	3	20	6	1	0
System is responsive to rider input	0	2	12	16	0	1
Eligibility well understood	0	11	18	0	1	0
Connections between systems are efficient	5	17	6	1	0	1

## HOW WELL DOES THE SYSTEM WORK AS A SYSTEM?

### YAKIMA / YAKIMA COUNTY

RATING	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
Service agencies work well with transportation agencies	1	1	6	9	1	9
Providers share assets and information to maximize services and minimize duplication	0	4	4	9	0	11
Federal and state funding can be flexibly applied as needed	0	8	4	0	0	16
Agreement on biggest challenges and how to address them	1	0	13	2	0	12

### DAVENPORT / LINCOLN COUNTY

RATING	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
Service agencies work well with transportation agencies	0	0	5	10	3	19
Providers share assets and information to maximize services and minimize duplication	4	8	5	4	1	14
Federal and state funding can be flexibly applied as needed	16	3	2	1	2	9
Agreement on biggest challenges and how to address them	1	0	1	11	0	19

### EVERETT/ SNOHOMISH COUNTY

RATING:	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
Service agencies work well with transportation agencies	1	4	21	7	0	13
Providers share assets and information to maximize services and minimize duplication	1	13	15	3	1	16
Federal and state funding can be flexibly applied as needed	6	20	2	1	1	16
Agreement on biggest challenges and how to address them	3	13	12	5	0	16

### TACOMA /PIERCE COUNTY

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
Service agencies work well with transportation agencies	2	3	14	8	1	1
Providers share assets and information to maximize services and minimize duplication	3	8	11	2	1	2
Federal and state funding can be flexibly applied as needed	7	10	1	1	0	9
Agreement on biggest challenges and how to address them	1	6	13	3	0	2

## BARRIERS / ISSUES FOR RIDERS\*

#	<i>Barrier / Issue</i>	Yakima	Everett	Tacoma	Davenport
		Table Votes (3)		Top 4 Votes	
1	People don't know how to access the system	2		0	5
2	Rides don't take people where they need to go	3	5	7	20
3	Service is not available when it is needed	3	5	16	25
4	Rural riders are under-served	3	1	24	29
5	Travel connections between counties are weak			12	8
6	Travel connections between rural areas of the county are weak			4	4
7	Multiple systems must be used to get to where people want to go	1	1	5	7
8	Housing is located away from transit service			13	1
9	Housing is located where there are no sidewalks or pedestrian friendly amenities			4	1
10	Needed services—medical or other—are not located close to transit routes			3	6
11	Bus shelters do not accommodate needs of riders			0	0
12	Users are afraid to ride the bus			14	5
13	Program eligibility rules are confusing	3	3	6	4
14	Users will not use the bus if they can get a personal trip service			10	8
	<i>Some human services agencies resist offers for help in transportation services training for their clients.</i>		1		
	<i>Information exchange between stakeholders is hindered by the lack of a global view about the needs of riders (both on part of the public and agencies)</i>		1		
	<i>Homelessness impacts on transit agencies—the challenges of servicing homeless families and children, particularly McKinney Vento Act requirements.</i>		1		

\*Items in *italicized text* were proposed by stakeholders from the table discussions at the Everett/Snohomish Forum

## BARRIERS / ISSUES FOR AGENCIES\*

#	Issue / Barrier	Yakima	Everett	Tacoma	Daven- port
		Table Votes (3)		TOP 4 Votes	
1	Service providers are unaware of how to better share their assets when under-utilized			3	8
2	Service providers are unwilling to share under-utilized assets	1		1	5
3	More transportation vehicles are needed			2	11
4	Providers can't find drivers			16	12
5	Providers sometimes can't insure skilled drivers or potential volunteers			4	5
6	Funding is too constrained to target gaps and problems as they arise	1		23	22
7	There is a disconnect or distrust between human services agencies and transportation service providers			6	2
8	Housing and services siting decisions are disconnected from transportation system planning		1	23	5
9	There is no inventory of system assets and expertise to call on for problem solving or other purposes	1		8	8
	<i>Service providers are <u>unable</u> to better share their assets</i>	1			
	<i>Special needs housing and services are sited outside of transportation routes</i>	1			
	<i>It is difficult to obtain grants. Yakima is at a geographic disadvantage in competing for state and federal funds—2<sup>nd</sup> largest county with only 3% of state population; it is also difficult to raise matching monies</i>	1			
	<i>It is difficult to compete for state or other funding when funding is dedicated for congestion relief as opposed to basic human needs --Congestion relief is not the issue here</i>	1			
	<i>Transit is not perceived as a priority issue in the community. It is a very car dependent area, given its size, cultural factors, marketing issues</i>	1			
	<i>Existence of multiple competing and overlapping transportation systems.</i>		3		
	<b>Scarce resources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“We need ‘more of everything’”—buses, routes, drivers, etc.</i></li> <li>• <i>Lack of funding makes it difficult for agencies to reduce fares</i></li> <li>• <i>Lack of funding makes it difficult to direct resources to underserved areas.</i></li> </ul>		3		

\*Items in *italicized text* were proposed by stakeholders from the table discussions at the Yakima/Yakima County and Everett/Snohomish Forums

# THEMES

## YAKIMA

- Challenges of the geographic and demographic diversity in the county: the **needs are quite disparate depending on where one lives or needs to travel**.
- **Rural riders** (those outside the immediate Yakima area) in particular are **underserved**.
- Special needs riders have difficulty in **understanding and accessing the system**; must improve efforts here.
- **State funding requirements favor urban areas**.
- **Enhanced coordination** needed at all governmental / agency levels.

## EVERETT

- Need **more service and more resources** to provide those services.
- Need **greater understanding of transportation systems by riders, the public, and agencies** –options, eligibility rules, routes.
- **Human services agencies** have important role to play in connecting transportation systems to special needs riders.
- Need to **increase coordination** of systems. The idea of **consolidating multiple transportation systems** into a single agency came up frequently as an idea to address coordination.
- Challenges related to the **siting of affordable and special needs housing** and needed services away from fixed-route transit access.
- Challenges of getting transportation information to clients of human services agencies.

## DAVENPORT

- Lack of services meeting the needs of **older adults aging in place in rural areas**.
- Knowledge of local rural needs important in designing, delivering service; strengthen local coordination efforts
- **Support 1-call shop** to arrange rides, help clients understand eligibility

## TACOMA

- Challenges differ in urban and rural areas
- Need for **increased funding**, and increased **flexibility** in application of funding
- **Support 1-call shop** to arrange rides, help clients understand eligibility—but skeptical of “super-broker” idea
- Need better coordination between siting of housing, services and transit planning

## Closing Observations:

- Needs differ across the state.
- Rural areas have unique challenges; Urban areas have unique challenges.
- More service needs observed than can be met with current funding.
- Tremendous range of individuals and agencies with interest, expertise and information to bring to the conversation.
- Finding ways for transportation providers, riders and human services agencies to communicate and plan together is key.
- Funding rules are complicated. Rules result in service gaps.
- Lack of information and ability to flexibly respond to needs results in duplication and lost efficiency.
- Need to better, and more clearly, communicate with riders about rules, programs, ride options.