

WSDOT Frequent transit service study

Policy advisory group meeting 1 summary
1:30-3:00 p.m., July 11, 2022

Attendees

PAG members

- Amy Asher (Mason Transit)
- Celeste Gilman (WSDOT)
- Justin Leighton (Washington State Transit Association)
- Paulo Nunes-Ueno (Front and Centered)
- Karl Otterstrom (Spokane Transit Authority)
- Angie Peters (Valley transit – Walla Walla)
- Anna Zivarts (Disability Rights Washington)

Project staff

- Don Chartock (WSDOT)
- Thomas Craig (WSDOT)
- Lauren Foster (PRR)
- Monica Ghosh (WSDOT)
- Kate Gunby (PRR)
- Sabrina Lopez (PRR)
- Justin Nawrocki (WSDOT)
- Stan Suchan (WSDOT)
- Jenny Thacker (PRR)
- Emily Watts (WSDOT)

Discussion

Slide numbers included in this meeting summary refer to the [PAG meeting 1 presentation](#) saved on engage.wsdot.wa.gov/frequent-transit-service-study.

Slides 1-3 – Jenny Thacker and Justin Nawrocki

Jenny welcomed the PAG members and led them in an introduction and Justin went over the agenda and meeting goals.

Slide 4 – Justin Nawrocki

Justin reviewed the legislative language guiding the frequent transit service study.

Slide 5 – Justin Nawrocki

Justin reviewed project roles and responsibilities. Important roles include the Policy Advisory Group, the Technical Advisory Group, the Joint Transportation Committee, WSDOT executives and the WSDOT project team. Justin explained that there is some overlap between these groups, and that the work would be iterative, with each group building on the work of the other groups. He emphasized that while WSDOT executives are the final decision makers in the process, the project team is striving for consent within each group and between the groups.

Slide 6 – Jenny Thacker

Jenny went over the project team's proposed meeting agreements and the PAG members agreed to follow these meeting agreements.

Slide 7 – Matthew Kenna

Matthew Kenna shared what the project team learned in a series of discovery interviews with PAG and TAG members and other stakeholders. Several key informants stressed that local context needs to be considered when coming up with standards. Common goals for the project mentioned included:

- Improving the rider experience
- Increasing funding stability
- Understanding the needs of those who lack access to transit

PAG members discussed the importance of developing standards that can lead to improved access for riders across the state, including non-drivers, while also remaining practical, especially for smaller or more rural providers.

Slide 8 – Matthew Kenna

Matthew shared some of the concerns that the group heard in the discovery interviews. Several key informants were concerned about the timeline and how quickly the work needed to get underway. Other concerns were that the study would lead to unattainable standards, or that any resulting high dollar figure would make the transit community look like it was greedy or scare policy makers away.

Slide 9 – Matthew Kenna

Many key informants stressed the importance of and relevance of the study and asked that the project team come up with an end result that is useful and usable and improves the lives of end users. Several key informants also stressed that frequency is context sensitive, that transparent coordination is important, and that the project team needed to work quickly.

Slide 10-12 – Thomas Craig

Thomas shared that the analysis of the project team to date indicates that there are specific and significant gaps in the existing data that will likely prevent the team from assessing the walkability of routes to transit stops, but that the team would be able to assess where people live relative to transit stops, as well as the level of service provided at those stops, using census and General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data.

During discovery interviews, the project team asked key informants what features came to mind when they thought of “accessibility.” Common features included:

- Within a reasonable distance
- Well-maintained sidewalks or shoulders
- A perception of safety
- A well-connected multi-modal network,
- Curb cuts, crosswalks, signals, and other features to help people navigate the network

Key informants stressed that because so many of these accessibility features related to sidewalks, curb cuts, cross walks and multi-modal networks take place in the right of way, and only a few are related to the actual transit stop, transit providers do not have much control over them.

Slide 13 – Discussion

Thomas asked the PAG to discuss what it might mean if the project team does not have the data to analyze a half mile walk to transit.

- PAG members discussed using existing road network data as a stand in for sidewalk data. Don suggested that the project team could either not include an analysis that included the walkability component, or include a range that includes at one end an assumption of a perfect multi-modal network across the state, and at the other end an assumption that all of the places we don't have perfect data for are totally inaccessible. The magnitude of that range might be unusable. In the end, the PAG members agreed that it would make more sense to not include walkability data, but to be clear about why it was not being included, and how such data could improve the analysis in future versions of the study.
- PAG members discussed the importance of including local jurisdictions in the conversation and planning of the study, especially after definitions have been developed and some analysis has been completed. Local jurisdictions have more control over the multi-modal network than transit agencies do. PAG members suggested connecting with the Association of Washington Cities (AWC).
- PAG members agreed that the study should be designed to be repeatable and comparable year after year so that agencies could track their progress. The report should also highlight any additional data needed, like the walkability data.
- Anna posted some interesting research on transportation insecurity in the chat: [Validating the Sixteen-Item Transportation Security Index in a Nationally Representative Sample: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis | Published in Survey Practice](#)

Slides 14 -16 – Justin Nawrocki

Justin Nawrocki reviewed next steps, including individual outreach to stakeholders who could not attend the initial PAG meeting, setting up a project website, and upcoming meetings with the PAG and the TAG. Justin asked the PAG members to think about what was covered in the meeting and if they know of any statewide data for walkability that WSDOT may not have considered.