

## Executive Summary

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The Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) was created by the 1998 Legislature. However, ACCT has its roots back in the 1970s. The current public transit infrastructure was not yet in place, so it was necessary for many communities to develop their own delivery systems. As the different systems started to grow and multiply state and local agencies undertook informal efforts to coordinate. One significant outcome in the 1980s was the development of the Medicaid Brokerage Program.

The interest in coordination led to several formal studies, each of which recognized the need to establish a statewide forum to promote and develop improved coordination strategies and tools. Finally, a study sponsored by the Washington State Legislature in 1996 succeeded in raising the awareness of the coordination issues. This study led to an initial appropriation of \$1 million to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to develop demonstration projects and to the ultimate formation of ACCT.

### ACCT: 1998-2008

During its first 10 years, the Council focused on local planning and pilot projects. ACCT facilitated the formation of 18 transportation coalitions covering 23 counties by providing technical assistance and limited start-up funding. In 2003, the Council lost the majority of its funding and became unable to continue providing the coalitions financial support. At that point ACCT dedicated remaining funds to pilot projects.

Noteworthy pilot projects included Mason County's school bus/transit project and Pierce County's *Beyond the Borders*, which matches the resources of Paratransit Services (broker), Pierce Transit and Pierce County Community Services. It is noteworthy that both of those "pilot" projects are still going years after their inception thanks to participants' hard work and coordination.

In 2004, Washington received a national award from *United We Ride*, a national partnership of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the U.S. Department of Education. Washington State received a *United We Ride*

leadership award based on the ACCT's success in creating local coalitions and funding demonstration projects to test coordination options.

In 2005, the U.S. Congress passed a new transportation authorizing act (SAFTEA-LU), which President George W. Bush signed into law. SAFETEA-LU required coordinated plans as a condition for federal public transportation funding. While other states scrambled to meet SAFETEA-LU's planning requirements, Washington was well positioned thanks to coordination work the state already had completed.

In 2006, ACCT provided technical support to the regional transportation planning organizations (RTPO) to facilitate necessary collaboration and coordination to successfully complete the plans. WSDOT managed to direct federal funding to assist the RTPO's in financing their initial planning efforts.

In 2007, state lawmakers extended ACCT's enabling legislation to June 2010. Meanwhile, the Council focused its duties and assumed an even greater advocacy role. ACCT became responsible for advising the State Emergency Management Council and facilitating a statewide complaint process for people with special transportation needs.

## **Recent Changes: Joint Transportation Committee and HB 2072**

In 2009 the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) published a report on coordinated transportation. The committee commissioned the Special Needs Transportation Coordination Study to examine and evaluate the effectiveness of special needs transportation in Washington State.

The study detailed nine broad findings:

- Strengthen ACCT's role as statewide oversight body
- Establish Local Coordinating Boards and Community Access Managers
- Promote coordination of public transit and Medicaid services
- Establish and use uniform definitions and reporting requirements
- Provide adequate funding to support coordination
- Improve service connectivity for customers
- Influence facility siting practices
- Enhance coordination with pupil transportation
- Seek to influence federal planning and program requirements

In response to the JTC study, the Legislature passed HB 2072 in spring 2009. The Council expanded its membership to better represent the world of special needs transportation and focus on the enabling legislation. ACCT then facilitated a statewide workgroup to address federal barriers and opportunities for coordinated transportation and support specific local coordination pilot projects in Pierce County and potentially Southwest Washington.

## **Council Membership**

In 2009 ACCT membership expanded from 10 to 14 voting members with the addition of representatives from the state Department of Veterans Affairs, Metropolitan/Regional Transportation Planning Organizations, the Washington Association of Counties and Transportation Brokers. Additionally, ESHB 2072 changed the chair to an annually elected position.

### **ACCT Voting Members**

Madelyn Carlson  
Community Transportation Association of the Northwest

Michele Drorbaugh  
Washington Association of Pupil Transportation

Lynne Griffith  
Washington State Transit Association

Michael Howell  
Developmental Disabilities Council

Allan Jones  
Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

John Lee  
Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs

Clint McCarthy  
Office of the Governor

Lynn Moody  
Transportation Brokers

Doug Porter  
Department of Social and Health Services

Michael Rogers  
Transit Consumer

Barbara Sanitizer  
Governors Committee on Disability and Employment

Page Scott  
Metropolitan/Regional Transportation Planning Organizations

Katy Taylor (CHAIR)  
Washington State Department of Transportation

Vacant  
Washington Association of Counties

### **Legislative Members**

Sen. Pam Roach  
*Vacant Senate spot*  
Rep. Deb Wallace  
Rep. Mike Armstrong

### **Current Work of the Council**

After the update of its enabling legislation, the Council formed a Federal Opportunities Workgroup and helped design a pilot project in Pierce County scheduled to launch in 2010. ACCT also made significant progress in other assigned duties, including:

- Emergency planning
- Human services transportation planning
- Implementing a statewide Customer Complaint Process
- Reviewing public transportation grants

ACCT also took on a handful of additional activities not specifically assigned, including:

- Conducting ADA eligibility training
- Improving veteran's transportation
- Adult day health transportation
- Intercity transportation coordination

## Changes to the Report

This year's ACCT Report is a greatly slimmed-down version of previous reports. There are no graphics or statistical presentations. There are two main reasons for this decision:

- WSDOT, which administers ACCT, is changing data collections procedures; and
- During the 2009 legislative session, lawmakers assigned very specific tasks to ACCT, most of which are just beginning and have successive reporting requirements.

### WSDOT Public Transportation Data Collection

Concern for the economy and budget realities have required that we all look for ways to be more efficient. In support of this effort, WSDOT's Public Transportation Division carefully considered ways to be more efficient, including changes to how the department collects and reports public transportation data. Most notably, statistical summaries for transit and community providers will not be published in 2009. In 2010 WSDOT will publish a revised version of the summary including 2008 and 2009 data, and will publish it every other year.

The change accomplishes several things – in addition to addressing budget and resource issues, it provides WSDOT an opportunity to work with the Legislature to better understand the needs of lawmakers, and it allows time to streamline the reporting requirements and align the various reporting deadlines. WSDOT will develop an online reporting system that will ease reporting and enable off-year data entry and reporting.

WSDOT will work with partners to help establish and direct an improvement team to work through the issues over the course of the year. Areas the improvement team will consider include:

- Report objectives
- Resources and capabilities
- Timing of the summary and other required reporting
- Data submission and verification
- Definition of terms
- Consistency of data, both system-to-system and year-to-year

## **ACCT Just Beginning Work for the Biennium**

Updated during the 2009 legislative session, ACCT's enabling legislation directed the Council to work on three new activities:

1. House Bill 2072 directed the Council to form a new Federal Opportunities Workgroup to identify and address relevant federal requirements related to special needs transportation. (ESHB 2072, Sec. 1)
2. The bill also created "Local Coordinating Coalitions" (LCC) in Pierce County and Southwest Washington. (ESHB 2072, Sec. 9-11)
3. The transportation budget partially funded the work of the Council and LCC's and directed the Council to identify additional funding sources to support the assigned activities. (ESSB 5352, Sec. 222 (8))

WSDOT staff worked with coordination partners to identify extra funding, and all projects are underway. However, the work of securing additional funding delayed other activities. Additional reports for the Federal Opportunities Workgroup and LCC's will be published in June 2010 with a final report on both activities published in December 2011. Those reports will include more statistical information. Current updates on both projects follow in this report.