

# Mobility on Demand – Key Issues and Solutions

A summary of outcomes from a January 2020 workshop

## Background

On January 24, 2020, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) staff facilitated a workshop at the Puget Sound Regional Council's offices in downtown Seattle. The purpose of the workshop was to identify key issues and solutions for implementing mobility on demand. The workshop brought together more than 40 industry professionals from public agencies, private mobility providers, academia, and non-profits. The attendees generated more than 340 key issues.

This document shares issue themes and solutions from the workshop. It also establishes WSDOT's next steps for mobility on demand.

## Issue themes

WSDOT staff organized the issues that workshop attendees identified into the following themes:

### Reduce emissions

Organizations should implement mobility on demand in a way that supports reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality.

Workshop attendees emphasized this theme more than any other (26 percent of votes).

### Vulnerable populations

Solutions that work for vulnerable populations (i.e., those with special transportation needs, those without bank accounts, those with limited English proficiency) work for everyone. As such, all mobility on demand services should be ADA-compliant. Mobility on demand providers should also work with cities and community organizations to keep the public right of way clear (i.e. preventing shared scooters from blocking sidewalks).

### One app to rule them all

Mobility on demand depends on the creation and use of a user-friendly app that integrates all modes and fares. Such apps rely on data standardization and access to real-time data, and will not become a reality without strong public-private partnerships.

### Funding needs

In increasingly austere times, agencies must implement new and continuing revenue sources to move mobility on demand services past the pilot stage.

Workshop attendees emphasized sustainable funding that focused on vulnerable populations and human services transportation.

### Active transportation

Mobility on demand should prioritize active transportation options (i.e., walking, biking, rolling). As such, public-private partners should collaborate to invest in safe, walkable communities. Additionally, all travelers need education and guidelines on how to share the public right of way safely, especially with the availability of new micromobility services (i.e., bike and scooter shares).

### Physical infrastructure and right-of-way management

Ensuring that cities and regions have the facilities needed for safe travel on all modes means making improvements to policies and existing infrastructure. Policies should enable dynamic approaches to curb and right-of-way management that protect travelers and reduce congestion.

### Workforce development

Job access, labor protections, and training are important aspects of mobility on demand. Organizations should implement policies that ensure fair compensation for independent contractors and drivers. Additionally, public agency staff must receive training on how to handle new mobility data appropriately to prevent compromising personal information.

## Solutions

Workshop attendees identified and prioritized solutions for near-term mobility on demand key issues. Attendees also identified the organization type (i.e., national, state, regional, local, private sector) best suited to lead solutions, and the mobility on demand policy framework core principle<sup>1</sup> that the solution related to.

| Priority | Solution  | Organization level              | Core principle |
|----------|---|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 1        | <b>Update the state's Public Records Act</b> to allow for safe and meaningful data sharing between public and private entities while protecting trade secrets and personal information.   | State                           | Data           |
| 2        | <b>Establish and implement new funding mechanisms</b> , such as congestion pricing or a road use charge, to fund multimodal transportation and discourage single occupancy vehicle trips.   | State                           | Environment    |
| 3        | <b>Require mobility on demand service providers to meet equity and accessibility standards</b> (i.e. those affecting ADA access, language access, family access, people without bank accounts, people without smartphones, people with low income). | State, regional, private sector | Equity         |

<sup>1</sup> See [Appendix C: Mobility on demand policy framework](#) for more information on core principles.

| Priority | Solution   | Organization level              | Core principle  |
|----------|--|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| 4        | <b>Promote/incentivize/provide electrification of mobility on demand services</b> and infrastructure to reduce carbon emissions.   | State                           | Environment     |
| 5        | <b>Create an incredibly easy to use app that shows all modal options</b> and the impacts of those options, seamlessly integrates data and fare payment, and incorporates universal design principles to promote more sustainable travel choices. | Private sector                  | User experience |
| 6        | <b>Promote a seamless and consistent user experience between public and private providers</b> through standards and contracting requirements.  | State, regional                 | User experience |
| 7        | <b>Establish data standards</b> that encourage data sharing, fare payment integration, and competition.  | Regional, local, private sector | User experience |
| 8        | <b>Regulate/support/pay for GTFS-Flex adoption.</b> <sup>2</sup>   | State                           | Data            |
| 9        | <b>Integrate micromobility/mobility on demand fare payments</b> into ORCA.   | Regional                        | Equity          |
| 10       | <b>Develop and enforce statewide curb management recommendations</b> to enable more rapid adoption of modern curb management that increases safety for all modes.  | State, local                    | Safety          |
| 11       | <b>Increase enforcement of traffic violations</b> (i.e. parking in bike lanes, driving in bus-only lanes, transportation network company pick-up/drop-off) to reduce modal conflicts.  | State, local                    | Safety          |

<sup>2</sup> GTFS (General Transit Feed Specification) and GTFS-Flex describe a set of data standards that enable the incorporation of public transportation service data into applications and tools. Whereas GTFS describes fixed-route services, GTFS-Flex has the capability to describe route deviated, demand response, and other flexible types of transit service.

## Next steps

WSDOT staff will continue to engage partners and stakeholders to develop and complete a mobility on demand action plan by June 2020. The action plan will align with the mobility on demand policy framework.

WSDOT will remain engaged with national mobility on demand partners, including the Mobility on Demand Alliance, Shared Use Mobility Center, Transportation Research Board, and United States Department of Transportation.

## Contact

**Ricardo Gotla**

206-716-1114

[GotlaR@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:GotlaR@wsdot.wa.gov)

## Appendix A: Workshop format

Attendees began the workshop by rotating between six stations, one for each of WSDOT's mobility on demand core principles.

At each station, groups of three to five people discussed how the core principle applied to mobility on demand.

After the discussion, attendees silently generated solutions to advance mobility on demand. Facilitators instructed grantees to generate tangible and action-based solutions, using the format “do   X   to achieve   Y  .” Attendees wrote their solutions on index cards.

After generating ideas, the groups selected the top two solutions generated by attendees.

Facilitators taped the index cards with groups' top two solutions to the wall backwards so that, as attendees rotated through stations, they could not see solutions generated by previous groups.

Once attendees had visited all six stations, facilitators revealed the index cards with groups' two solutions. Attendees grouped similar solutions to remove duplicates.

After grouping solutions, facilitators gave attendees five dots. Facilitators instructed attendees to place the dots on solutions that attendees thought were priorities for advancing mobility on demand in Washington state. This resulted in 11 solutions that had at least four dots.

Attendees broke into small groups and facilitators assigned the groups solutions. Facilitators instructed the groups to discuss and identify the organization level would be best suited to lead the solutions (i.e., national, state, regional, local, private sector).

## Appendix B: Organizations represented at the workshop

City of Bellevue

City of Tacoma

Community Transit

Commute Seattle

Everett Station District

Hopelink

King County Metro

Kitsap Transit

Lime

Lyft

MLK Labor (King County Labor Council)

Pierce Transit

Port of Seattle

Puget Sound Regional Council

Rooted in Rights

Seattle Department of Transportation

Sound Transit

Transportation Choices Coalition

Transportation Research Center

Uber

University of Washington

Engineering

Transportation Services

WSDOT

Cooperative Automated Transportation Program

Washington State Ferries

Multimodal Planning Division

Public Transportation Division

## Appendix C: Mobility on demand policy framework

At the request of Secretary Roger Millar, WSDOT's Public Transportation Division took on a strategic initiative to establish a statewide policy framework for mobility on demand. This work began in early 2019 through a series of subject matter expert interviews, with findings published in the [Government's Role in Mobility on Demand white paper](#).

Since that time, division staff engaged partners to develop recommendations for the state's role in this new emerging field. Through a series of meetings, workshops, and targeted outreach with diverse stakeholders, the program adopted the following emphasis areas and core principles. These were reviewed and approved by the state's Transportation Demand Management Executive Board and Transportation Demand Management Technical Committee in late 2019.

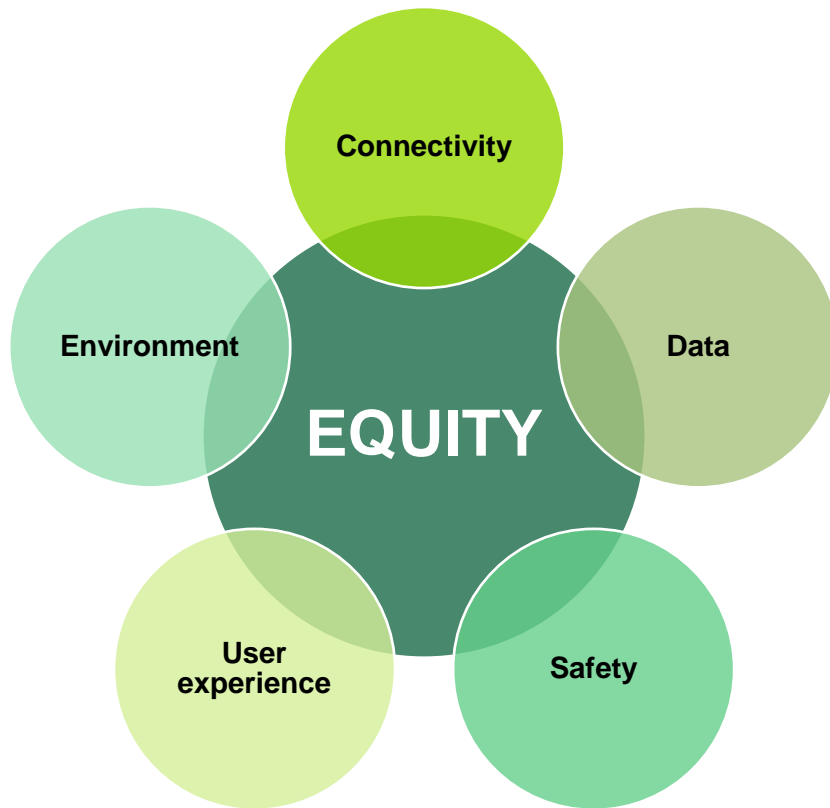
### Emphasis areas and core principles

WSDOT's mobility on demand program has identified following emphasis areas to guide the state's work over the coming years:

1. **Maintain** a robust public transportation network as a backbone for mobility on demand services
2. **Enhance** connectivity and data sharing between transportation providers to maximize the efficient and seamless use of transportation networks
3. **Expand** access to mobility on demand services to assure all Washingtonians benefit from new and innovative services.

It is central that mobility on demand services benefit all people in Washington state, including vulnerable populations. As such, equity remains central to WSDOT's mobility on demand core principles:

- Enhance **connectivity** to public transportation and other efficient modes
- Promote the open exchange of **data** that advances the public interest
- Improve **safety** and help Washington reach state target zero goals
- Provide the best possible **user experience** for all Washingtonians
- Protect and enhance the **environment** by reducing air pollution



*Figure 1: WSDOT mobility on demand core principles: connectivity, data, environment, safety, and user experience, with equity as a central core principle.*