
2013 M O B I L I T Y
• L I S T E N I N G
2014 S E S S I O N S

Summaries and Findings

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The opposite of mobility is isolation. It's not just about getting a bus or taking Access to an appointment; people are cut off from socializing due to limited transportation choices. At any time of the day or evening people are denied the opportunity to engage with others as they desire - an at-will option open to people with cars.

-Robin McClelland

North King County Mobility Coalition Member
& Former Planning Commissioner, City of Shoreline

ABOUT THE NORTH KING COUNTY MOBILITY COALITION

The North King County Mobility Coalition (NKCMC) was formed in the fall of 2010. Members include transportation service providers, human service agencies, and residents of Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, Kenmore, Bothell, and Woodinville. The Coalition brings together individuals and organizations with a common interest in human service transportation to increase awareness of and expand services for North King County residents focusing on special needs populations (older adults, youth, low-income individuals and families, and people with disabilities). The NKCMC works to identify transportation service gaps and untapped opportunities in and around the community, leveraging existing resources and catalyzing local projects to improve mobility in North King County.

INTRODUCTION

The North King County Mobility Coalition (NKCMC) held a series of listening around the North King County region sessions during their 2013 and 2014 work years. The purpose of these sessions was to interact firsthand with mobility-challenged populations, learning about the specific obstacles and challenges they encounter while traveling or attempting to travel around the region. In 2013 the NKCMC conducted sessions at Paramount House and at Westminster Manor, both King County Housing Authority properties located in Shoreline, WA. The 2014 listening sessions were held at the Sequoias Senior Apartments, a senior living facility managed by Senior Housing Assistance Group (SHAG) in Kenmore, WA and at the Northshore Senior Center, a day-use activity center for seniors in Bothell, Washington.

The format of the listening sessions was conversational and based on three to five questions intended to stimulate discussion. The 2014 Sessions did use a set script as a starting-off point. The sessions maintained a loose structure where NKCMC members asked participants questions about how they traveled around the region in order to spur lively conversation.

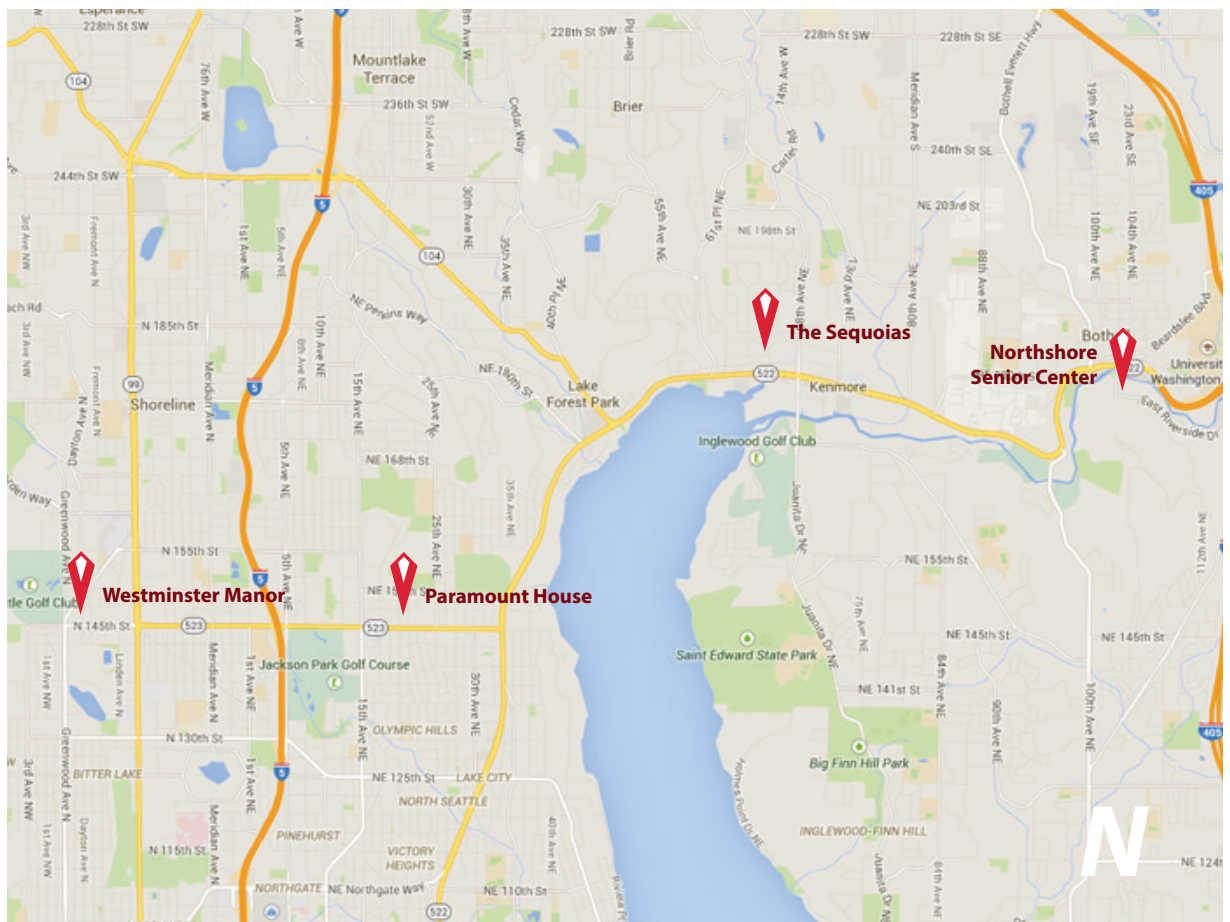
There were two goals for the sessions: first, to learn about specific impediments, barriers, and opportunities related to participants'

transportation needs relevant to their location; second, to tease out and identify trends affecting participants regardless of their individual circumstances or backgrounds. In the process we identified several recurring trends:

- The built environment in North King County is generally composed of inadequate pedestrian infrastructure and amenities, at a scale not built for pedestrian traffic.
- There is a general lack of destinations accessible via non-motorized means of travel. Using alternative transportation services such as Dial-a-Ride or Access as a substitute for a personal vehicle is insufficient, being both inconvenient and confusing.
- There is a general perception that local governments do not give the proper amount of attention to senior mobility issues. Seniors tend to have negative experiences when attempting to reach out to their political representation.

There is a wide range of mobility-limiting circumstances people from all walks of life face on a daily basis, and the variety of means available to address such limitations vary from one person's particular circumstance to the next. Because of this, it was important to NKCMC members to try to connect with as broad a range of people as possible while maintaining a focus on identifying issues that not only affect the seniors, but also issues that may disproportionately affect people with mobility limitations.

Participants spanned a wide age range with various levels of mobility limitations from vision impairment to wheelchair dependency to a multitude of other reasons and circumstances preventing them from being fully mobile.



Listening Session Locations

OVERALL THEMES AND TAKEAWAYS

In addition to the trends, from one session to another several recurring themes also surfaced:

- The distance between where people live and where they want or need to go is too long and fraught with obstacles to travel as a pedestrian safely.
- The state and scale of pedestrian infrastructure in North King County cities is generally not conducive for pedestrian travel. Destinations tend to be too far away and the infrastructure by which a pedestrian might access them in an efficient, repeatable manner, regardless of the state of their mobility challenges.
- When the distance to a significant destination (for example, a grocery store) is close enough that non-motorized transportation does become an option, the infrastructure is oftentimes insufficient for efficient travel if users are mobility challenged.
- There is a strong fear of giving up their ability to drive because of the very real limitations that occur as a result, an eventual prospect faced by almost all seniors. Residents feel isolated, helpless, and stranded without access to a personal vehicle. Many of those who did still drive expressed strong discomfort with the idea of driving in certain situations such as

using the freeway, driving at night, driving through busy city streets, such as downtown Seattle, and driving in rainy conditions or during otherwise severe weather, observing that that they usually avoid driving altogether under those circumstances.

- Participants utilize creative mobility solutions including paying friends, neighbors, or other residents to drive them either on a case-by-case basis, or by organizing (informal) rideshare networks, to maintain some level of mobility.
- Gaining access to available transportation services is confusing and difficult. The amount of pre-planning required to utilize the transportation services currently available including alternative systems such as Metro Access, Hopelink Transportation, Hyde Shuttle, the existing bus/high-capacity transit system, and others is overly burdensome for use in daily activities. Infrequent service, inaccessible stops, as well as alternative service shuttle schedules requiring residents to dedicate exponentially more time to planning and traveling than is reasonable or efficient and ultimately hampers mobility.
- Participants tended to share a lack of knowledge about many of the existing transportation services and did not have nor know how to access additional educational resources with which to learn and empower themselves.

- Participants' are regularly frustrated with their perceived lack of communication channels with elected officials and city staff with which to express their concerns. There is a general feeling that participants' mobility needs and limitations are consistently dismissed, ignored, or insufficiently addressed by local governments and service providers.
- Private transportation services such as cabs and shuttles are too costly an alternative and were thusly regarded as being generally out of the question as an option for the residents living within the financial constraints of a fixed income.
- Newer, alternative transportation services that utilize smartphone technology such as Uber or Lyft were also not considered an option for these populations who, in addition to the aforementioned cost barrier, also tend to not have access to nor experience with the kind of technology necessary to use those services.

The remainder of this report describes each session in detail.

2013 LISTENING SESSIONS

PARAMOUNT HOUSE LISTENING SESSION REPORT

Background

The North King County Mobility Coalition held a listening session with residents of King County Housing Authority's Paramount House apartments (1750 N.E. 145th St. in Shoreline) on May 9, 2013.

The purpose of the listening session was to receive information and feedback from residents on their use of the 145th St/ SR523 transportation corridor. Candace Ives, King County Housing Authority's Resident Services Coordinator, hosted the meeting, which was attended by 10 Paramount House residents. Robin



Paramount House (1750 NE 145th St, Shoreline, WA 98155)

McClelland, North King County Mobility Coalition member, facilitated the discussion.

Following the session, representatives from Hopelink and Senior Services described general travel information and identified specific programs and services of use to the residents. The residents also were informed about an upcoming event at POPY's Café at the nearby Prince of Peace Lutheran Church intended for people of limited means to join the conversation about Sound Transit's light rail station area planning and land use changes in Shoreline.

Resident Feedback

During the lively conversation, the residents offered a long list of ways they travel the corridor. They painted a vivid picture of how they get around using several forms of aid including walkers, wheelchairs, and scooters. Several walk up or down the corridor to shops or bus stops. Most are dependent on Metro or Access paratransit to traverse the area – one resident startled the group with her description of the all day trip she makes three times a week to visit her mother in Puyallup using public transportation.

Some residents combine transit modes – van, shuttle, use of a walker, or “rolling” to make a single trip. Whether walking, “rolling”, or using public transportation, the residents portrayed difficult movement along 145th due to obstructions on the sidewalk, narrow passage, and unsafe crossings.

At least one resident drives his own vehicle. However, due to a stroke and subsequent brain injury, he has great difficulty speaking. His ability to contribute was limited, but his frustration with the corridor came through clearly as he nodded in agreement with comments made by others.

Ways participants traverse 145th include:

- Walking
- “Rolling” in a wheelchair or scooter
- Walker
- Driving a personal vehicle
- Access paratransit
- Van or shuttle

The obstacles encountered by the residents make up a long list worth noting in detail. They are of particular relevance to those who travel by non-motorized modes and who confront these conditions daily. They speak to safety, traffic flow, and transit service:

- Sidewalks are narrow or non-existent, raising safety concerns.
- Tree roots have pushed up the sidewalk in several places, making it dangerous or impassable, especially for those using wheelchairs, walkers, and other mobility devices. Uneven pavement has resulted in trips and falls.

- The South side of the roadway lacks a good pedestrian path, but people cross to that side to avoid certain intersections. Others use the North side to avoid safety issues.
- The high volume of traffic slows vans, shuttles, and buses.
- The overgrowth of bushes, shrubs, and wild plants along the sidewalk is a safety hazard.
- Despite the proximity of the QFC and other retail shops, due to the condition of the corridor, residents said it is very difficult to transport groceries home.
- Bus connections are poor. For example, despite the proximity of Lake City to Paramount House (just down the hill), it is difficult to travel there via a Metro bus.

Specific conditions the residents raised could be targets for spot improvements in the corridor:

- The corner at 17th Ave NE and 145th (near the Arco gas station) is dangerous, due to lack of sightlines and visibility. Residents suggested a stoplight or crosswalk to improve safety. They stated that despite the high speeds and bad sightlines at this corner, people often jaywalk or use the unmarked intersection. The bus shelter at Paramount House was removed, making it more difficult to wait for the bus here. Residents would like the shelter to be replaced. (It has since been replaced.)

When asked what they would change to improve the corridor, residents shared the following ideas:

- Safety improvements for pedestrians including wider sidewalks, more crosswalks, or perhaps a pedestrian overpass.
- Better signage. Possibly signage indicating “senior crossing” zones.
- Lower speed limits.
- A more convenient bus route to the Library (in Lake City) and to the Shoreline Senior Center.
- Safety improvements at the intersection of 145th and 20th Ave NE. Both this “blind” corner and the top of the hill need more and better signage.
- The crossing time at NE 145th and 15th NE needs to be extended to provide more time for pedestrians to cross 145th St.
- Metro route 73 should go to Lake City. There is no direct route from Paramount House to Fred Meyer, despite its relative proximity.

Key Takeaways

Residents of Paramount House in Shoreline described their trips along the 145th St/SR523 corridor using a variety of transportation modes. Noting a

number of obstacles to safe and comfortable travel, they suggested several ways that mobility could be improved in the corridor.

As an initial catalyst project and the best way to improve mobility in the corridor in the short term, residents selected replacing the bus shelter (which had previously been removed) and adding a bench at 145th St and 19th Ave NE near Paramount House.

Residents had noted during the conversation that the bus shelter and bench at 145th St and 19th Ave NE near Paramount House had been previously removed, leaving them to wait for transit in the open. As a result of advocacy efforts by the NKCMC and at the urging of King County Councilmember Rod Dembowski, in late July of 2013 a new bus shelter and bench were installed months ahead of original schedule.

WESTMINSTER MANOR LISTENING SESSION REPORT

Summary

Residents of Westminster Manor (14701 Dayton Ave N, Shoreline) say that they travel in Shoreline and Seattle using a variety of transportation modes. They noted several obstacles to safe and comfortable travel in the area around them and suggested ideas for improving the corridor, emphasizing pedestrian improvements to the intersection of 145th and Greenwood. The top suggested improvements were lengthening the crossing time at the intersection, raising driver awareness of pedestrians via signage, and extending the sidewalk in front of Westminster Manor on Dayton Avenue all the way down to 145th.

Background

The North King County Mobility Coalition held a listening session with residents of King County Housing Authority's Westminster Manor apartments on November 18, 2013. The purpose of the listening session was to



Westminster Manor (14701 Dayton Avenue North, Shoreline, WA 98133)

receive information and feedback on residents' use of the 145th St/ SR523 transportation corridor and surrounding streets. Fifteen residents attended the session and hosted by Candace Ives, Westminster Manor's Resident Services Coordinator. Robin McClelland, a member of the North King County Mobility Coalition, served as the meeting facilitator.

Resident Feedback

Residents listed several ways they get around along the 145th corridor. These included:

- Walking
- Rolling in a wheelchair or scooter
- Walkers
- Driving a personal vehicle
- King County Metro bus
- Access paratransit
- Hyde Shuttle
- Carpooling with caretakers, family, or friends

The intersection of 145th and Greenwood is not friendly to pedestrians,

especially those using mobility devices. There are many potholes at that intersection, which make maneuvering devices difficult and necessitate a greater amount of time to cross than what is given. Residents shared their experiences encountering obstacles along 145th St:

- Sidewalks are scarce within the neighborhood. The streets, although low-traffic, tend to have rough surfaces, which raise safety concerns, especially for people who use mobility devices.
- Bus connections, especially to the east and north, are poor. This makes accessing even nearby human services, such as Hopelink's Shoreline food bank and the Shoreline Senior Center nearly impossible.
- Residents described travel to parks and shopping in Shoreline as difficult and time-consuming. Public places are essentially out of reach to many.
- Abrupt sidewalk end at the north edge of Westminster Manor property. Many residents shop in the Greenwood neighborhood in Seattle, rather



Abrupt sidewalk end at the north edge of Westminster Manor property.



Abrupt sidewalk end at the south edge of Westminster Manor property.

than in Shoreline due to more direct and frequent transit connections to the south.

- Several residents described concern with driver behavior at 145th and Greenwood. Drivers often seem unaware of pedestrians.
- The south side of the intersection at 145th and Greenwood lacks wheelchair cutouts, forcing residents to dogleg, crossing on the north side of the busy thoroughfare and back in order to get to their only bus stop to the Greenwood area of Seattle.
- Residents described booking the Hyde shuttle outside scheduled times as inconvenient and time consuming.

When asked what they would change to improve the area, residents shared the following ideas:

- Several residents requested a “no right turn on red” sign for the intersection of 145th and Greenwood.



Westminster Manor residents' typical route towards 145th St.

- The crossing at 145th and Greenwood needs to be retimed to allow more time for pedestrians to cross the street.
- Some residents suggested distributing pedestrian visibility clothing, such as armbands and vests.

- Construct a sidewalk on Dayton all the way to 145th from Westminster Manor.
- Schedule the Hyde shuttle for every Tuesday.
- Have more transportation resources on hand at Westminster Manor, including education on how to use King County Metro's online trip planner.

Key Takeaways

The residents of Westminster Manor are transit-savvy and care deeply about the state of their walking environment. The intersection of 145th St and Greenwood Ave N is a critical place for residents to access transportation, including Metro buses. While they engaged enthusiastically in conversation about that intersection, they had less to say about points eastward on 145th St because they used that part of the corridor less frequently. Many residents go to Seattle for shopping and recreation needs rather than Shoreline because of better transit connections to the south. The top suggested improvements were lengthening the crossing time at the intersection, raising driver awareness of pedestrians via signage, and extending the sidewalk in front of Westminster Manor on Dayton Avenue all the way down to 145th. This session gleaned insights into the condition of the western edge of the 145th St/SR 523 corridor, particularly the needs of senior and disabled users in this area.

The obstacles that limit mobility appear to have logical and simple fixes if the residents had access to and influence with local officials and decision makers. Their concerns about the timing of the stoplight at 145th was reported to Shoreline city staff, resulting in a subsequent adjustment of signal time to better accommodate pedestrian travel.

2014 LISTENING SESSIONS

SEQUOIAS SENIOR APARTMENTS LISTENING SESSION REPORT

Background

On August 21, 2014, the North King County Mobility Coalition (NKCMC) held a listening Session at the Sequoias Senior Apartments, a senior living facility managed by Senior Housing Assistance Group (SHAG) in Kenmore, WA (7111 NE 181st St, Kenmore, WA 98028). The purpose of the listening session was to receive information and feedback from residents about how they travel, what issues related to mobility are important or of concern to



The Sequoias Sr Apts (7111 Northeast 181st Street, Kenmore, WA 98028)

them, and their interest or current efforts at engagement towards addressing their concerns. Residents were asked a series of six questions to stimulate the conversation. These questions were:

- Where do you travel regularly in your community and how do you get there?
- Do you have any special needs you depend on when traveling and how are they provided?
- What obstacles exist that interfere with your traveling and how do you get around or address those?
- What kind of improvements would you like to see along your travel routes?
- Have you tried to engage your local government or community with your concerns?
- Would you use public transportation if training was provided to you?

Robin McClellan, NKCMC member, facilitated the discussion. Cameron Duncan, staff, took notes and recorded audio during the meeting.

Key Takeaways & Resident Feedback

Although the residents noted that the property has well-designed walking areas, they expressed concern over the significant lack of pedestrian infrastructure surrounding the facility – primarily in the form of sidewalks and crosswalks. For instance, there is a large swath of sidewalk missing along the walking route from the Sequoias Senior Apartments to the local Safeway grocery store - located barely one quarter of a mile away, which residents of the Sequoias frequent for their regular grocery needs on foot.

Although many residents use Access to travel to their various appointments in the region, they observed that the service remains a challenging service to utilize because of both scheduling and timing difficulties as well as logistical confusion having to do with determining if residents qualify for Access and the subsequent confusion often stemming from managing the necessary paperwork involved in signing up.

As in the previous listening sessions, we learned that residents are uneasy about becoming dependent on public transportation. They are confused by how it works, concern about safety and reliability, and fearful of difficulties they may experience with getting to bus stations, traveling long distances, and having to make transfers between buses mid-trip. Additionally, some residents were even fearful about the idea of using public transportation due to perceived safety concerns, as well as anxiety about the potential of getting lost easily.

Residents presented a varied list of ways they traverse the region, including:

- Driving themselves, being driven by a friend, family member, or helper
- Traveling as a pedestrian with the aid of a walker, wheelchair, or other mobility device
- Using specialized transportation services like Access or the Northshore Senior Center vanpool
- Using the existing public transit modes like Metro bus or Sound Transit light rail (when traveling to the airport)

Mini-Case Study: Safety Getting To Safeway

Traveling as a pedestrian in and around their community was a central point of session discussion. The residents almost unanimously agreed that walking or moving via other non-motorized transportation between their apartments and local destinations – most notably the Safeway grocery store in the area – is regularly a dangerous experience for them.

Although the Safeway store used by residents is only approximately one quarter of a mile away from the apartments, there is no safe and complete pedestrian route connecting the two. The sidewalk in front of the Sequoias stops abruptly at the edge of the property line and does not resume at any point along the route, which runs past the next-door trailer park. The lack



Seniors have trouble navigating what is in reality a very short distance between their home and the local grocery store.

of sidewalk forces the seniors trying to walk to the grocery store onto either the road or the adjacent uneven, overgrown, and gravelly surfaces along their route, which provides them with minimal protection from the fast moving traffic along NE 181st Street. When residents arrive at Safeway, which they approach from the store's rear, they must walk along a long driveway - used primarily by delivery trucks - which connects the store's parking lot and frontage (facing NE Bothell Way) to 181st Street at its rear. No pedestrian infrastructure is provided along the driveway, which spans the entire length of the building's east side.

Residents are forced to occupy the same space as cars and trucks entering and exiting the parking lot, which residents noted often traveled at unsafe speeds, particularly on the rear driveway where there is no pedestrian infrastructure, or other indicators to let drivers know to slow down.

Residents were very concerned about their safety along this route as almost all of them are frequent customers, walking to and from Safeway regularly.

Robin explained how the city addresses capital improvements and infrastructure planning for things as sidewalks. She also suggested approaching Safeway directly to address the poor pedestrian accommodations along the route and the risks posed to vulnerable populations like the elderly. She also discussed different methods by which residents could approach store management about making improvements to



Abrupt sidewalk ending at the edge of the Sequoias property.

their property's rear driveway to accommodate pedestrians. After some conversation, the residents expressed interest in working together to contact the manager of the Safeway to communicate their concerns.

Working with the city to address the lack of pedestrian infrastructure along their travel route still seemed somewhat

daunting and confusing to a number of residents. The suggestion of using the Internet to access city government resources to address concerns appeared to remain a barrier for many of the residents. Residents recounted stories of how their travel plans had gone awry when using public transportation, due mainly to either poor accessibility of bus stops or difficult situations created by transferring from one bus to another on a trip because

of timing and distance between stops. One resident described how she rarely has time to cross the street from one bus stop to another in time to catch the second bus en route to her daughter's house. Being dependent on the poorly timed stoplight and walk signal, she often gets off the first bus in time to see the second one pull away, forcing her to wait for some time on the street until another bus comes along. Stories such as this highlight serious factors that keep people from using public transit. This story resonated with Coalition members, being a complaint frequently heard by mobility-challenged populations in the region.

Residents generally expressed an interest in utilizing travel-training programs such as those offered by Metro. Some hesitation was present, primarily from those who had not considered using Metro before. Travel training programs appeared to be something residents were interested in and were not aware of previously.



Back driveway to Safeway on 181st St
used by Sequoias residents.

The residents appeared eager to mobilize an effort to talk to Safeway management about what can be done to help address their concerns as regular customers of the grocery store. Residents were encouraged by the thought that they could affect change in an easier manner than going to the city first. Reaching out to city leadership remained a somewhat

intimidating or confusing avenue for residents, some of whom said that they were previously unaware of how to go about getting in contact with local leadership.

The set list of questions posed to participants were useful for generating conversation, allowing Coalition members and to glean valuable insights from participants as a result of the conversation prompted by the questions.

NORTHSHORE SENIOR CENTER LISTENING SESSION REPORT

Background

On October 7, 2014, the North King County Mobility Coalition NKCMC) held a listening Session at the Northshore Senior Center, a day-use senior citizen activity center located in Bothell, WA (10201 E Riverside Drive, Bothell, WA 98011). Like the earlier session at the Sequoias Senior Apartments, the purpose of the listening session was to receive information and feedback from residents about how they travel, what issues related to mobility are important or of concern to them, and their interest or current efforts at engagement towards addressing their concerns. The Coalition prepared a list of six questions related to mobility needs of senior populations determined by members to be relevant to the purpose of the listening session and the interests of the Coalition. The same questions as those used during the Listening Session held at the Sequoias Senior Apartments were also used for the



Northshore Senior Center (10201 East Riverside Drive, Bothell, WA 98011)

Northshore Senior Center session.

- Where do you travel to regularly in your community and how do you get there?
- Do you have any special needs you depend on when traveling and how are they provided?
- What obstacles exist that interfere with your traveling and how do you get around or address those?
- What kind of improvements would you like to see along your travel routes?
- Have you tried to engage your local government or community with your concerns?
- Would you be interest in using public transit to get around if someone were to provide training to you?

The Northshore Senior Center is a day-use facility exclusively, unlike the residential ommunities where we held the previous sessions. The four people at Northshore participated in the discussion provided a different perspective than those at the other facilities. Jim Seeks, Director of Transportation at Northshore opened the session. He introduced himself and his Coalition colleagues who would facilitate the meeting. Robin McClelland, NKCMC member, facilitated the discussion. Cameron Duncan, staff, took notes and recorded audio during the meeting.

Key Takeaways & Participant Feedback

Some people continue to drive to the Northshore Senior Center; others use the shuttle and bus services provided by the Senior Center's transportation department, while still others use King County Metro's Access and/or DART shuttles.

Once again, among those who drive, we learned that they experience discomfort with the prospect of doing so at night, on busy roads and freeways, and in congested and/or confusing areas. They noted that their spouses and/or family members have expressed a similar unease about the prospect of their driving, particularly in adverse conditions.

Participants conveyed extreme concern about the possibility of losing their ability to drive. Even those who had expressed an interest in not having to use their cars as their primary mode of transportation said that the physical infrastructure of the area they lived in prevents them from effectively using any other mode to get around with anywhere close to the same level of reliability and convenience. To many, the only other options for affordable transportation in the area are the DART or Access shuttle services. But participants all noted that those services were inconvenient to use, requiring them to orient their schedules around the timing and availability of the shuttle services to the point at which their entire day would be disrupted beyond ability to realistically be able to make any other plans on the day of their trip.

The prospect of using the existing bus system as a regular means of transportation was met with general unease among many facility users. Main concerns expressed by participants included:

- Basic convenience of service (unlike residents who were generally more concerned with basic safety)
- Bus routes and schedule were either too confusing or too inconsistent with the timing of their needs and lifestyles
- Pedestrian infrastructure necessary for a senior or otherwise mobility-challenged person to access the bus was largely nonexistent in the areas they need to travel frequently, including sidewalks, curb ramps and cuts, short blocks, frequent and properly-timed crosswalks, and more

When asked if they had engaged their local government leadership to address the state of the transportation system and its ineffectiveness in serving individuals with limited mobility, they said that they had not. The few who had attempted to reach out and discuss the issue with public leaders reported being told that local programs like sidewalk installation were currently too expensive to carry out at the scope and scale necessary to address their concerns. The sidewalk improvements that the city was planning on doing were already prioritized for routes where children walk to school. This feedback discouraged them from pursuing the issue with local leadership further.

The Cost of Mobility

We were reminded at the Northshore Senior Center that getting around - basic mobility - is not free. Often the expense of transportation exceeds the ability of people to move around due to financial constraints many seniors encounter. We learned that many seniors who use the Center live on a reduced-income who and the cost of mobility in their daily lives is often out of reach. They said that, although owning a car is expensive, the cost of using alternative transportation would be even greater in terms of both money and of time.

When asked about moving to a location better suited for pedestrian travel and other alternative transportation modes, financial limitations were a significant factor. People said that a fixed income is usually the largest barrier preventing them from being able to move. This insight highlighted the true value of living close to the services, people, and locations you value as you age.

To many people the convenience of driving is frequently taken for granted. However to those who can no longer drive or are limited in their ability, this is a luxury they must forego. Being unable to afford to move to a different place more conducive to their mobility needs, they are forced to remain in environments that not only make basic transportation difficult and increasingly expensive, ultimately confining them in isolated, unhealthy lifestyles as they age and grow more dependent on others to go about their daily lives.

One woman described the poor conditions of the mobile home park where she lives but is unable to move due to her fixed income and lack of any additional financial resources. She described in detail the lack of sidewalks, benches and other basic tools for improving mobility. She also noted that the park's suburban location meant that practically all services and destinations not served by alternative transportation services such as the Northshore Senior Center shuttle were extremely difficult to access.

She also talked about her experience engaging park management in a conversation about improving pedestrian safety. Similar to the experiences of participants in previous listening sessions, she found this attempt to be unpleasant and unproductive. Her concerns were met with no significant action. Due to her significant financial constraints, she remains unable to address the issue independently. And to this day her mobility remains extremely limited.

CONCLUSIONS

The people engaged by the North King County Mobility Coalition expressed their concerns and frustrations with the current state of pedestrian infrastructure. Many residents feel stranded, concerned that their own basic mobility needs have been put on hold while their community leadership focuses attention on other priorities.

Being limited in terms of physical mobility, financial constraints, and access to educational resources, many people expressed a sense of resignation that they may never once again have the degree of mobility and freedom they once enjoyed. Rather, the norm for their daily lives has become an acceptance that using available transportation resources means spending significant amounts of time planning trips days in advance, working with service providers to accommodate the system demand, and being prepared to dedicate hours and sometimes entire days to sitting on (or waiting for) transportation services.

A significant number of seniors in North King County live with a perpetual, ever-increasing risk of isolation due to challenges of limited mobility and they lack the means to address the challenges that steadily impact their lives more and more each day.

The Listening Sessions demonstrated that many of these challenges can be mitigated by relatively simple fixes with the help of local leadership. These include (but are not limited to):

- Adjust stoplight timing
- Fill in gaps, level and/or complete sidewalks on routes frequented by mobility challenged pedestrians
- Improve access to the current, existing public transportation system
- Communicate regularly with mobility-challenged populations through channels they are comfortable with using
- Provide resources for people who have already or are anticipating giving up their car
- Utilize advocacy and resource groups like the King County Mobility Coalition and its partners to maintain a regular flow of information between residents and local leadership

Piecemeal Adaptation

The degree to which people adapt their lives to a system that does not adequately provide for their basic mobility needs by organizing piecemeal fixes to fill in the gaps is impressive. People are creative. They organize informal networks of able drivers compensated by simple payment/bartering

systems in exchange for rides. Those who participate in these networks noted that cash in exchange for a ride is the most convenient method of payment, as opposed to buying lunch, doing chores, or other forms.

However, people participating in the listening sessions emphasized that most of their solutions are piecemeal at best, requiring an exorbitant amount of effort to set up and maintain with little or no help from others. Furthermore, those who are not lucky enough to be surrounded by the proper resources, including simply knowing the right people, find themselves out of luck. This creates an extremely unequal landscape from one individual to the next in terms of access to and availability of help. It was made clear that these arrangements and networks at best serve as a stopgap, awkwardly plugging a hole in a system that continues to serve them poorly. This requires large amounts of effort, organization, and energy on the part of people with mobility limitations and already struggling to make ends meet. We concluded that a preference is strong and apparent for reliable, equitable, and affordable transportation service in lieu of their current piecemeal approach is strong and apparent.

Access to Leadership

People are frustrated by their limited access to those who have the power to address their needs, such as elected officials and city staff. They noted that, in their world, public meetings are poorly advertised. Their frustration is

compounded by the additional burden of simply arranging for transportation to those meetings, often held during hours and at locations not conducive to the schedule of a senior or mobility challenged individual.

They would prefer to have officials and staff come to them to discuss mobility issues. But they also acknowledged that they could make more effort to reach out to local leadership. A significant barrier between the participants and their leaders is their limited familiarity with technology. This creates a learning curve which limits their ability to do such things as navigate city websites for, use email; and conduct researching online. This prevents them from gaining access to available services such as travel trainings; transit schedules, routes, service updates; pending legislation with impacts to their mobility; and more.

Participants were under no illusion that swift and large-scale system-wide solutions to address their mobility needs is a realistic prospect. However, they do believe smaller improvements such as the ones cited in this report, addressing specific impediments and issues have the potential to make a large, positive impact on their lives.

For example, one need look no further than the less-than-one-block of incomplete sidewalk at the Sequoias Senior Apartments in Kenmore or the all too similar situation at Westminster Manor. At both places, a distance shorter than one city block separates the facility from access to necessary services (a grocery store and a food bank, respectively). The lack of a level,

safe walking surface creates a disproportionately difficult and dangerous environment for someone with a walker, wheelchair, cane, or any other mobility limitation to navigate safely. The simple task of completing these kinds of vital pedestrian connections, linking people with no alternative means of transportation, practically speaking, can mean the difference between access and isolation for many individuals. Unfortunately, these simple improvements are almost always extremely low on a city's list of priorities in terms of dedicating limited funds and resources.

In addition to making physical improvements, participants believed that another simple solution is more education on subjects such as how to use available area transportation options and what tools exist with which to access local government leadership. Sharing the tools and resources to help navigate a large and confusing transportation network – as well as demonstrating how to use them – can be a critical step in addressing mobility challenges. Some area service providers do provide different travel training services. Participants felt that arranging for regular sessions and classes would go a long way in terms of empowering them to access and be knowledgeable about what is available.

Participants interviewed during the listening sessions provided the North King County Mobility Coalition with detailed, invaluable, firsthand accounts of their experiences navigating their way through the community. They overwhelmingly agreed that the existing system does not adequately serve their needs and limits their ability to travel freely, hampering their

quality of life in significant ways. They have limited access to basic services and social interaction. Participants acknowledged the existing challenges transportation service providers face. However, they feel strongly that their local leadership and service providers could and should make a stronger ongoing effort to reach out to and address the needs of mobility-challenged people.

It is the intention of the North King County Mobility Coalition that this report carries the message of people with mobility limitations in North King County to those who can take action to address their needs in meaningful, significant, and lasting ways.

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