



# Assessment of the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Programs Administered by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)

Technical Committee

January 6, 2012

# FTA JARC and New Freedom Programs

- Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)
  - Support s job-related transportation for low-income workers
- New Freedom
  - Supports transportation for persons with disabilities
- Match required
  - 50% for Operating
  - 20% for Capital and Mobility Management
- Projects Must be “Derived from” a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan



# TPB Role

- Became Designated Recipient in 2006
- Administers JARC and New Freedom programs for Washington DC-VA-MD Urbanized Area
- Established the Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force in 2006
- Adopted an Update to the Coordinated Plan in 2009

UPDATE TO THE COORDINATED  
HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION  
PLAN FOR THE NATIONAL  
CAPITAL REGION

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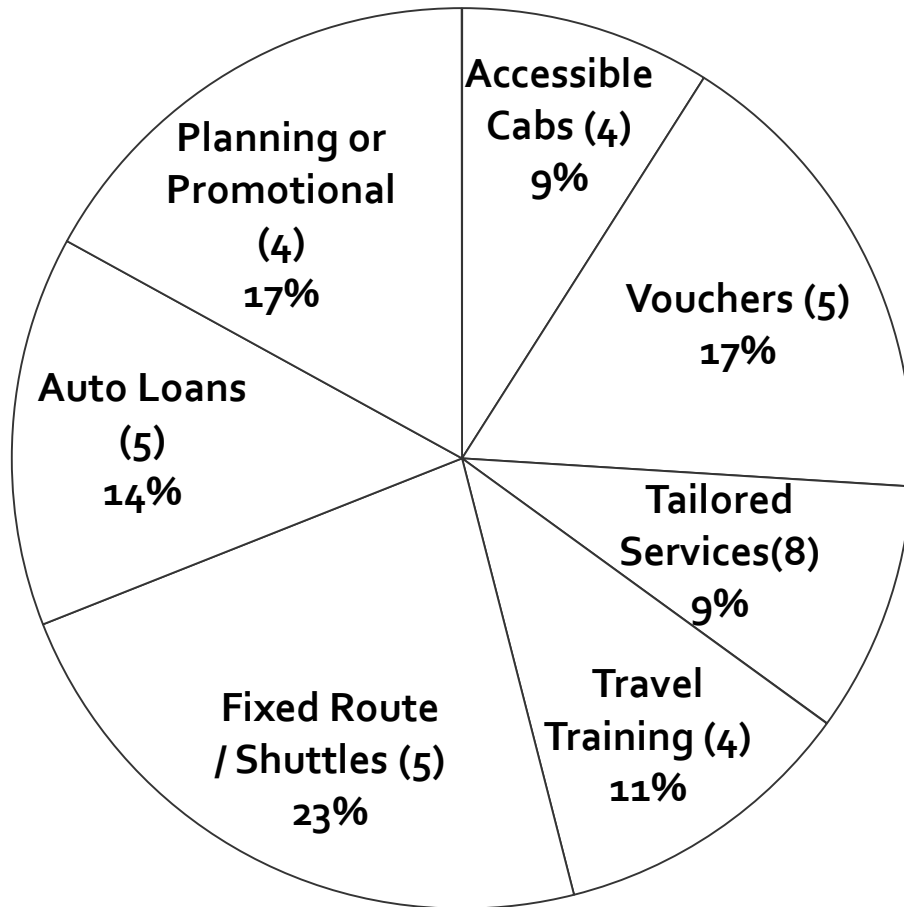
December 16, 2009

# Background

- Purpose of Assessment
  - Review program administration and oversight (TPB role)
  - Comparison to agencies in other metro areas and states
  - Assess data from the 35 grants funded between 2007 and 2010 and customer benefits
- Nelson/Nygaard conducted the assessment between March and November 2011
  - Interviewed grantees, customers and the Task Force
  - Reviewed FTA-required reports from grantees
  - Presented findings and recommendations to the Task Force

# Grants Funded Between 2007 and 2010

Percentage of Grants by Type  
(# of Grants)



35 grants total \$10.3 million

- Wide variety of grants funded and project sponsors
- 15 grants out of 35 are 50% or more complete
- Over 2/3 of the total grant amounts less than \$300k (Federal + Match)
- 80% of funding went to grants responding to priorities set by the Task Force

# Compared to peer agencies, the TPB:

- Has a more proactive role in program administration
- Is one of only a few to undertake an assessment of this scope
- Has been successful in obligating all of its JARC and New Freedom funds
- Funded a wider range of grants, and also has a wider variety of project sponsors
- Selection committee composition tended to be more diverse
- Selection Committee is chaired by a Board Member

# The TPB, like it's agency peers:

- Found FTA regulations and processes to be cumbersome
  - Too much lag time from selection to FTA approval
  - Activities eligible for funding too limited
  - Match requirement for operating grants (50%) is too high

# Key Findings

## TPB Role

- No widespread changes to the TPB administrative and oversight process called for

## From the 15 grants examined:

- Implementation slower than expected
  - New programs take time to set up
  - Recruiting program participants sometimes challenging
- Most grants did not meet the estimated number of people to be served originally stated in application
- Customer benefits from programs significant, but hard to quantify (e.g. one person who is travel trained could experience daily benefits over a long-period of time & rely less on paratransit)



# Key Findings

## From the Grantees:

- Matching funds difficult to find
- Grant administration took more time than anticipated
- Reluctance to start new services when future funding is uncertain
- Even more challenges with economic downturn – more need, fewer staff and less funding available
- All project sponsors highlighted successes that improved transportation for clients

# Grants Expand Customer Choices

## Better Options with Lower Costs for People with Disabilities

- Regional Travel Training
- Regional Bus Stop Access Improvements
- D.C .Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Pilot
- Reach-a-Ride: Website and call center for specialized transportation information



[www.reacharide.org](http://www.reacharide.org)

# Improvements We Will Make to the TPB Process

## Spring 2012: Grant Solicitation and Selection

- Provide project templates as resource to prepare applications
- Rotate selection committee members more often

## Summer/Fall 2012

- Refresh Task Force membership
- Strengthen grant performance measurements and monitoring
- Provide opportunities for grantee exchange on lessons learned
- After 2012, solicit for grants every 2 years (rather than every year)



Examples of Project Templates

# How the TPB Could Do More

## Changes in Federal Requirements Could Improve Program Efficacy

- Lower the match requirement to 20% for both capital and operating grants
- Streamline and reduce administrative requirements (which were set up for conventional transit programs)
- Expand activities eligible for funding
  - Allow transit fares
  - Remove trip restrictions under JARC
- National Independent Evaluation to allow regions to learn from each other

# For More Information

- Full Report and details for 2012 solicitation available at [www.tpbcoordination.org](http://www.tpbcoordination.org)

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