

Pilot Participation Application Process

Background

About half of the current Community Connections projects were initiated to fill transportation gaps following reductions in fixed-route bus service during the September 2014 service changes, a priority set by a King County Council ordinance. The other half were identified in Metro’s Five-year Implementation Plan for Alternatives to Traditional Transit Service Delivery (September 2012) to right-size service in select areas of the county given the unstable funding situation at the time. Starting in 2017, Metro has initiated new projects that will pilot solutions to complement fixed-route and Dial-A-Ride Transit (DART) services in communities where mobility gaps exist. The application process used to select the current projects addressing these needs is outlined below. Metro is planning to use a similar process for a new round of applications during fall 2017 for new projects that will be initiated in 2018.

Application Scoring Criteria

Metro’s 2015 Service Guidelines Update established a set of prioritization criteria for Metro to use when evaluating the delivery of alternative services. Criteria include: time-based service gaps; geographic coverage service gaps; rural communities or emerging transit markets; market potential (including jobs, student enrollment, household density, park-and-rides, low-income or minority populations, and proximity to major activity centers or the regional transit network); and partnership opportunities for service or infrastructure.

Metro incorporated these criteria into a four-part questionnaire that comprised the application for the Pilot Participation Application Process. The purpose of this process was to identify up to eight pilot communities for Alternative Services complementary services projects to be initiated in 2017. Questions and their scoring criteria are outlined in the table below.

| Question | Wording | Scoring Criteria |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Potential Market | Identify the geographic boundaries of the community and the potential market for an alternatives services solution to that community’s mobility needs. Potential markets could be based on access to: existing local activity or employment centers, the regional transit network, major institutions (e.g., educational, medical, regional social service agency), rural communities, or emerging markets. | Clarity in the description of candidate pilot community including its geographic boundaries and the market potential for alternative services within that community taking into account proximity/access to existing activity/employment centers and the regional transit network. |
| Needs and Gaps | Describe the mobility need(s) in your community including any gaps in fixed-route transit service (geographic or time-of-day). | Specificity in identified day-of-week, time-of-day or geographic gaps in the fixed-route transit network. |
| Equity and Social Justice | Describe the potential rider demographic and population to be served. Describe how an alternative services solution would support historically disadvantaged populations such as: | Specificity in the description of the potential rider demographic, the population to be served and how an alternative services solution |

| Question | Wording | Scoring Criteria |
|-------------|--|---|
| | low-income people, homeless populations, students, youth, seniors, minorities, people with low English proficiency, people of color, people with disabilities, or other populations who depend on public transportation. | would support historically disadvantaged populations. |
| Partnership | Identify how the applicant(s) will support and participate in a Community Generated Project, including, but not limited to, financial contributions, community engagement and outreach support, promotional support, equipment, staffing, or other forms of partnership. | Demonstrated partner interest supported with specific, proposed partnering concepts or opportunities. |

Process Timeline

In October of 2016, Metro announced the Alternative Services Pilot Participation application process. Communications were sent to all 39 of King County’s cities and towns, the Muckleshoot and Snoqualmie tribes, and representatives from its 9 unincorporated area Community Service Area councils/organizations. The timeline for this application period is outlined below.

- October 14, 2016:** Eligible applicants were contacted about the opportunity to apply for a pilot project. Communications included the application timeline and an Application Process FAQ page.
- October 20, 2016:** Eligible applicants were contacted to announce the opening of the application period: October 20 - November 30, 2016. In addition to a link to the on-line application, materials included a Pilot Participation FAQs document and a reference application.
- October 25, 2016:** Metro staff hosted a 90 minute pre-application web meeting to review the application process and answer questions.
- November 30, 2016:** The application period closed.
- November 30 – December 22, 2016:** Application scoring period.
- December 22, 2016:** Metro invited the eight top-scoring applicants to meet with Metro staff to discuss project scoping and timeline. After the initial project scoping meeting, successful applicants had 30 days to commit to moving forward with a project to begin in 2017.
- February 17, 2017:** The eight top-scoring applicants committed to moving forward with projects in pilot communities in Bellevue, Des Moines, Issaquah, Kent, Kirkland, Newcastle, Normandy Park, and Seattle.