

“Out and About: Persons with Disabilities” Support Group Focus Group Meeting and Follow-up Comments, 9-10-14

Burlington Library

Total number of participants was 11, 10 of which were physically or developmentally disabled. Three members were confined to wheelchairs. One participant was not disabled but is the full-time caregiver to her disabled adult son.

Group Comments:

Evening events are difficult for persons with disabilities who use public transportation because the bus schedule ends too early for night return.

Inter-county transit continues to be a challenge. One member mentioned the ORCAS card in the Pierce/Snohomish/King County area; this one card is rechargeable and universal throughout the counties. It would be nice if there was a similar system in Skagit/Island/Whatcom counties.

A [WA state bill](#) was passed a few years ago with the purpose of bringing together the various Special Needs groups in the state, along with the transit services so that everyone could “sit at the same table.” Group is called Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation, or ACCT.

Would like to see more interaction between entities across the state so that once central conversation about special needs transit can happen more efficiently.

Group discussed various recreational activities they would like to do together; for every suggestion (art museum, island trip, festivals) there was a conversation on whether or not there was bus service/paratransit/Dial-A-Ride service to the area and when the bus/transit service returned.

Group wondered if Skagit Transit could provide a van for them to travel from Burlington to a festival in Bellingham, as most are physically disabled and would require ADA accessible vehicle service.

The following comments were later sent to SCOG by Shawn Latham, Peer Group Coordinator for the Center for Independence North Sound:

“I am very interested in helping my participants from the Center get adequate transportation. I myself have a van but most people with disabilities don’t have the luxury. The top 4 concerns I see are:

1. No evening service, which makes night event impossible since they can get dropped off but not picked up from events.
2. It would be nice if more transportation systems work together. All of the Sound counties had the Orca Card which helps us go from one county to another. It would be great if Skagit/Island added it https://www.orcacard.com/ERG-Seattle/p1_001.do

3. On the same note it seems like using dial a ride/shuttle/Para transit are hard when you have to use two or more shuttles to go from county to county. It can take a whole day to get there. Not sure what to do other than have all the agencies have constant communication to help with this.

4. On my wish list and I do realize these would take more money is: more bus routes since most in Skagit are only main roads and to shorten the 7 day reservation period just to get a dial a ride bus. One consumer told me they have to call in 7 days exactly no earlier or later to get a ride.”

-Notes by Liz Theaker, SCOG intern