



## Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative Annual Report 2008

### Overview

Healthy, vibrant communities invest in infrastructure and services that allow people of all ages and abilities to live with as much independence and choice as possible. New programs – and investments – are needed to help transit services keep pace with the increasing mobility needs of all transportation-disadvantaged people, including older adults, people with disabilities, youth and low-income people. The planning for such infrastructure requires a coordinated effort from a number of disciplines including transportation and health and human services.

In winter, 2005, representatives from these disciplines gathered in Bellevue, Washington to discuss how they could begin to work on projects that would increase access to health and human services for one of these groups -- older adults living in Bellevue. While the focus for the first project was on assisting Bellevue residents, as the project advanced, it was clear that a “bigger picture” approach was critical, and that a sub-regional plan would be more effective. Thus, the vision was expanded and a collaboration named the “Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative” was organized to identify a creative and cost effective way to assist older adults living on the Eastside experience a better quality of life through increasing their mobility.

### Objectives & Accomplishments

The Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative is working actively to identify and initiate coordinated, creative, and sustainable ways to assist special needs populations in East King County attain a better quality of life by increasing their transportation options. Some of the funding and implemented program successes we accomplished are the Travel Ambassador Program, the Bus Buddy Program, a Mobility Coordinator for East King County, and a voice in the Downtown Bellevue Circulator project.

The EERC committee meets with elected officials and key decision makers in the community to tell our story of how important expanded transportation options are needed throughout the Eastside. Our goals are to improve the mobility of all people's access to social, recreation, education and human service opportunities through:

-  Additional connectivity door-to-door, maximizing existing transportation systems
-  Promotion of aging in place and independence for older adults
-  Transportation information and referral resources
-  Advocacy and a voice for special needs transportation initiatives
-  Collaboration to coordinate and improve transportation options
-  Identification of gaps in service and providing mobility solutions
-  Developing and promoting key transportation partners
-  A project slated for 2009, Dial-A-Ride service in East Bellevue

Many forward-thinking special projects have been funded and piloted through the efforts of EERC such as-

-  Bus Buddy program
-  Travel Ambassador
-  Mobility Coordinator for the Eastside Communities

We have seen measurable success in 2008 and we are now seeking to expand our programs, outreach efforts, and partnerships throughout East King County. There are many exciting initiatives coming that offer strong solutions such as the East Link Light Rail, Downtown Circulator, and Legislation. We see opportunities now and the days ahead to increase education, hearing the needs of people, and implementing solutions for better services to those who benefit the most. For additional information about EERC and how to join us as a partner, please contact François Larrivee at Hopelink Transportation Division, (425) 943-6770, flarrivee@hope-link.org.

