Coordination Can Help Better Manage Limited Public Transportation Resources

Through coordination, we can:

- offer more rides to more people, serving a greater number of people within current resources
- eliminate duplication and inefficiency
- avoid or reduce the amount of service cutbacks that might otherwise be necessary
- attract new money by demonstrating wise use of scarce resources and responsiveness to community need
- increase the quality of life of those people who have fewer transportation options

What ACCT Needs From the Legislature

ACCT recommends a number of ways for the Washington State Legislature to improve the efficiency of transportation for people with special needs.

1. Renew ACCT legislation.
2. Support performance measurement by requiring state and federally funded agencies that purchase transportation to report data.
3. Re-establish financial support for coordinated transportation at the local level.
4. Remove intercity bus route monopolies.
5. Expand Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission's Special Needs Regulation to for-profit providers.

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Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation

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The Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) is a partnership of state agencies, transportation providers, and consumer advocates with a vision to ***remove transportation as a barrier to full participation in the community***.

ACCT provides a forum to bring agencies and people together to maximize the use of all community transportation resources while meeting local and agency needs. ACCT provides an institutional structure to promote coordination and improve transportation options for everyone, particularly people who depend on public transportation or who have few transportation options. People with special transportation needs include:

- elderly citizens
- children
- people with disabilities
- people with low incomes

ACCT also provides technical assistance, leadership in developing and sharing travel information, and support in meeting regulatory requirements.

ACCT Members

Membership in ACCT consists of permanent state agency representatives, Governor appointed representatives, and legislators:

- Department of Transportation
- Department of Social and Health Services
- Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Washington Association of Pupil Transportation
- Washington State Transit Association
- Community Transportation Association of the Northwest
- Office of the Governor
- Consumers representing people with special transportation needs
- Legislators

The Washington State Legislature created the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) in 1998.

In 1999, the Legislature amended the ACCT statute, expanding the responsibilities of the Council and the role of ACCT and becoming the first state to define coordination by statute. RCW 47.06B outlines a complex and ambitious work agenda for ACCT to achieve meaningful coordination at the local and state levels.

ACCT's Goals

ACCT staff and Council implement strategies that:

- identify and address barriers to coordinating transportation
- focus on results by establishing performance measurement of coordination activities
- increase advocacy to familiarize the legislature, communities, and customers with the work we do

Project Highlights

ACCT has made significant progress over the last 10 years toward increased efficiencies in special needs transportation. Through ACCT's accomplishments, Washington received national recognition as one of five states with the most effective coordinated transportation programs. The following are highlights of key ACCT projects.

Identify and Address Barriers

- ACCT founded the WorkFirst Transportation Initiative, a partnership of state agencies, to address transportation for people of low income. Between 2000 and 2005, ACCT brought in over $15 million in federal dollars to fund job access projects in 28 counties. These projects provide transportation services to help people develop job skills, meet their childcare needs, find and keep jobs, and ultimately decrease reliance on public assistance.
- Through a $1 million federal grant secured by Senator Patty Murray, ACCT worked with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to award grants to seven Washington school systems for the transportation of homeless children.
- ACCT developed a prototype of a Travel Options Web site, an online resource for public transportation customers. ACCT plans to implement the first phase of the project in 2007 to streamline information sharing between public transportation providers and the public.
- ACCT created the Program for Agency Coordinated Transportation Forum (PACT) to support the development of community based coordinated transportation systems. The PACT Forum is an ongoing work group consisting of representatives from state programs that provide or fund transportation programs, purchase transportation on behalf of clients, arrange transportation for clients, and provide social, health, educational or other services to persons with special transportation needs.

Focus on Results

- ACCT facilitated the formation of 18 coalitions covering 23 counties by providing technical support and limited start up funding. These coalitions provided the foundation for seamlessly integrating 14 regional groups to meet new federal public transit and human services planning requirements.
- ACCT developed the framework for a performance measures program to demonstrate the results of coordinated transportation to ACCT stakeholders including state agencies, transit districts, communities, and legislators.
- ACCT identified the intercity network and created a policy to fill gaps in bus service to connect communities statewide.
- ACCT published several reports and resource manuals including *Volunteer Drivers – A Guide to Best Practices*; *Building a Community Bus: Guide to Coordinating Pupil and Public Transportation*; and *How to Plan and Design a Coordinated Local Transportation System*. These publications are used in communities across Washington as well as by programs in other states.

Increase Advocacy

- During the 2004 Legislative Session, ACCT supported Senate Bill 5869 allowing nonprofit corporations to form a self insurance risk pool with other nonprofit corporations or a local government entity for property or liability risk. The bill passed and transportation providers may now lower their insurance costs by accepting higher deductibles.
- ACCT keeps special needs transportation on the radar screen as the state addresses major transportation infrastructure needs. For example, ACCT members provided input for the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP), particularly for the Transportation Access goals for meeting special transportation needs.

Washington Leads the Nation in Coordinated Planning

ACCT worked with local communities across the state to set up transportation coalitions that include human services representatives, transit services, senior centers, chambers of commerce, and community transportation providers. These groups plan regional public transportation, evaluate and prioritize project proposals, and implement local coordination strategies.

Recent changes to federal law made coordinated planning a requirement for grant funds focused on transportation for elderly citizens or persons with disabilities. Washington was able to take advantage of the existing coalitions and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) and quickly engage the necessary participants in order to secure federal grant funds for our communities. For completed regional plans, visit **www.wsdot.wa.gov/acct**

Regional Planning Groups

ACCT is working with these lead organizations to meet the new federal requirements for public transit and human services planning:

- Benton-Franklin-Walla Walla RTPO
- Southwest Washington RTPO
- Northeast Washington RTPO
- Palouse RTPO
- Link Transit/North Central RTPO
- Mason Transit/Peninsula RTPO
- People for People/Quad-Co RTPO
- Island Transit/Skagit-Island RTPO
- Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council
- Thurston RTPO
- Whatcom RTPO
- People for People/Yakima RTPO
- Puget Sound Regional Council
- Spokane Regional Transportation Council