

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on May 1, 2018

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

April 3, 2018
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Mercer, Commissioners Kline, Ma, Oxrieder, Perelman, Piper

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner McEachran

STAFF PRESENT: Dee Dee Catalano, Christy Stangland, Cynthia Moreno, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: Don Okazaki, Liz Mack, Anne Bruskland, King County Metro; Gazel Tan, Hannah Kimball, Judy Dowling, Bellevue Network on Aging

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Mercer who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Perelman, who arrived at 6:06 p.m., and Commissioner McEachran, who was excused.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 6, 2018

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Oxrieder. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Piper and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioner Ma abstained from voting.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Human Services Planner Christy Stangland announced that the Commissioners were invited to attend the annual gumbo night event sponsored by Youth Link. She also noted that the 28th annual community leadership award ceremony was scheduled for May 30.

Commissioner Kline noted that concurrent with the Commission meeting there was a forum at Sammamish High School focused on the emotional well-being of students. She said information was to be presented regarding available services to both students and parents.

Grant Coordinator Dee Dee Catalano announced that on April 2 the City Council unanimously voted to reappoint Commissioner Piper and Commissioner Kline to the Human Services Commission.

There was agreement to revise the agenda to move item 7 ahead of item 6.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Stangland reminded the Commissioners that she had emailed everyone a list of additional meeting dates, specifically May 8 with King County Metro to discuss concept solutions and potential pilot projects; May 30, a joint meeting with area human services commissions at Kirkland city hall to talk about homelessness investments; and June 26 to allow additional time for the review of applications.

Ms. Stangland said a workshop regarding the Land Use Code amendment process regarding the shelter was scheduled for April 12 at Crossroads from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., and at the South Bellevue Community Center from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Catalano said the general fund application period was open and would remain so through April 10. The CDBG RFP for additional 2018 dollars has been sent out along with the regular 2019 CDBG RFP.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Review of Transportation Survey Results and Discussion: King County Metro

Don Okazaki with King County Metro said the goal of the survey was to determine how people are getting around and where else they need to go. The survey was online from February 16 to March 19, but the paper and translation versions were only available for two weeks. There were 155 online survey responses and 276 paper survey responses for a total of 431 responses. Most respondents did not answer all of the questions, and ten of the respondents only provided geographic information.

The majority of the respondents were 65 and older. A much smaller percentage of the respondents were persons with disabilities and those experiencing homelessness. Forty percent of the respondents identified as Caucasian while 27 percent identified as Asian American. Twelve percent classified themselves in the “other” category, eight percent said they are Latino, 30 percent said identify with multiple races, and one percent was American Indian. For 56 percent of the respondents, English was noted to be their primary language; 20 percent said their primary language is Chinese while seven percent listed Spanish, six percent indicated “other,” four percent said Russian, three percent said Vietnamese, and one percent said Punjabi.

The majority of respondents, 57 percent, indicated they have no disability. Twenty-six percent indicated they have a disability related to mobility, while ten percent indicated a vision disability, seven percent a hearing disability, eight percent a cognitive disability, and nine percent “other.”

The income levels of the respondents were largely low-income as they were expected to be. The majority indicated they earn less than \$15,000. Twenty-five percent chose not to answer the question. The majority, 71 percent, indicated they have a smart phone. Sixty-seven percent noted they have a valid driver’s license; 47 percent said they have an Orca card bus pass; 21 percent said they have the rideshare apps Uber or Lyft; and five percent said they have an active registration with Access Transportation.

Eighteen percent of the respondents indicated they work either part-time or full-time. Forty-two percent indicated they are on a fixed income. Thirty-six percent said they do not have or do not drive a car. Three percent noted that they are currently staying in a shelter or experiencing homelessness, though some copies of the survey failed to include that question, so that population may be underrepresented.

The survey sought information regarding how the respondents get around currently. Fifty percent said they use the bus or train at least once a week. Forty-seven percent indicated they drive alone or walk, while 45 percent said they use rideshare, 10 percent use Access, eight percent use transportation network companies such as Lyft and Uber, which is twice as much as a taxi, and four percent use a bicycle. Fifteen percent indicated they use the bus or train at least once a week, 40 percent said they do not ride the bus at all, and 30 percent said they ride the bus at least once per week.

In asking where people go in northwest Bellevue, the top choice was Bellevue Square followed by nearby grocery store, library, medical facility, theater or community center, and food bank. Ten respondents indicated they travel to schools, three said they visit the gym, and two said restaurants. With regard to northeast Bellevue, the respondents indicated Crossroads Mall, nearby grocery stores, medical facilities including Overlake Hospital, Fred Meyer in Overlake, the library, and senior or community centers. Seven mentioned schools, two mentioned gyms and two indicated restaurants. With respect to south Bellevue trips, Factoria Mall was the top

destination followed by grocery stores, retail stores, Eastgate Plaza, medical facilities, and senior or community centers. Five mentioned schools and three mentioned churches.

The top non-work travel destinations were listed as medical appointments, social/recreation/entertainment, running errands, going out to eat, and attending religious services. Eight specifically mentioned the community center, eight highlighted schools, and three noted after-school programs and volunteer events.

Chair Mercer pointed out that even though 68 percent of the respondents indicated their top non-work trips are focused on medical appointments, the top destinations for all sectors of the city are shopping facilities. Mr. Okazaki explained that trips to shopping centers and the like include trips for entertainment, eating out and running errands. Anne Bruskland with King County Metro added that people have to eat every day but they do not have medical appointments every day, so from a response perspective that may be how people related to the question.

Mr. Okazaki said the survey questions regarding opportunities and barriers highlighted challenges involved in traveling between home and a bus stop, a transit center or a park and ride, as well as challenges in traveling between a bus stop, transit center or park and ride and the ultimate destination. It was somewhat surprising that finding parking at a park and ride was not deemed to be a barrier, but that could be that the respondents are not utilizing park and rides. Fifty-four percent indicated that understanding the transit or bus system is not a barrier.

Chair Mercer commented that many face barriers to transportation based on where they are coming from, which is the first/last mile issue. She said knowing where everyone congregates confirms some of what the Commission has been talking about. It would have been good to include in the survey a question about where people are starting their trips.

Mr. Okazaki said the survey indicated that barriers to travel by multiple modes included irregular work hours, non-commute travel needs such as child care and errands, safety and comfort in riding with strangers, and finding neighbors to carpool with. Also high on the list were not being able to afford to ride the bus, to use a taxi or similar services, and not being able to travel independently.

Commissioner Piper commented that the survey is clearly skewed toward low-income residents and those who are 55 or older. Ms. Bruskland agreed but pointed out that the focus is not on trying to find solutions for all of Bellevue but rather for a specific market. The data indicates the survey targeted the right people.

Commissioner Perelman said it would be very helpful to slice the data to determine if there are significant differences in the responses of those who are 65 and older and those who are 64 and younger. Mr. Okazaki said he could do that.

Mr. Okazaki said the top answer to the question of which top three things would help the respondents get to, from and around Bellevue without driving alone was a transportation service when needed that connects to transit and local destinations. That response was made by 46 percent of the respondents. Thirty-nine percent highlighted transit service that would get the respondents to destinations they cannot currently get to on the bus or by train. Twenty-nine percent called out transportation services that cost the same as the bus or less than the alternative services that are currently available. A guaranteed ride home in case of emergency was listed by 22 percent. "Other" also came in at 22 percent and was defined variously as cheaper fares, unlimited Orca for the homeless, closer bus stops, more later/frequent/coordinated bus express service, improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure, more park and ride spaces, and improved bus route services.

Ms. Liz Mack with King County Metro said the first step in the process was the survey, which was intended to collect useful information. She said information will also be drawn from the experiences of the Commissioners and the Network on Aging members. She said the next step was to develop between three and five needs statements for the targeted populations and the identification of transportation options.

The Commissioners and Network members took a few minutes to draft needs statements. Ms. Mack then read through the statements and the group worked to categorize them.

Ms. Kimball pointed out that in looking to serve the homeless, the focus will be on three or four specific locations. The same is not true for seniors who want to age in their own homes wherever they are located in the city. Chair Mercer agreed and said that is why a distinction is necessary between direct access and first/last mile. Some folks are used to having to go far and jump through hoops to get where they need to go and it would be useful to have something like a route that runs from a set place such as Crossroads a set number of times per day to doctor's appointments, the mall, the day center and homeless shelters. Ms. Kimball said direct access of that sort would meet the needs of many seniors as well.

Ms. Brusklund stated that before King County Metro can develop solutions, it will be necessary to know what specific populations will be the focus, be it the homeless and seniors, or something broader. Knowing the "who" will inform the solutions. The group agreed that the focus should be on seniors, low-income residents and the homeless, and on a system that is easy to understand.

Chair Mercer stressed the need for more frequent off-peak travel options, especially early and late in the day. Commissioner Kline said those options should include more than just the bus. Ms. Brusklund explained that frequency is not what is needed during off-peak hours. People need service when they need it, but running a service based on frequency alone would not be practical. Commissioner Ma stressed the need to have reliable transportation options available during off-peak hours.

The categories identified by the group were transit options that include the first/last mile; transit options that connect between cities; transit options that are affordable; transit options that provide direct access to destinations; transit options that connect to specific populations/key destinations; parking options at park and rides; easy-to-understand transit options; transit options that connect to other systems; transit options that are accessible; transit options that are reliable/flexible; and transit options that provide timely service during off-peak hours.

Chair Mercer suggested that first/last mile, direct access, reliable and flexible could all be tied to being able to schedule a service ahead of time. Mr. Okazaki noted that Lyft and Uber usually arrive within five to fifteen minutes, which most people would call reliable. Ms. Bruskland added that the Access service defines a window as well, though it is a fairly large window and probably would not be deemed reliable. Ms. Stangland said Access says it has a half-hour window but sometimes the service does not arrive for an hour. There was agreement that arriving within a 15-minute window would be called reliable.

Chair Mercer allowed that Lyft and Uber have transformed the way many access and experience transportation. They are, however, expensive. She asked if King County Metro is looking into something in between that incorporates the benefits of on-demand services. Ms. Bruskland said that is part of what community connections does. King County Metro is exploring how to incorporate technology and the elements of on-demand services.

Ms. Tan said the other issue with Access, even when it picks someone up on time, is that it may take a very long time to get a rider to their destination given that it drops people off all along the way. Ms. Bruskland cautioned that King County Metro is public transportation and thus involves shared-ride services. A direct route from a home to a destination would be ideal, but that is not something that King County Metro will be designing.

Ms. Kimball said the goal of the Network on Aging is to work toward having ways to have transportation available to those in the community who are or are going to be on limited incomes. Ms. Bruskland agreed and said she would be comfortable with a needs statement calling for a service that is flexible and reliable.

On the issue of affordability, Commissioner Perelman suggested any system designed should be affordable both to those who will use it and to King County Metro.

Commissioner Ma stressed the need to discuss and interpret the overall message of the survey results before moving on to working on solutions. Mr. Okazaki said King County Metro would be reviewing the survey results in detail along with the comments offered by the Commission and the Network on Aging.

Referring to the information related to barriers to taking transit, Ms. Bruskland noted that the section speaks to the first/last mile connections issue, as well as affordability, cost effectiveness, availability of park and ride spaces, and planning. She said the barriers for multiple modes speaks to shared rides, specifically safety and comfort for shared rides and how to get shared rides, and non-commute travelling. Additionally, the barriers related to cost takes into account the affordability options highlighted by the group.

Ms. Bruskland said her team would go back and do a slice for seniors and low-income residents to see if anything is skewed. If nothing is wildly different, the focus will be on the overall issues.

Commissioner Kline suggested the issue of parking availability at park and rides should be removed as an issue. That will be looked at by King County Metro regardless. Ms. Bruskland said one of the solutions Community Connections has addressed is the ability of King County Metro to affect park and rides over the long term. There are concepts like park and pool lots that could be effective, along with priority parking at park and rides.

The group members took a few minutes to place dots beside the various issues as a way of identifying priorities. Ms. Mack noted that connecting specific populations to key destinations received seven dots, as did shared/reliable options that are flexible. Timely service during off-peak hours was next with six, followed by first/last mile with five, affordable with four, accessible with three, and direct access with one. Ms. Bruskland said her team would focus on the top three in working on solution concepts while also taking into account the importance of the other issues.

8. NEW BUSINESS – None

9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

10. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Piper and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Mercer adjourned the meeting at 7:58 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date