

ITEM 8 - Action
September 19, 2007

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

Staff

Recommendation:

- adopt Resolution R6-2008 to approve five projects for funding under the JARC and New Freedom Programs of the FTA
- receive briefing on the next project solicitation scheduled for early 2008

Issues:

None

Background:

In the Fall of 2006 the TPB became the designated recipient of the JARC and New Freedom program funding for the Washington Urbanized Area. At the April 18, 2007 meeting, the Board approved the first Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for the National Capital Region, which includes the competitive selection process to be used to solicit project applications and select projects for funding under these programs. The first project solicitation for JARC and New Freedom funds was conducted from May 1 through June 30. In July and August, a selection committee comprised of members from the TPB Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force reviewed the project applications and recommended that five projects be presented to the TPB for funding approval.

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

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

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 and participation by membership 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 was adopted by the TPB at its regular meeting on April 18, 2007 (R22-2007); and

WHEREAS, a solicitation for JARC and New Freedom projects was conducted from May 1 through June 30, 2007, during which approximately 1,500 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 human service, nonprofit, transit and consumer representatives from the task force met during July and August to review the applications for completeness and evaluate them against the selection criteria; and

WHEREAS, the selection committee recommended five projects for funding based on its review and evaluation, and forwarded the recommendations to the TPB Officers for concurrence in presenting to the TPB; and

WHEREAS, the five projects recommended for funding are described in the attached memorandum; and

WHEREAS, the TPB Officers approved the recommendations for presentation to the TPB;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD approves the five 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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September 13, 2007

To: Transportation Planning Board

From: Kathy Porter, Selection Committee Chair
TPB Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force Chair

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

CC: Ronald Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning

I am writing to present five endorsed project recommendations for funding under the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom programs of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for TPB approval. The project recommendations result from a selection committee's deliberations, described below. The TPB Officers have reviewed and concur with the project recommendations.

Five Project Recommendations

1. JARC projects:

- a. **Northern Virginia Family Service Ways to Work Program:** Expansion of an existing loan program for low-income individuals to purchase cars or perform car maintenance. The program has operated since 1998 throughout Northern Virginia and benefits individuals with limited access to transit.
Total Project Amount: \$102,768; JARC Funding Requested: \$51,384.00
- b. **Montgomery County Ride On Isolated Communities Program:** Taxi voucher program to connect low-income commuters in the Tobytown community to public transit. Tobytown is a low-income community near the Potomac River in Montgomery County, south-east of Poolesville.
Total Project Amount: \$70,000; JARC Funding Requested: \$35,000.00
- c. **Prince George's Department of Public Works & Transportation UPS Shuttle:** Expansion of weekday shuttle service serving the Greenbelt Metro, Prince George's Community College and the UPS facility in Laurel, MD to benefit those who reverse commute or work nontraditional hours. The service is provided by The Bus and currently operates from 10:30am to 12:45 pm; this grant would allow the shuttle to operate early weekday morning hours from 3:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. UPS is a financial partner in the grant proposal in that they pay part or all of the fare for their employees.
Total Project Amount: \$75,971; JARC Funding Requested: \$37,985.50

2. New Freedom projects:

- a. **Jewish Council for the Aging Travel Training for Seniors with Disabilities:** This multi-jurisdictional project provides intensive classroom and hands-on travel training for seniors who are healthy enough to use public transit in the District of Columbia, Fairfax County, VA and Montgomery County, MD.
Total Project Amount: \$82,560.90; New Freedom Funding Requested: \$66,048.72
- b. **Arlington Agency on Aging Door-through-Door Service Pilot:** Developed jointly by Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, this project provides personal care attendants to clients with disabilities who need assistance using paratransit to get to medical appointments.
Total Project Amount: \$288,000; New Freedom Funding Requested: \$144,000.00

Background

The TPB approved the first Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan for the National Capital Region (the “Plan”) and selection criteria for JARC and New Freedom Projects on April 18, 2007. The TPB’s Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force (“Task Force”) oversaw the development of the Plan and the selection criteria for JARC and New Freedom projects. The TPB is the designated recipient for the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA’s) JARC and New Freedom funds for the Washington, D.C.-MD-VA Urbanized Area. JARC funds are for improving transportation for low-income workers in reaching job sites. Formally an earmarked program, the JARC program is now a formula-based program in which projects must be competitively selected. The New Freedom program was created for the first time under SAFETEA-LU to fund new transportation services for persons with disabilities and older adults.

Solicitation for JARC and New Freedom Projects

The TPB conducted its first solicitation for JARC and New Freedom funds from May 1 through June 30, 2007. Approximately 1,500 organizations or agencies received a brochure or e-mail announcing the availability of transportation funds to help low-income individuals, persons with disabilities and older adults. At the conclusion of the solicitation period, 11 applications were received: 4 for JARC funding and 7 for New Freedom funding. Of these 11 applications, 6 were incomplete and were not considered for funding (as stated in the application guidelines). The incomplete applications were missing key requirements, such as the local match or the project budget. At the direction of the Selection Committee, letters were sent to applicants whose applications were incomplete. The letters explained why the application was incomplete and provided suggestions for strengthening the applications in the next solicitation.

While the number of complete applications and the total funding requests were lower than anticipated, the proposals included some creative and innovative pilot programs with balanced geographic coverage. It is clear that the required match provides a challenge to many organizations in applying for JARC and New Freedom grants; a 50 percent match is required for operating projects and a 20 percent match for capital projects. The Task Force will discuss the lessons learned from this first solicitation and recommend improvements for the next solicitation.

Selection Committee

The Selection Committee of 11 people was comprised of human service, nonprofit, transit (including WMATA) and consumer representatives from the TPB Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force. Members of the Task Force whose agencies were submitting a proposal were not permitted to serve on the Selection Committee. A list of Selection Committee members is attached. Each member reviewed and scored the applications according to the TPB-approved selection criteria. The Selection Committee met twice to discuss the applications and to make final decisions about which projects to recommend for funding. The Committee recommended that the five projects described above be funded.

Next Steps

If all five of the above recommended projects are funded, approximately \$1.7 million out of the \$2 million combined FY2006 JARC and New Freedom funds are remaining, as the table below indicates. The remaining funds can be carried over to the next solicitation. As stated earlier, a major challenge to local governments and non-profit organizations in utilizing the JARC and New Freedom funding is the match requirement; a 50 percent match for an agency with a tight budget could make these programs beyond their reach. A recent GAO report found that implementation of the New Freedom program has been limited and an identified barrier is the match requirement¹.

	FY06 Funding Available	Funding for 5 Projects (If Approved)	FY06 Funding Remaining (carryover)
JARC	\$1,112,035.00	\$124,369.50	\$987,665.50
New Freedom	\$937,837.00	\$210,048.72	\$727,788.28

To address the challenges encountered by this first TPB JARC and New Freedom project solicitation, the Task Force will discuss a number of improvements for the next solicitation at its September 20, 2007 meeting. The Task Force will consider a recommendation from the Selection Committee that a solicitation be conducted early in 2008 that combines the remaining funds with FY07 and FY08 funds for a two-year project cycle. It is hoped that this larger funding amount for a two-year period rather than a one-year period will solicit a greater number of proposals. Furthermore, it is hoped that this recommendation will allow for the possibility of regional projects that address multiple jurisdictions' unmet transportation needs and coordinate local funding. An early 2008 solicitation may also mesh better with budget cycles, which would allow organizations more time to secure the required match. The Task Force will also discuss lengthening the amount of time applicants have to put together a proposal from two months to three months. The Task Force will also be asked to share ideas about how the TPB can conduct more targeted outreach to potential applicants.

Should you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at portertakoma@verizon.net or 301-270-8680 or Wendy Klancher on the TPB staff at wklancher@mwcog.org or 202-962-3321.

¹ GAO-07-999R Transportation Disadvantaged: Progress in Implementing the New Freedom Program. July 19, 2007.

**Selection Committee Members
July 2007**

Hon. Kathryn Porter – Chair
TPB Member
Mayor, Takoma Park
Chair, Human Service Transportation
Coordination Task Force

Anthony Foster
Potomac & Rappahannock
Transportation Commission
Woodbridge, VA
(Public Transportation)

Shelby Holley
Prince William County Department of
Social Services
Woodbridge, VA
(Human Services)

Christian Kent
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit
Authority
Regional
(Public Transportation)

Jane King
AARP
Alexandria, VA
**(Consumer representing older
adults)**

Denis Paddeu
Fairfax Connector
Fairfax County, VA
(Public Transportation)

Brenda Richardson
Women Like Us
Washington, DC
**(Consumer representing low-
income commuters)**

Patricia Sanders
Prince George's County Department of
Family Services
Hyattsville, MD
(Human Services)

David Sharp
Spinal Cord Injury Network
Rockville, MD
**(Consumer representing people
with disabilities)**

Rhonda Stewart
Mayor's Committee on Persons with
Disabilities
Washington, DC
(Human Services)

Joyce Taylor
The Arc of Montgomery County
Rockville, MD
Arc is a non-profit agency that provides
support and transportation services to
people with developmental disabilities.
**(Non profit transportation
provider and Human Services)**

