

**Meeting Notes**  
**Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation**  
**Washington State Department of Transportation**  
**Large Commission Board Room**  
**Friday October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008**  
**11:30 AM – 2:00 PM**  
**Olympia, WA**

## ***Council Business***

### **In Attendance:**

Cathy Silins (Chair), Allan Jones, Marilyn Mason-Plunkett, Richard De Rock, Vickie Foster, Michael Rogers, Doug Porter, Page Scott, Nancy San Carlos

### **Safety Briefing:**

Cathy conducted the safety briefing.

### **Meeting Notes -- Chair**

The Council approved the meeting notes from the August 2008 ACCT meeting.

### **Budget-- Don Chartock**

Don reviewed the budget.

- We are right about where we should be with about 44% of our overall budget remaining.
- CTAA has informed us that they have spent their matching Technical Assistance funds that we jointly sponsored.
- Due to the State budget freeze, it is looks as if we will not have \$169,000 to spend on technical assistance.

## ***Identify and Address Barriers***

### **JTC Findings and Recommendations — Tim Payne**

Tim reviewed coordination activities in Washington State including the strong brokerage system, many active coordination councils, and a great deal of coordination with tribes. However, there is also a great deal of untapped opportunity including a lack of statewide policy to define and enforce coordination and many of the largest sponsors do not blend funds, resulting and confusing and barriers for the customer.

Some of the other barriers that prevent coordination are funding restrictions that hinder the blending of money, incompatible vehicle requirements (ADA paratransit van vs. school bus), differing drivers requirements, and unique customer needs not allowing for the grouping of passengers. These barriers limit options for the customer and make travel across county lines difficult.

The report found that the mission of ACCT is clearly understood by its stakeholders; however, most feel that ACCT is not empowered with meaningful oversight of coordination at the statewide level. Many felt that ACCT is not provided with adequate staffing or budget to fulfill its potential. With that said, the majority of the stakeholders believe ACCT should continue at least as an advisory body.

*The consultants on this report developed seven Findings and Preliminary Recommendations:*

Governance and Policy: The report will propose the use of a *Community Transportation Board* who would serve as a local resource to identify and advance coordination activities.

Uniformity of Definitions: Establish uniform reporting measurement definitions, measurement, and standards in reporting.

Funding: Require state agencies that purchase transportation to participate in/and financially support ACCT. Establish a dedicated funding source that could be used for “gap funding” when no other funding is available. Direct WSDOT to tie the use of its funds to meeting coordination objectives.

Connectivity: Identify areas of importance or transit “hubs” and have local councils develop connectivity plans around those.

Facility Siting: Prioritize access to transit when siting public and private facilities.

Coordination with Pupil Transportation: School districts should investigate the feasibility of providing transportation for homeless youth through community brokers. Direct OSPI to develop program guidelines for use of school resources (such as vehicles) for broader community purposes.

Influencing Federal Planning Program Requirements: Work with national partners to establish common goals and objectives for the reauthorization of McKinney Vento. Support Federal Legislation that would increase the reimbursement rate authorized for volunteers.

Next steps...Tim and Connie will refine recommendations as needed, have a draft plan available for public view in November, and a draft plan submitted to the JTC in early December.

A short discussion by the Council followed the presentation with a number of the Council Members having contributions to the dialogue.

Page Scott pointed out that everyone who has a transportation element should put their money on the table.

Richard DeRock stated that there are challenges to everything going through the broker. The structure of the ADA and transit create strong barriers that can prohibit coordination. He wanted the study to be clear as to what are hoping to achieve. Finally, that improved efficiency does not mean saving money and the legislature shouldn't be expecting to find money through this process..

Tim Payne said that the legislators have said that the main thing that the legislators are after is less calls saying someone cannot get a ride.

Doug Porter asked that the study be explicit when addressing structural issues.

Mike Rogers stated that these were good quality issues. He believes better transportation is needed. He would like the report sent to him.

Doug Porter asked that we also focus on how to improve the flow of Federal funding.

Patty McDonald (audience) said that she believed that facility siting could not be done by DSHS. She also expressed a concern that it is difficult to find housing for many of her clients.

Allan Jones pointed out that OSPI doesn't represent all of the school districts in the state. They will have to have a say in how things are done as well.

Marilyn Mason Plunkett said that hard financial times are here but it is nice to have a vision that we can move towards.

Don asked what kind of reception the consultant received when presenting the findings to the legislature.

Tim answered that they were receptive, cautioned about the current economic climate and asked good questions.

### ***Increase Advocacy***

### **Complaint Process-- Ryan**

Website: Staff has developed the best practices page on the ACCT website. The page describes the process, gives examples of model policies, and information on resolving customer complaints.

Grant Process: Staff has developed a process to evaluate the policies of grantees who receive paratransit special needs grants. Once someone receives a paratransit special needs grant Ryan will review their policy against a matrix of requirements of the customer complaint process. Once an agency policy passes muster their funds will be released.

### **Rider Risk--Faith Trimble**

FLT Consulting and Nelson Nygaard were contracted to explore safety and security issues of people using public transit in Snohomish County. A literature review of pertinent periodicals on safety concerns (crime, wheelchair securement, unsafe driving) and strategies to mitigate fear (technology, design and planning, transit policing, personal planning) was developed. Additionally, three focus groups were conducted: one with working-women, one with people with disabilities, and one with older adults.

Faith shared some of the key findings from the focus groups:

People with Disabilities: The key concerns for this focus group were driver knowledge, driver sensitivity and contagious diseases on transit vehicles. Possible transit strategies the group came up with were additional driver training and/or mystery rider program. The focus group also recommended that the transit agency institute cleanliness inspections. The group also recommended possible riders strategies such as taking a friend or advocate on the bus.

Working Women: The key concerns for this focus group was crime and harassment at bus stops and a lack of familiarity with the system. They recommended that the transit provide better enforcement, as well as information about how they have made the system safer. Rider strategies they recommended were to be alert, sit near driver, travel in groups and be careful.

Seniors: The key concerns for seniors were getting lost or stranded and rowdy behavior from other passengers. This group believed that transit could provide training and information on how to safely ride the bus. Personal strategies the group recommended were to study the bus guide and to take a friend on the trip.

Faith noted that while each of the groups expressed concerns about safety, for people with disabilities the concern included concerns inside the bus and at the transit stop. While working women and seniors had concerns specific to the transit stop

*Comments from the council*

Richard DeRock said the danger issue tends to be overplayed. If you look at the statistics they are actually very good and the more we talk about the negative, the more we make it hard to use the system. That is not to say we don't address the concerns. We just need to address them carefully. Secondly, there are not as many issues on the bus as there are at the bus stops.

Vickie Foster pointed out that she has taken all types of transit and buses and trains are not always the safest place to be. She pointed out that she takes the bus everywhere that she goes and has direct experience. She hopes that we will not belittle the issue of safety and security on vehicles.

## **Follow up on Previous Advocacy Positions-Don Chartock**

### Volunteer Drivers- Ryan

There are currently two bills on the federal level on volunteer driving. S. 3532 and its companion H.R. 6854. S. 3532 has received co-sponsorship from both of the Washington State Senators. The House companion has received no support from the Washington State House delegation. This bill can strengthen volunteer driver programs by allowing the U.S Treasury to set appropriate volunteer mileage deduction and exempt volunteer driver's reimbursement from income at the business reimbursement rate.

Ryan presented a draft letter supporting the concept of more fairly supporting volunteer drivers to the Council. Ryan will be working with Don and Madelyn Carlson (People for People) to complete the letter.

### ADA rules update: Ryan

No update from the federal government has been issued yet.  
Richard DeRock said that we are unlikely to see anything for another 6 months.

### FTA/School Buses: Don

The Federal Transit Administration has issued a clarification of their proposed policy statement regarding tripper service and school bus operations. They will continue with their new policy language but all providers can continue to operate as they traditionally have. Additionally, they will be conducting a full rules making process in the near future.

