

JTC Special Needs Transportation Policy Group

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❖ Consumer issues and challenges are similar for all the groups included in the term “Special Needs”:

- That is, anyone who is transportation dependent:
 - children,
 - low-income persons
 - older adults (this population outlives their ability to drive themselves by about 11 years)
 - most persons with disabilities
- This population is at least 30-40% of the population
- Is transportation planning, funding and attention equitable?

The Five A's of Consumer-friendly Transportation (adapted from the Beverly Foundation):

Available: Transportation exists and is available when needed (e.g., evenings, weekdays, and weekends).

Accessible: Transportation can be reached and used (e.g., path to the bus stops, bus stairs are negotiable, seats are high enough (for seniors), transportation on demand, hand-to-hand, door-to-door for those who require this level of service,).

Acceptable: Clean vehicles and stops, promote a feeling of safety, transit stops are in safe areas, drivers courteous and helpful.

Affordable: Fees are affordable, vouchers or coupons are available to defray out-of-pocket expenses.

Adaptable: Transportation can be modified or adjusted to meet special needs (e.g., the fixed route bus can accommodate a wheelchair, trip chaining is possible, and escorts can be provided).

❖ As a senior who works, I both ride the bus and drive, but I am getting more and more concerned about my mobility options as I grow older:

- Seniors outlive their ability to drive themselves - by about 11 years
- Taking the bus at night for entertainment, visit friends, etc.
- Grocery shopping
- Feeling safe on a bus as I grow older
- Getting to the bus in order to get to necessary medical appointments as I grow older:
 - Time, transfers, not being eligible for Medicaid yet being on a fixed income, help in getting these issues resolved
 - Medicare doesn't pay transportation costs to medical appointments for seniors unless it is by ambulance.
- Being single with no family - who might I ask to help me get around?
- Are seniors planning for these eventualities?
 - The Hyde Shuttle - a great boon to persons 55 and older here in the Beacon Hill area should be replicated across the County and have its hours extended. Funded by a bequest.

- ❖ Transportation is certainly in the top 2-3 hardest issues to address, fund and solve. In fact, many of us perceive it as an intractable issue.
- ❖ Transportation is not only mobility but is an essential service
 - All the health care and human services and educational opportunities in the world are useless without transportation to/from those elements.
- ❖ Transportation departments provide transportation and Health, human service agencies, schools provide services
 - Goals are not the same
 - How to bridge the gap between these two entities?
 - How might these two sides work together better to meet the needs of transportation dependent people?
- ❖ **Transportation may be intractable but Coordination is achievable**
 - It takes planning, funding, accountability, community involvement, negotiation, at both the State (ACCT) and local level (local coordinating Councils).
 - SAFETEA-LU requires it but it is pretty much an unfunded mandate
 - **We cannot afford not to promote coordination given current realities**
 - People living longer because of medical advances; e.g., Down syndrome persons will live longer and will get Alzheimer's.
 - Aging boomer population
 - Energy crisis
 - Funding limitations
 - Protecting the public health requires it
 - The State should invest in coordination processes
- ❖ We have successful evidence in our State of what coordination can accomplish
 - ACCT accomplishments and projects
 - Caution: ACCT still needs to have some enforcement authority to accomplish real coordination among the partners who are members. Be wary of continuing silo-protection.
 - Snohomish County Coordinating Council
 - Pierce County Coordinating Council
 - Both originally funded through the seed grants from the State budget that were used to make available to local communities to get started in coordination
 - One of the most successful transportation brokerages in the Nation
- ❖ **Coordination:**
 - A neutral community-based entity (a.k.a., a local coordinating council) that will
 - identify barriers
 - seek equitable and cost-effective solutions

- e.g., flexible funding options since current funding silos and varying eligibility requirements are often more expensive and not very inclusive or flexible
- create mechanisms for seamless transportation boundaries
- improve customer service
- conduct travel training
- transportation ombudsman function
- Build trust
- Pursue other funding
- Influence state and federal action
- Seek to improve and match customer needs with appropriate mobility options
- Contribute to better public health outcomes
 - environmental (fewer cars)
 - by facilitating social and civic engagement
 - preventing minor and major depression and suicide when adults can overcome isolation
- It should have some authority and funding to do all this
- It can be held accountable
- Caution: Be wary that levels of service don't go down; and that a new coordinated system is not more cumbersome than what we have
 - ACCT and local Councils have to be able to realistically manage expectations. An inclusive process will do this better than the current more adversarial model

❖ *Successful coordination is maximized when both the possibilities and pitfalls are fully acknowledged. It is a fluid process involving working relationships among persons who come from different backgrounds and may have differing objectives. It is a political process, one in which power and administrative responsibilities are shared, not controlled by one party or the other. In order to survive and thrive, coordination efforts have to have the continued support of key decision makers; be able to demonstrate real benefits to all parties involved, and be relatively free of personal political agendas.* (Adapted from the Conclusion of TCRP study, March 2003: Economic Benefits of Coordinating Human Service Transportation and Transit Services.)

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