

## **ITEM 7 – Action**

June 20, 2012

Approval of CY 2012 Projects for Funding Under the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Programs of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

**Staff Recommendation:** Receive briefing on the solicitation and selection process and approve Resolution R17-2012 to approve CY 2012 projects for funding under the JARC and New Freedom Programs.

**Issues:** None

**Background:** In the Fall of 2006 the TPB became the designated recipient of the FTA JARC and New Freedom program funding for the Washington DC-VA-MD Urbanized Area. These funds are for improving mobility options of low-income commuters and persons with disabilities respectively. A project solicitation for JARC and New Freedom funds was conducted from February 16 through April 11. In April and May, a selection committee chaired by Mr. Wojahn reviewed the project applications and recommended projects to be presented to the TPB for funding approval. The next project solicitation is scheduled for early 2014.



**NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD  
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002**

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE NINE PROJECTS FOR FUNDING UNDER THE JOB  
ACCESS REVERSE COMMUTE (JARC) AND NEW FREEDOM PROGRAMS OF THE  
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION FOR CY 2012**

**WHEREAS**, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington Region, has the responsibility under the provisions of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) for developing and carrying out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the Metropolitan Area; and

**WHEREAS**, under SAFETEA-LU, projects funded by three Federal Transit Administration (FTA) human services transportation programs: Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) (Section 5316), and New Freedom (Section 5317) must be derived from a “locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan” and JARC and New Freedom projects must be selected on a competitive basis; and

**WHEREAS**, in July 2006 the TPB established the Human Services Transportation Coordination Task Force to oversee the development of the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan and a competitive selection process for identifying projects for JARC and New Freedom funding in the National Capital Region; and

**WHEREAS**, the JARC program provides capital and operating funding for services that improve access to jobs for low-income persons; and

**WHEREAS**, the New Freedom program provides capital and operating funding for transit and paratransit services and improvements for persons with disabilities that are new and go beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act; and

**WHEREAS**, in August 2006 the TPB was designated by the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the Governor of Maryland, and the Governor of Virginia as the recipient to administer the JARC and New Freedom programs in the Washington DC-VA-MD Urbanized Area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Coordinated Plan was developed under the guidance of the task force which included the active participation of representatives from public, private and non-profit transportation and human services providers, as well as participation by members of the public who provided insight into local transportation needs and strategies for improvement; and

**WHEREAS**, the Coordinated Plan also includes the selection criteria to be used in the competitive selection process of JARC and New Freedom projects and to inform the selection of Elderly and Disabled Individual Program (Section 5310) projects administered by the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia Departments of Transportation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Coordinated Plan, the selection criteria and the process for a competitive selection process were adopted by the TPB at its regular meeting on April 18, 2007 (R22-2007); and

**WHEREAS**, the TPB adopted an Update to the Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan at its regular meeting on December 16, 2009 (R13-2010); and

**WHEREAS**, the TPB has approved fifty projects for funding under the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Programs since 2007;

**WHEREAS**, a solicitation for JARC and New Freedom projects was conducted from February 16 through April 11, 2012, during which approximately 1,700 organizations and agencies received a brochure or email announcing the availability of transportation funds; and

**WHEREAS**, three pre-application conferences were conducted during the solicitation period for interested organizations and agencies to receive technical assistance on the application process and FTA requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, a selection committee comprised of local and national experts in transportation and human services familiar with special needs populations met twice in May to review the applications for completeness and evaluate them against the selection criteria; and

**WHEREAS**, the selection committee recommended nine projects for funding based on its review and evaluation; and

**WHEREAS**, the nine projects recommended for funding are described in the attached memorandum;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD approves the nine projects described in the attached memorandum for funding under the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Programs of the Federal Transit Administration.

# National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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June 14, 2012

**To:** Transportation Planning Board

**From:** Patrick Wojahn, Selection Committee Chair  
TPB Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force Chair  
Councilmember, City of College Park, MD

**Subject: Approval of Grant Recommendations for Funding Under the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Programs**

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I am pleased to present to the TPB for approval nine endorsed grant recommendations for funding under the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom programs of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). These grant recommendations are the result of a federally-mandated competitive selection process, described below, which I chaired. This year's solicitation was very competitive, with funding requests of twice the amount of federal funds available, and required the Selection Committee to make a number of difficult choices.

The TPB is the designated recipient for two Federal Transit Administration programs: 1) Job Access Reverse Commute, which provides funding for low-income workers to reach employment and employment training activities; and 2) New Freedom, which funds transportation services for persons with disabilities. The federal funds are required to be matched with other sources of funding provided by the grant recipients: 20 percent for capital projects and 50 percent for operating projects. As the designated recipient of these program funds, the TPB is able to fund projects to implement its Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan ("Coordinated Plan"), which includes selection criteria for the federally-required competitive selection of projects. An Updated Coordinated Plan was approved by the TPB on December 16, 2009. The eight selection criteria from the Coordinated Plan are used to score and rank applications; a copy of the selection criteria is attached.

## Prior Year Solicitations

Since 2007, the TPB has awarded 50 grants totaling \$17 million to support a range of projects such as travel training on how to use the bus and rail system, wheelchair-accessible taxis, low-interest car loan programs, reverse commute bus services and door through door transportation services. A complete list of the 50 grants awarded between 2007 and 2011 is available at [http://www.mwcog.org/tpbcoordination/documents/JARCNF\\_2011\\_FundedProjects.pdf](http://www.mwcog.org/tpbcoordination/documents/JARCNF_2011_FundedProjects.pdf).

The solicitations have become more competitive. In earlier solicitation years, an average of 13 applications was received, and for most of those solicitations (2007, 2009-10), the funding requests did not exceed the available grant funds. In the past two solicitations, the average number of applications submitted increased to 20, and the requested funds were double or triple the amount of the available grant funds.

## 2011 Program and Grant Assessment

In 2011, an assessment of the TPB's JARC and New Freedom program and grants was conducted by an independent consulting firm, Nelson Nygaard. The final report, which was presented to the TPB on January 18, 2012, outlined recommendations for changes to the solicitation process, changes to strengthen the oversight of subgrants, and recommendations to provide additional technical assistance to grantees in the implementation of grants. Overall, the assessment found that no widespread changes to the TPB administrative and oversight process are called for. A major challenge confirmed by the Assessment is the difficulty that agencies have in identifying matching funds for the grants. The Assessment also found that none of the grant-funded projects has been sustained without additional JARC or New Freedom support.

Following the assessment's solicitation recommendations, resources on developing statements of need, sample budgets and project best practice examples were compiled and made available. Additionally, changes were made to the application itself that included requesting additional milestone information, past performance data, and more realistic estimates of the number of people to be served.

## 2012 Solicitation for JARC and New Freedom Projects

The TPB solicitation for JARC and New Freedom funds was conducted from February 16 through April 11, 2012. Approximately 1,700 organizations or agencies received a brochure or email announcing the availability of grant funds. TPB staff conducted three pre-application conferences to instruct interested organizations on the application process. Conferences were held in Maryland and Virginia in addition to D.C. and were attended by approximately 30 different organizations and agencies.

The Task Force identified five priorities for the 2012 solicitation. Applicants may also submit proposals for projects that are not priorities, and the priority projects do not receive extra points during the selection process.

- Rideshare or vanpool activities
- Low-interest, revolving car loan programs in areas not well served by transit
- Travel Training
- Door-through-door service
- Volunteer driver programs

The priorities were released for public comment via the TPB website in December 2011. No comments were received in response to the priorities.

As part of the Assessment report, project templates were developed for four project types: Travel Training; Volunteer Driver Programs; Rideshare/Vanpool Programs; and Low-Interest Auto Loan Programs. These templates were made available to applicants on the solicitation website, [www.tpbcoordination.org](http://www.tpbcoordination.org). The resources include suggestions for sources of possible matching funds, but as previously noted, finding and obtaining the necessary matching funds is an ongoing challenge. Securing funds to sufficiently match the federal grant dollars is the applicants' responsibility, and the adequacy of those funds often factors into the feasibility determination of an application.

At the conclusion of the solicitation period, 18 complete applications were received: 9 applications for JARC funding and 9 applications for New Freedom funding.

## Selection Committee and Selection Process

I chaired the Selection Committee, which was comprised of five people from national and local organizations representing disability, workforce development, transit and private provider expertise. The Selection Committee members were:

1. Harold Morgan, Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association
2. Jeanna Muhoro, Fairfax County Neighborhood & Community Services, Human Service Transportation
3. David Remick, Arlington/Alexandria Workforce Investment Board
4. Connie Spinner, University of the District of Columbia, Dean of Workforce Development & Lifelong Learning
5. Joyce Taylor, The Arc of Montgomery County, Disability Specialist

Each member reviewed and scored the applications using the TPB-approved selection criteria. The Selection Committee convened twice and, after a thoughtful and deliberative process, the Selection Committee recommended that 9 out of the 18 applications be funded. The following tables provide a summary of the applications and the recommended grant awards. Where applicable, the narrative includes the priorities met by each application.

The applicants whose proposals were not recommended for funding will receive letters explaining how their applications may be strengthened for the next solicitation. The chart at the back of the memo describes the applications that are not recommended for funding.

## Recommended projects

The following 9 projects were recommended for funding by the Selection Committee.

1. JARC projects (4 projects):

- a. **Skill Source Group, Inc. Road to Employment Project:** Funding to support the capital costs of purchasing a vehicle to provide transportation to and from job sites in Northern Virginia for low-income individuals re-entering the community after incarceration. The rideshare activity was a priority in this year's solicitation.

Requested		Recommended	
Requested JARC Funds	\$26,000	Recommended JARC Funds	\$26,000
Proposed Match	\$ 6,500	Required Match	\$ 6,500
Total Proposed Project	\$32,500	Revised Total Project	\$32,500

- b. **Northern Virginia Family Service Vehicles for Change Program:** Funding to continue the Vehicles for Change program, which provides donated vehicles to low-income working families for a program fee. The project operates throughout Northern Virginia and benefits families with limited access to transit. This project was a priority in this year's solicitation.

Requested		Recommended	
Requested JARC Funds	\$ 822,486	Recommended JARC Funds	\$ 999,044
Proposed Match	\$ 309,861	Required Match	\$ 370,415
Total Proposed Project	\$1,132,347	Revised Total Project	\$1,369,459

- c. **Year Up National Capital Region:** Year Up NCR provides a one-year, intensive training program that offers low-income adults, aged 18-24, with a combination of hands-on skill development, college credit and corporate internships to help bridge the opportunity divide. The funding would help the agency support the participants' program-related transportation costs, which include a vehicle purchase for ridesharing, mileage reimbursement and taxi vouchers. Internship placements are located throughout DC, Suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia.

Requested		Recommended	
Requested JARC Funds	\$117,682	Recommended JARC Funds	\$157,682
Proposed Match	\$ 76,082	Required Match	\$116,082
Total Proposed Project	\$193,764	Revised Total Project	\$273,764

- d. **Boat People SOS:** Continuation of the Road to Independence through Savings and Education (RISE) Employment project, which prepares Vietnamese refugees and immigrants for employment by providing job skills and other training opportunities. Project also includes a taxi voucher component to assist clients in getting to jobs for the first four months after job placement.

Requested		Recommended	
Requested JARC Fund	\$256,620	Recommended JARC Funds	\$256,620
Proposed Match	\$125,324	Required Match	\$125,324
Total Proposed Project	\$381,944	Revised Total Project	\$381,944

2. New Freedom projects (5 projects):

- a. **Jewish Council for the Aging:** Funding to establish the Village Rides program, a coordinated volunteer transportation program in five aging-in-place communities in Montgomery County that matches volunteer drivers from the five villages with residents who need transportation to healthcare appointments, grocery stores or social outings. Volunteer driver programs were a priority in this year's solicitation.

Requested		Recommended	
Requested New Freedom Funds	\$219,032	Recommended New Freedom Funds	\$219,032
Proposed Match	\$ 54,759	Required Match	\$ 54,759
Total Proposed Project	\$273,791	Revised Total Project	\$273,791

- b. **Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind:** Funding to support continued travel training for low-vision, blind or deaf-blind individuals in the DC region and for the continuation of the Orientation & Mobility Specialist internship program. Funding will also support an innovative audio maps project for Metrorail stations in partnership with WMATA. The maps, which will



also be made available in Braille, will be recorded, downloadable descriptions of the physical features of Metrorail stations and Metrobus transit centers. Details will include the layout of stations and transit centers, navigational direction, names of entrances/exits, locations of stairs, escalators and station manager kiosks. The information will also include orientation information from exits to the immediate neighborhoods and surrounding points of interest.

Requested		Recommended	
Requested New Freedom Funds	\$346,324	Recommended New Freedom Funds	\$442,324
Proposed Match	\$ 86,581	Required Match	\$110,581
Total Proposed Project	\$432,905	Revised Total Project	\$552,905

- c. **Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind:** Funding for the continuation of a youth transportation program to transport blind and low-vision youth to the agency’s recreational, community integration and career-focused programs.

Requested		Recommended	
Requested New Freedom Funds	\$ 76,500	Recommended New Freedom Funds	\$ 66,500
Proposed Match	\$ 76,500	Required Match	\$ 66,500
Total Proposed Project	\$153,000	Revised Total Project	\$133,000

- d. **Yellow Paratransit:** Funding for the expansion and continuation of rollDC, the wheelchair accessible taxicab pilot project in DC. The project was originally funded with a New Freedom grant in 2008. In the two and a half years the service has been available, the company has experienced a seven fold increase in the number of trips provided. Funding under this grant would support the purchase of seven additional wheelchair-accessible minivans and provide additional operating funds.

Requested		Recommended	
Requested New Freedom Funds	\$398,120	Recommended New Freedom Funds	\$398,120
Proposed Match	\$208,340	Required Match	\$208,340
Total Proposed Project	\$606,460	Revised Total Project	\$606,460

- e. **The Arc of Northern Virginia:** Funding to develop a Train the Travel Trainer curriculum to support travel training for young adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in Northern Virginia. The program would partner with public schools and various disability provider agencies to deliver the training and expand the capacity of agencies to provide ongoing travel training.

Requested		Recommended	
Requested New Freedom Funds	\$194,505	Recommended New Freedom Funds	\$194,505
Proposed Match	\$ 50,800	Required Match	\$ 50,800
Total Proposed Project	\$245,305	Revised Total Project	\$245,305

The selection committee is recommending that these 9 projects (4 JARC projects and 5 New Freedom projects) totaling \$3,869,128 be funded. These projects would be provided with \$2,759,828 in federal funding.

## Next Steps

If all 9 of the above recommended grants are funded, all but \$751,258 in JARC funds and \$256,078 in New Freedom funds will be expended. The remaining JARC funds would be carried over to the next solicitation. The Task Force will again be asked to provide priorities for JARC and New Freedom projects throughout the region.

The Assessment report referenced above also recommended conducting JARC and New Freedom solicitations every other year to create opportunities in off years to spend more time addressing coordinated human service transportation planning issues. The off years also give the Task Force time to develop and encourage larger regional projects – such as the Reach a Ride Clearinghouse and WMATA Bus Stop Improvement Project – that have the potential for greater impact, and to identify sponsors for those projects. The Task Force has indicated its support for a biennial solicitation process. The TPB will next solicit for applications in 2014, in the first quarter of the calendar year. It should be noted that the next transportation authorization bill may change the future program structures, requirements and future funds available.

Applications Not Recommended for Funding				Reason
Applicant	Project	Funding Requested	Program	Selection Committee Rationale
Prince George's County Dept of Public Works & Transportation	Branch Avenue Circulator	\$1,367,193.00 (50 percent match)	JARC	Limited justification for number of low-income people served; lower-scoring application; low feasibility score
Prince George's County Dept of Public Works & Transportation	South County Demand Response /Fixed Route Hybrid Service	\$911,462 (50 percent match)	JARC	Limited justification for number of low-income people served; lower-scoring application
Prince George's County Dept of Public Works & Transportation	UPS Shuttle	\$349,498.00 (50 percent match)	JARC	Limited justification for number of low-income people served; lower-scoring application
Service Source	Ride Source	\$254,771.00 (50 percent match)	JARC	Service not well-defined, lack of clarity about roles and functions in project
Family Matters of Greater Washington	Ways to Work Program	\$419,654.55 (20 percent match)	JARC	Concerns about feasibility related to use of loan guarantee pool and money from loan repayments
National Children's Center	Train the Travel Trainer	\$512,141.00 (20 percent match)	New Freedom	Little to no cash match; concerns about training delivery and availability in public domain; cost per person compared to The Arc of Northern Virginia application (same project)
University of Maryland	Evaluating Impacts of Zoning Strategy for ADA Paratransit Services	\$178,155.00 (20 percent match)	New Freedom	Low feasibility score; not a good fit for New Freedom funding; better fit for TRB or TCRP
Matthews Center	Vehicle for After School Transportation	\$104,868 (both 50 and 20 percent match)	New Freedom	No match lined up; better fit for 5310 funding
IT Curves	Accessible Taxi Regional Dispatch Center	\$273,279 (20 percent match)	New Freedom	Low feasibility score, lack of implementation details and regional partners

## Description of Selection Criteria

Criteria	Definition and Possible Score	Total Score
<p><b>1. To what extent does the project respond to the strategies identified in the Coordinated Plan?</b></p>	<p>Projects that address multiple strategies will make better use of limited funding and will be weighted more heavily. This criterion considers two issues: how many strategies does the project address (there is a total of four), and how well does it address them? Each strategy addressed should be rated on a scale of 1 to 4, with the maximum of 16 points indicating the project would respond well to each of the four strategies.</p> <p><b>Maximum Possible Points: 16</b></p>	
<p><b>2. To what extent does the project demonstrate coordination among various entities?</b></p>	<p>Service delivery is better where projects are developed and operated with the cooperation and coordination of jurisdictions, agencies, and interested stakeholder organizations. The criterion is defined by multiple jurisdictions, agencies, or stakeholder organizations involved in the project. A maximum score of 16 would be awarded for a project that has three or more partners each in program planning, operations, communications and funding.</p> <p><b>Maximum Possible Points: 16</b></p>	
<p><b>3. To what extent does the project demonstrate a new or innovative idea that can be replicated elsewhere in the region?</b></p>	<p>Projects that comply with the spirit of SAFETEA-LU are those that combine new and innovative ideas, new technologies, and creative sources of financing to address currently unmet needs. Projects that succeed in meeting unmet needs and can be replicated in other jurisdictions are weighted higher. To the extent an existing program demonstrates innovation and replicability (by other jurisdictions or agencies) it would score well in this category. A score of 11 points would be awarded for a project that employs a new and innovative idea and demonstrates excellent prospects for feasibility of replication.</p> <p><b>Maximum Possible Points: 11</b></p>	
<p><b>4. To what extent does the project meet a regional transportation need?</b></p>	<p>Jurisdictions may differ in the services they provide, but the need for programs that address the four strategies identified above is regional. “Regional” means that the project is not limited to single geographic area and ideally would serve the entire urbanized area. Programs that are focused regionally will be scored higher than those that are limited in geographic scope. Projects that are proposed as a pilot project should include narrative of how the proposed project serves a regional need. The maximum 11 points would be awarded to projects that reveal both a comprehensive region-wide service area and distribution of trips provided.</p> <p><b>Maximum Possible Points: 11</b></p>	

Criteria	Definition and Possible Score	Total Score
<p><b>5. To what extent does the project involve the private sector?</b></p>	<p>Cost-effectiveness is often accomplished with the involvement of the private sector and, as such, they are important partners in project planning and development. This criterion will consider the extent to which private sector is involved in the project – such as in service delivery or project sponsorship (i.e. employer-based van pools). A maximum of 10 points will be awarded for the most involvement by private sector partners.</p> <p><b>Maximum Possible Points: 10</b></p>	
<p><b>6. How many individuals with disabilities and/or with limited-incomes does the project propose to serve or benefit?</b></p>	<p>Applicants will be asked to estimate how many individuals with disabilities and/or individuals with limited incomes the project proposes to serve in the first year. The number of individuals can be estimated in the project proposal, and usage statistics could also be asked for, such as the average number of monthly one-way trips the program hopes to provide. For an infrastructure improvement, an estimate of the number of people living around the improvement who are expected to use it could be provided. Points will be assigned based on the relative number of people to be served or trips expected to be provided.</p> <p><b>Maximum Possible Points: 11</b></p>	
<p><b>7. To what extent does the application identify reasonable strategies for on-going funding?</b></p>	<p>The limited funding available under SAFETEA-LU requires that projects identify other sources of funding to sustain operations in future years. Projects that have identified reasonable strategies for sources of on-going funding after the first grant will be scored the highest.</p> <p><b>Maximum Possible Points: 11</b></p>	
<p><b>8. How feasible is the project?</b></p>	<p>The criterion will explore the feasibility of a project in terms of budget, resources and institutional or administrative support. Does the proposal identify and secure the necessary financial, human and institutional capacity to make the project happen? The more feasible the project proposal, the higher the project will score with this criterion. Success is critical for the coordinated planning efforts and for future appropriations of JARC and New Freedom funds.</p> <p><b>Maximum Possible Points: 14</b></p>	
	<p><b>TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS: 100</b></p>	