

DRAFT

COORDINATED HUMAN SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR THE
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION



February 16, 2007

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Approximately five million people choose to live, work, learn and play in the Washington, DC region. Efficient transportation plays a major role in supporting travel to and from the many activities that make the region the vibrant and dynamic area that it is. Facilitating the movement of residents and visitors requires a complex transportation infrastructure of various modes supported by a substantial network of public and private providers. This transportation system must serve equally the needs of all who rely on it. Some transportation-disadvantaged groups – persons with disabilities, individuals with income limitations or with limited English proficiency and older adults with limited incomes or mobility impairments – have specialized needs that necessitate distinct planning and coordination efforts.

What Is Coordination?

Coordination is a difficult term to define, and means different things to different people. Within the context of Human Service Transportation, the term refers to agencies, jurisdictions and non-profit organizations working together to maximize transportation services for people with disabilities, low-income populations and older adults and the elimination of service gaps. Various state and federal funding streams have different administrative and eligibility requirements, which complicate the coordination of public and human service transportation. In its recent Report 91, the Transit Cooperative Research Project defined coordination as:

Coordination is a technique for better resource management. It means working together with people from different agencies and backgrounds. It requires shared power: shared responsibility, management, and funding. Many transportation functions, including planning, purchasing, vehicle operations, maintenance, and marketing, can be coordinated...

Coordinating transportation services offers substantial benefits to many communities, but significant investments of time and energy may be required before the desired results are achieved...

Coordinating transportation functions is best understood as a political process, which, like many other political processes, may involve changing environments, conflicts regarding power and control over resources, and competing goals or personalities...¹

¹ Executive Summary. *Economic Benefits of Human Service Transportation and Transit Services*. TCRP Report 91. Transportation Research Board, 2003.

Purpose of the Coordinated Plan

The purpose of this first Coordinated Plan for the National Capital Region is to guide funding decisions for three FTA programs, the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) Program, the New Freedom Program and the Elderly and Disabled Individuals program commonly known as Section 5310.

This Coordinated Plan is also intended to broaden the dialogue and support further collaboration between human service agencies and transportation providers to better serve persons with disabilities, individuals with limited incomes and older adults. The Plan will be a “living document” and will evolve to support greater coordination and collaboration efforts within the region.

The Coordinated Plan covers the jurisdictions of the multi-state region that is the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board’s (TPB’s) planning area. Figure 1 shows a map of the TPB planning area and the Washington DC-MD-VA Urbanized Area. The TPB also serves as the designated recipient for the JARC and New Freedom programs for the Washington DC-MD-VA Urbanized Area.

What is the TPB?

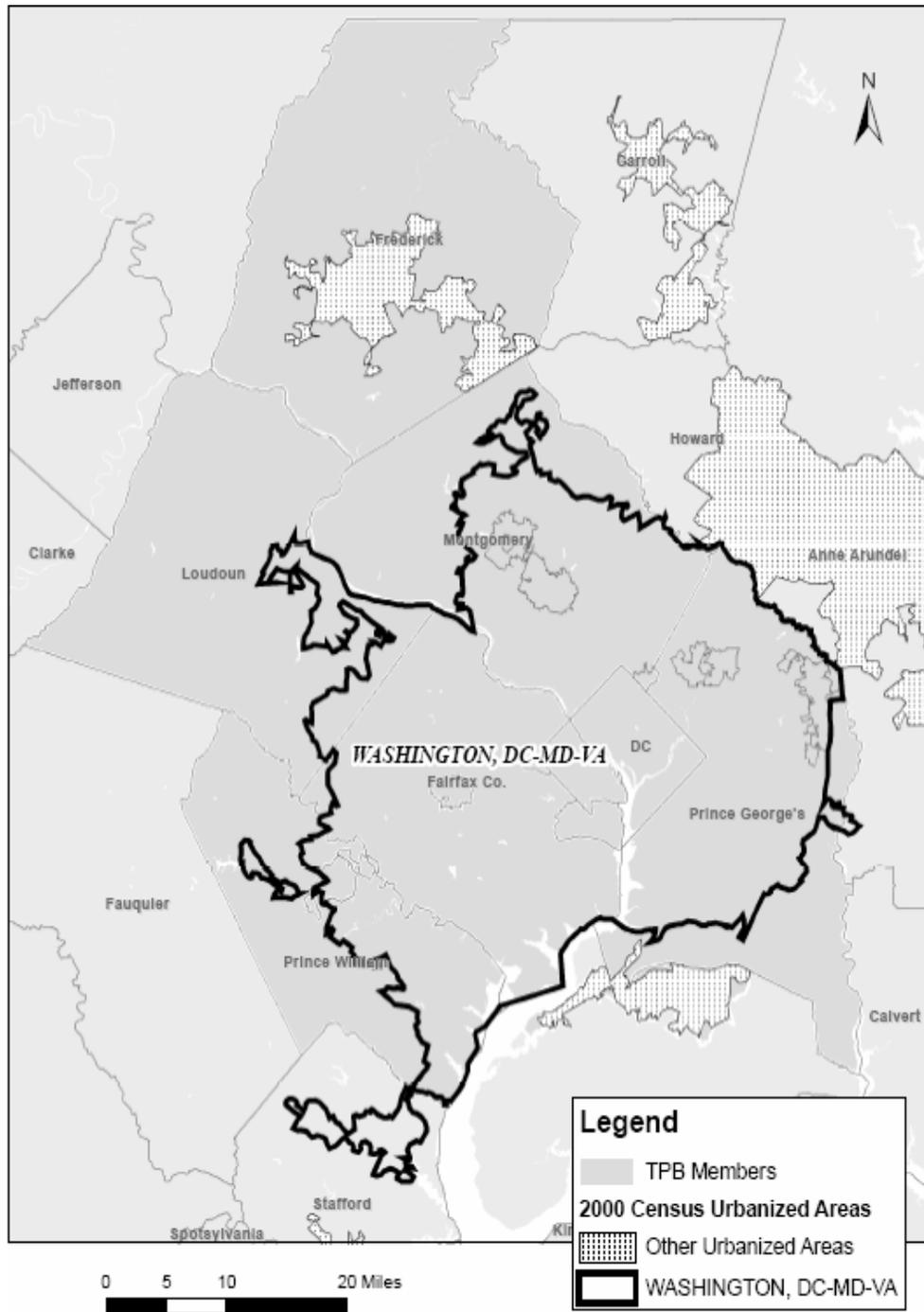
As the metropolitan planning organization for the Washington, DC Urbanized Area, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) has the privilege of preparing this Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. The TPB is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region, and plays an important role as the regional forum for transportation planning. The TPB prepares plans and programs that the federal government must approve in order for federal-aid transportation funds to flow to the Washington region.

Members of the TPB include representatives of local governments; state transportation agencies; the Maryland and Virginia General Assemblies; the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority; and non-voting members from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and federal agencies. The TPB has an extensive public involvement process, and provides a 30-day public comment period before taking action on plans and programs.

The TPB's planning area, shown in Figure 1, covers the District of Columbia and surrounding jurisdictions. In Maryland these jurisdictions include Frederick County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County and the St. Charles urbanized area of Charles County, plus the cities of Bowie, College Park, Gaithersburg, Greenbelt, Rockville, and Takoma Park. In Virginia, the planning area includes Alexandria, Arlington County, the City of Fairfax, Fairfax County, Falls Church, Loudoun County, Manassas, and Prince William County.

For more information on the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, including a list of TPB members, visit www.mwcog.org/transportation.

Figure 1: The TPB Planning Area and the Washington DC-MD-VA Urbanized Area



SAFETEA-LU

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) is the reauthorization of federal transportation legislation enacted in August 2005. SAFETEA-LU mandates greater coordination of funding and services for human service transportation through three programs.

As mentioned earlier, the TPB is the designated recipient for two FTA programs: Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom. Table 1 describes the two programs in greater detail as well as the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (5310) program, which is administered by the states. The programs require a local match – 80/20 for capital projects and 50/50 for operating projects. Non-DOT federal funds can be used for the match, so long as the federal share of the project does not exceed 95% of the total project cost. Federal funds for JARC and New Freedom will continue yearly for six years.

Table 1 – SAFETEA-LU Programs

Program	Designated Recipient	Purpose	Federal FY2006 Funding	Total Funding with Match
Job Access Reverse Commute (Section 5316)	TPB	Assist low-income commuters getting to job sites	\$1,192,035.00	\$2.2 Operating (50/50) \$1.3 Capital (80/20)
New Freedom (Section 5317)	TPB	Transportation for people with disabilities that goes above and beyond the ADA	\$1,017,837.00	\$2.0 Operating (50/50) \$1.25 Capital (80/20)
Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (5310)	State/District DOTs	Provide formula funding to increase mobility for the elderly and persons with disabilities	Differs by State/D.C.	Only capital projects are eligible (80/20)

Description of Programs

Job Access Reverse Commute

The JARC program existed under the previous transportation legislation. SAFETEA-LU has changed the funding from an earmark to a formula program based on the number of low-income individuals. The JARC program is designed to assist low-income commuters in getting to job sites. SAFETEA-LU requires that JARC recipients be selected on a competitive basis, and allows other, non-DOT federal funds to be used as matching funds, so long as the federal share does not exceed 95% of the total project cost.

New Freedom

This program is new under SAFETEA-LU, and its purpose is to encourage services and facility improvements for addressing the transportation needs of people with disabilities, above and beyond what is required by the transportation section of the Americans with Disabilities Act. New Freedom funds may cover capital or operating costs, and like the JARC program, grantees must be selected on a competitive basis.

Section 5310 – Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities

This program existed under the previous transportation legislation, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The 5310 program provides funds for capital costs associated with providing services to older adults and people with disabilities. Additional requirements under SAFETEA-LU include the provision that projects funded under this program must be included in a locally-developed human service transportation coordinated plan. In the Washington, D.C. Urbanized Area, the 5310 programs are administered by the Maryland Transit Administration, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and the District of Columbia Department of Transportation for their respective jurisdictions.

To ensure compliance with the SAFETEA-LU requirements, this Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for the National Capital Region will guide the funding of projects within Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia's 5310 programs. The competitive selection criteria that will guide the selection of JARC and New Freedom projects will also be used to evaluate proposals submitted for 5310 funding. Additionally, a subcommittee of Task Force members will review the 5310 applications to ensure there is no overlap of projects or funding between the three programs.

As this Coordinated Plan continues to guide projects in successive years, this review process will be evaluated and refined as necessary to ensure that projects funded under the three separate programs are complementary to one another and fit into the vision and goals of the Coordinated Plan.

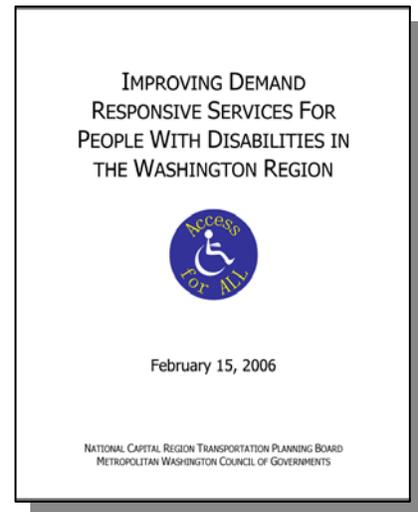
SECTION 2: PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Previous TPB Studies and Reports

The Coordinated Plan was developed within the context of several TPB studies and reports, including the TPB's JARC Plan (January 2004), and three reports from TPB's Access for All Advisory Committee². The *Improving Demand Responsive Services for People with Disabilities* report from February 2006 identified existing specialized transportation services, gaps and shortcomings in those services, and recommendations for transit improvements and coordination opportunities in the region. This report is described in more detail below. The other two AFA reports are *Transportation Issues for Low-Income Populations, Findings and Recommendations, July 19, 2006* and *Report on Major Findings and Recommendations to Improve Transit Information for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Customers*. In addition, the development of the plan was aided by a WMATA study conducted by KFH Group, Inc entitled *Specialized Transportation Study*; March, 2004.

The MetroAccess Study

In its 2006 report "Improving Demand Responsive Services for People with Disabilities in the Washington Region", the TPB made 15 recommendations for improving paratransit service and identified opportunities for coordination. MetroAccess is the curb-to-curb paratransit service provided by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to customers who cannot use the fixed-route service because of a disability. The study was guided by a steering committee chaired by TPB member Kathy Porter and included AFA members including persons with disabilities who use paratransit; human service agencies; WMATA MetroAccess representatives and local paratransit providers; and representatives from two national organizations: Easter Seals Project ACTION and the Community Transportation Association. The study was also supported by a consultant, Russell Thatcher of TranSystems, Inc. The entire study can be found at www.mwcog.org/transportation.



The study found that in addition to MetroAccess, more than 60 local government and non-profit programs provide specialized transportation services for people with disabilities. Medicaid is the second largest provider of specialized transportation services, next to MetroAccess. The coordination-related recommendations included:

² The Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee advises the TPB on transportation issues, programs, policies, and services that are important to low-income communities, minority communities and people with disabilities. The mission of this committee is to identify concerns of low-income and minority populations and persons with disabilities, and to determine whether and how these issues might be addressed within the TPB process. Membership includes community leaders from transportation-disadvantaged groups from around the region. More info at: www.mwcog.org/transportation/committee/afa

1) Local jurisdictions should explore opportunities for collaboration. In addition to the coordination that is already occurring at the local level, human service agencies and transit providers could consider coordinating regularly scheduled paratransit trips and broadening local alternatives to MetroAccess; and

2) The region should explore additional opportunities, such as a regional information clearinghouse and an accessible taxi program, through regional Human Service Transportation Coordination planning efforts.

The study consultant, TranSystems, Inc, conducted telephone interviews with human service agencies that provide transportation in December 2005. The purpose was to identify currently available services, unmet needs, existing coordination efforts and opportunities. The key issues and unmet needs identified by human service agencies are summarized below.

Key issues:

- **Funding:** By far, the most common transportation issue facing human service agencies and transportation providers is adequate funding. Funding was mentioned in relation to expansion of services to meet growing demand and fill in service gaps, such as evenings and weekends.
- **Vehicles:** Vehicle availability and accessibility were also high on the list of issues for survey participants from non-profit organizations.
- **Taxis:** Many participants described issues relating to taxi services, the primary concerns being driver training and attitude.
- **Other:** Other issues that were frequently mentioned include scarcity of drivers due to competition with other transportation services; infrastructure with poor accessibility (including fixed route service and housing); and service reliability and timeliness.

Unmet needs:

- Same day service and greater service areas were the top two unmet needs mentioned in the phone interviews. The participants described their clients needing day of transportation for medical trips due to sudden illnesses and other short-notice trips. Additionally, many transportation services are only provided in a limited service area, which may not include a client's doctor's office or necessary destination. There seems to be several options for seniors and persons with disabilities to travel to medical appointments but few for shopping and social activities. The need for additional trip types was followed by the need for expanded operational hours.
- The next three unmet needs that were identified include reliable service, companion services, and door-to-door service. Under service reliability, several survey respondents indicated that their clients were frequently left waiting for rides.
- Essentially, no survey participants indicated major significant overlap in services, or the need to significantly expand coordination efforts. There already seems to be some degree

of coordination between organizations at the municipal and county level. The only area where the issue of overlapping services might be studied further is Prince George's County, which has a Call-a-Bus program at the county level as well as programs in several municipalities.

The TPB Human Services Transportation Coordination Task Force

In July 2006, the TPB formed the Task Force to oversee the development of the Coordinated Plan and to steer coordination efforts in the region. In September 2006, the TPB approved the membership for a Task Force. TPB member and Takoma Park Mayor Kathy Porter chairs the Task Force, and its membership is comprised of public transit agencies, state departments of transportation, private and nonprofit transportation providers, human service agencies, and users of specialized transit services from jurisdictions across the region. A complete list of Task Force members is included in Appendix 1. The Task Force met from October 2006 to February 2007 to develop this first Coordinated Plan.

Table 2: Task Force Composition

Stakeholder Group	Number of Representatives
Public Transit	12
State Public Transit / DOTs	3
Private Providers	3
Non-Profit Providers	6
Human Service Agencies	10
Users/Customers	8
Total	43 (with the Chair)

Guiding Principles

SAFETEA-LU intensifies the need for regional of coordination human service transportation. As the metropolitan planning organization and the designated recipient of Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom funds, the TPB has a unique opportunity to develop a plan that addresses the unmet needs of people with disabilities, low-income individuals and older adults to support their independence and mobility. With that in mind, the TPB has established Guiding Principles for its Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan. These principles

build upon each other, and are reflected throughout this Coordinated Plan in the strategies and priorities described here.

The Right to Mobility

People with specialized transportation needs have a right to mobility³. Individuals with limited incomes and people with disabilities rely heavily, sometimes exclusively, on public and specialized transportation services to live independent and fulfilling lives. These services are essential for travel to work and medical appointments, to run essential errands, or simply to take advantage of social or cultural opportunities.

The costs of providing human service transportation are indeed rising. However, cost containment should not be achieved at the expense of service delivery. Fortunately, coordination of human service transportation offers the potential to improve service delivery by reducing duplication, making use of available capacity elsewhere in the system, and achieving economies of scale in providing these services.

Customer Service Focus

In providing public transportation, the transportation needs of the customer should always be kept at the forefront. The abilities of individual riders vary in different aspects of the transportation experience, from accessing program information to trip scheduling, to route navigation. Policies and procedures should be clear and flexible enough to allow for different abilities, and to provide support as needed. The goal of every transportation provider should be to facilitate a safe, courteous and timely trip every time.

Elimination of Service Gaps

While there are many providers serving a numerous and diverse clientele, significant gaps exist in human service transportation, which limits the mobility of the individuals who rely on it. Across the region, users of specialized transportation programs live and work in different areas and have different travel patterns. To the maximum extent feasible, gaps in human service transportation services should be eliminated to ensure individuals have a viable transportation option when they need it.

Maximize Efficiency of Service Delivery

Accessible vehicles are expensive to acquire and maintain. Maximizing the efficiency of human service transportation vehicles helps to reduce program costs by generating additional user revenue while also helping to eliminate gaps in service, without the need for additional capital purchases. Transportation providers should collaborate to provide services where extra capacity exists. The TPB Coordinated Plan will help to identify opportunities for collaboration, as well as providing the space for resolving any issues related to cross-jurisdictional service delivery.

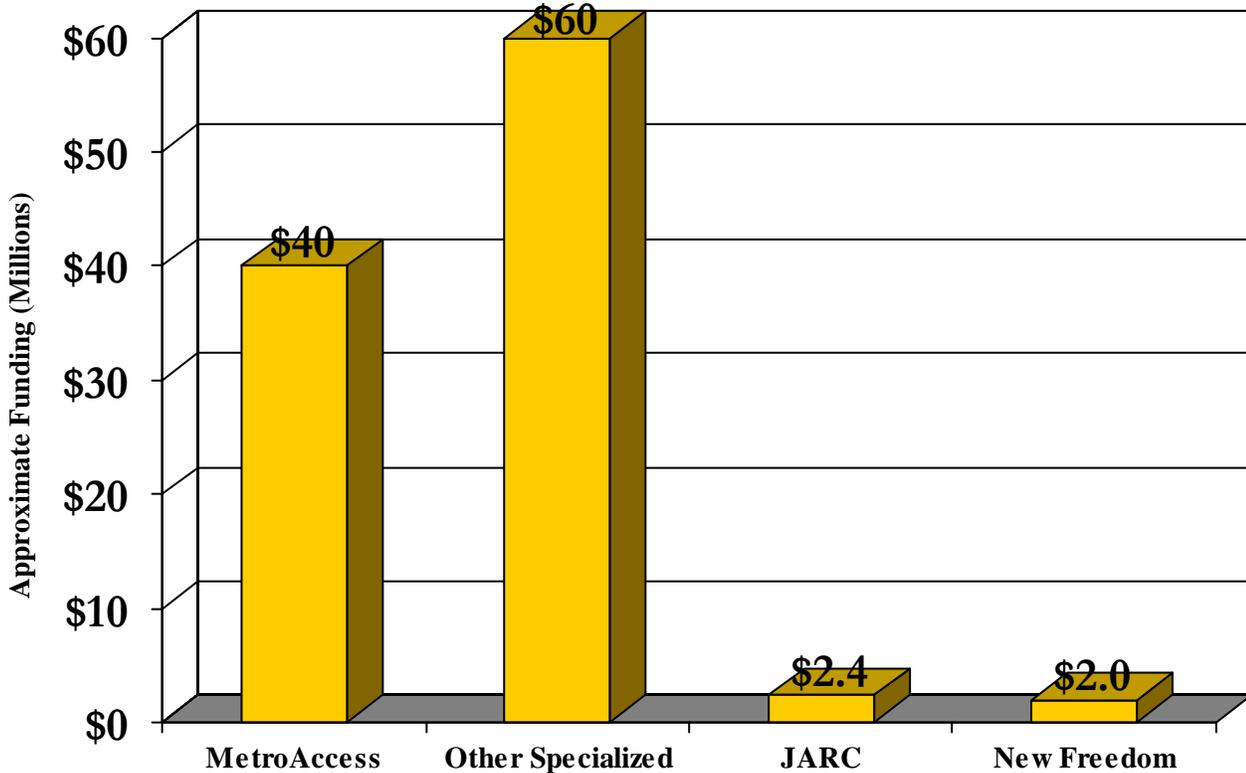
³ Right to mobility is defined as getting from the door of where you are through the door of where you need to go.

Plan Approach

In contrast to previous years, when the region received approximately \$5 million a year in JARC funding, the funding currently available under JARC and New Freedom is very limited. Table 3 shows a comparison of JARC and New Freedom money compared to other specialized transportation services in the region.

In light of the comparatively small amounts of money available, the plan encourages innovative pilot projects that creatively address unmet needs. The intention is that the pilot projects will offer important lessons learned, and for those that are shown to be effective, the plan will encourage the replication of these projects in additional jurisdictions and for the benefit of more clients. The plan “incentivizes” the coordination of funding, vehicles, information and other resources, and seeks projects that offer lessons learned about addressing potential obstacles and about replicating the project throughout the region.

Table 3 – Funding in Perspective



Based on FY2003 figures. JARC and New Freedom totals shown include funding with the required 50/50 match for an operating program.

The real value here is less in the money chase and new projects...instead the real benefit is making the best use out of existing resources and programs.

– David Snyder, TPB member from Falls Church, VA

Timeline for the Plan and the Competitive Selection Process

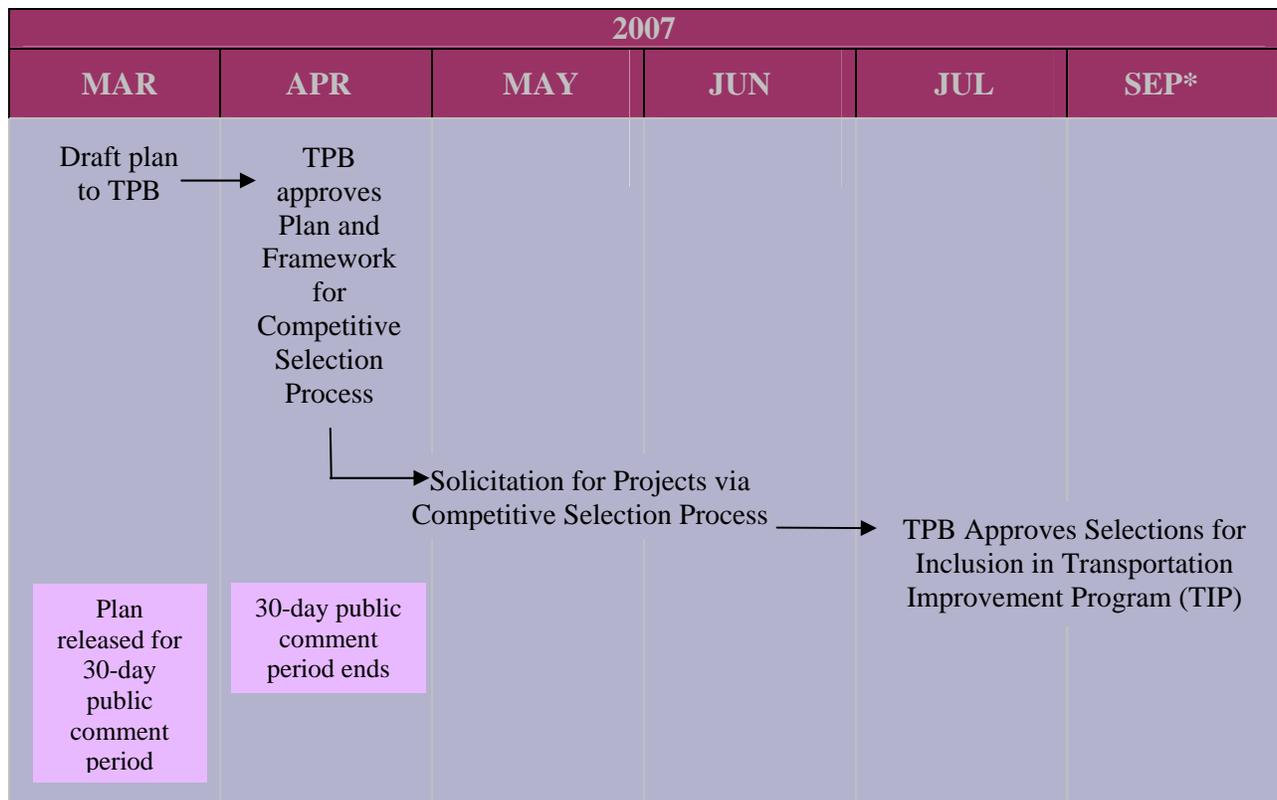
Federal legislation requires that a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan be in place by July, 2007.⁴ The TPB began work on how to address the requirement for more coordination in early 2006, with the completion of the MetroAccess study “Improving Demand Services for People with Disabilities”. Building on coordination issues and opportunities identified in that study, the TPB hosted a series of ad-hoc meetings to determine how the region can best meet new requirements. This ad-hoc group included the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia Departments of Transportation, public and private transportation providers (including the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), human service agencies, and representatives from low-income populations, persons with disabilities and older adults from

⁴ The FTA requires a Coordinated Plan for FY07 programs. The metropolitan planning organization proposed rules require that all long-range plans adopted after July 2007 be SAFETEA-LU compliant.

around the region. The ad-hoc group recommended that the TPB take the lead in developing the Coordinated Plan and be the designated recipient for the JARC and New Freedom Programs for the Washington DC-MD-VA Urbanized Area. The TPB endorsed this recommendation in July 2006 and the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the Governor of Maryland and the Governor of Virginia designated the TPB the recipient of JARC and New Freedom for the Urbanized Area in August 2006.

The Task Force has been meeting monthly since October, 2006 to develop the plan, and expects to present a draft plan to the TPB at its March 21, 2007 meeting. If the TPB approves the plan and the framework for the competitive selection process at its April 18 meeting, the solicitation for projects would go out at the end of April and project proposals would be due in June. In July or September, the TPB would then approve the selected projects for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program. Figure 1 depicts a graphic of the timeline.

Figure 2 – Timeline for March to September 2007



*The TPB does not meet in August.

Public Input

In developing the Coordinated Plan, public input was sought in a number of ways. The Task Force membership was constructed to ensure representation from various stakeholders, as described earlier. The Plan is based on previous TPB studies and reports from the Access for All Advisory Committee, which is made up of community leaders from minority populations, low-income populations and persons with disabilities. In addition, TPB staff presented the elements of the plan to and gathered feedback from various COG/TPB committees and interested groups, including:

- COG Human Services Policy Committee (April and October 2006, February 16, 2007)
- TPB Access for All Committee (May 25, September 28, 2006 and January 25, 2007)
- TPB Citizens Advisory Committee (January 11, 2007)
- Washington Regional Aging Network (November 2, 2006 and February 1, 2007)

The Plan was released for a 30-day public comment period (March – April, 2007) before being formally adopted by the TPB. (A summary of the comments received will be provided here). The entire list of comments received is found in Appendix 2.

In addition, TPB staff conducted two focus groups – one focus group on JARC service and issues and one on New Freedom service and issues. The focus groups featured 8-15 consumer representatives identified with the assistance of Task Force members. Participants were asked to provide their feedback on the strategies and actions identified by the Task Force, and on the following discussion topics:

- What do you think of the approach for the Coordinated Plan?
- Which of the actions do you think will have the biggest impact on meeting the unmet needs? How about the biggest obstacles?
- Are there additional ideas that would significantly reduce service gaps that should be included?

Feedback from the focus groups will be incorporated into the plan. (A summary of the findings will be provided here.) A list of focus group participants is included in Appendix 3.

SECTION 3: ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

Regional Demographic Profile

As a context to the transportation needs this Coordinated Plan attempts to address, regional statistics of the various population groups are provided here. Appendix 4 provides more information and maps of these population groups.

Table 4 shows statistics for transportation-disadvantaged population groups living in the Washington region. Despite the region's overall affluence, over 328,000 residents lived below the poverty level in 2000, and an additional 447,000 residents were classified as low-income, which is defined as twice the official poverty line. In the same year, 629,500 persons had a physical, sensory, and/or cognitive disability (14% of the population). In 2000, over 400,000 people in region were 65 years and older, 9% of the total population. Individuals with limited English proficiency make up 5 percent of the population; 58 percent of these individuals are members of the Hispanic/Latino community. Although not shown in the table, it is interesting to note that over 40 percent of the region's population is non-white, a figure which includes many recent immigrants to the region⁵.

Table 4: Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations in the Washington Region

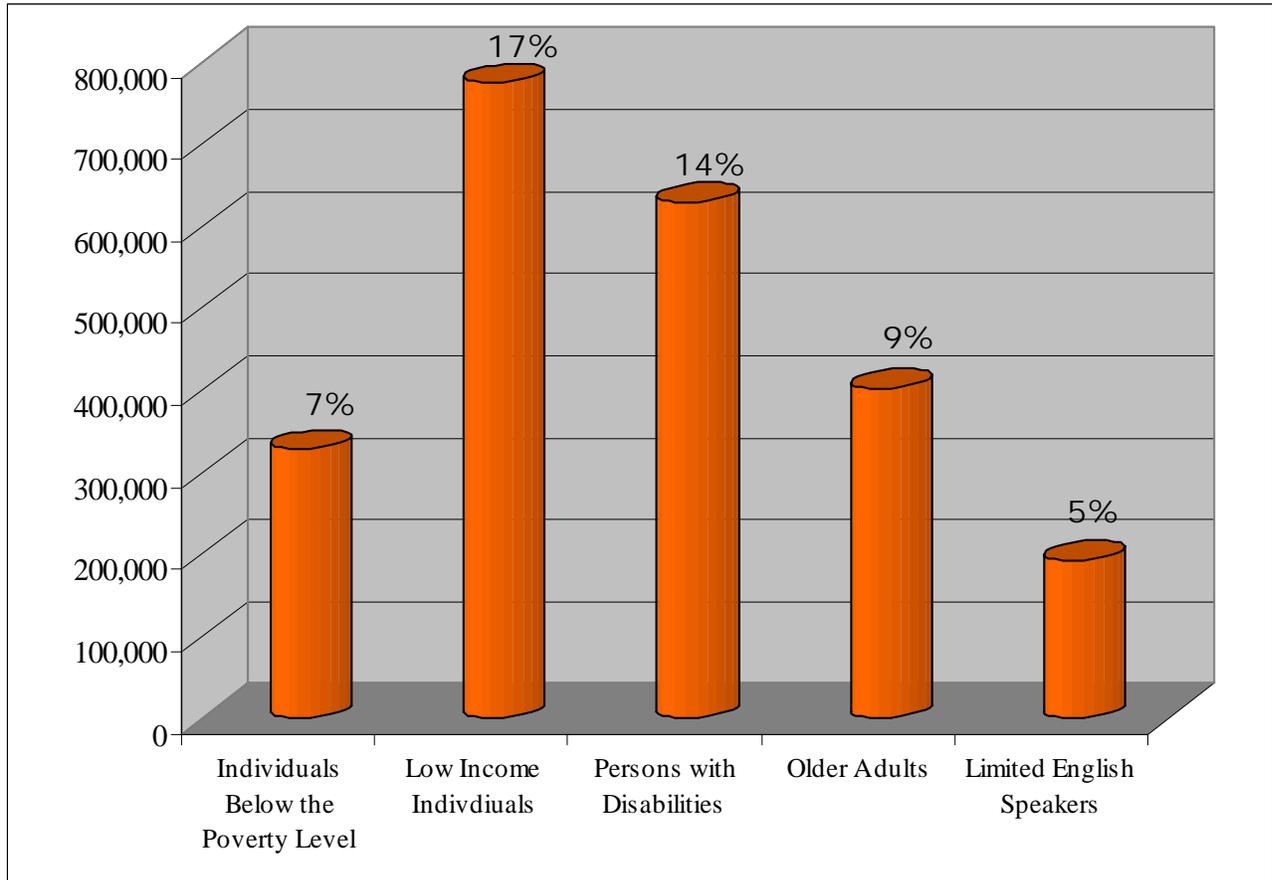
<i>Population Group</i>	<i>Washington Region</i>	<i>Percent of Region</i>
Below the Poverty Level (1)	328,300	7%
Low Income (2)	775,300	17%
Persons with Disabilities (4)	629,500	14%
Older Adults (65 and older)	403,000	9%
Limited English Speakers (3)	193,600	5%
Total Population	4,544,900	100%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census; numbers are for the Washington DC-MD-VA MSA

⁵ Our Changing Region. Census 2000. Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Volume 1, Number 1. Figures provided are for the TPB Planning Area.

- (1) Official poverty level depends on family size. For a family of four, the poverty level is an annual income of \$17,000.
- (2) “Low income” is defined as twice the poverty level. For example, for a family of four an annual income of \$34,000 is considered low income.
- (3) Limited English Proficiency includes individuals who speak English “not well” or “not at all.”
- (4) Include individuals with physical, sensory and/or cognitive disabilities.

Figure 3: Regional Demographic Profile of Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations in the Washington Region



Source: 2000 U.S. Census; numbers are for the Washington DC-MD-VA MSA

Unmet Transportation Needs

The first meeting of the Task Force focused on identifying the most significant unmet transportation needs or service gaps faced by transportation-disadvantaged individuals. These unmet needs are substantiated by the previous TPB reports and studies described earlier. The needs were grouped into four categories, described below, and examples of service issues are provided. The unmet needs guided the development of strategies and potential projects that could be submitted for funding under the JARC or New Freedom programs.

Figure 4: The Four Categories of Significant Unmet Transportation Needs

<p style="text-align: center;">Need For a Customer Focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transportation services are not tailored to responding to individual needs ▪ A greater awareness is needed about how various types of disabilities – cognitive, physical and visual – impact people’s ability to travel, especially by transit providers. ▪ Need for improved pedestrian access, including sidewalks, safety and signage, at bus stops and rail stations ▪ Need for additional driver training
<p style="text-align: center;">Lack of Reliability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reliability of paratransit services is a major concern ▪ Bus and rail transit is not always accessible ▪ Need for back-up service
<p style="text-align: center;">Need for Better Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information on existing specialized services and user-friendly fixed-route information is lacking (this includes but is not limited to non-native English speakers)
<p style="text-align: center;">Lack of Additional Funding and Transportation Choices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need for expanded evening, weekend service, door-to-door and door-through-door service ▪ Need for same-day service, especially for urgent appointments ▪ Infrequent transit service for non-traditional work hours ▪ Getting workers to employment locations not well-served by specialized transit ▪ Limited eligibility for specialized transit, such as people who experience temporary disabilities⁶ ▪ Affordability for users is a concern ▪ Lack of funding for transportation

⁶ MetroAccess has a 21-day eligibility assessment window. By law, after the 21-day window has passed MetroAccess must offer provisional eligibility service to people waiting for a final determination to be made.

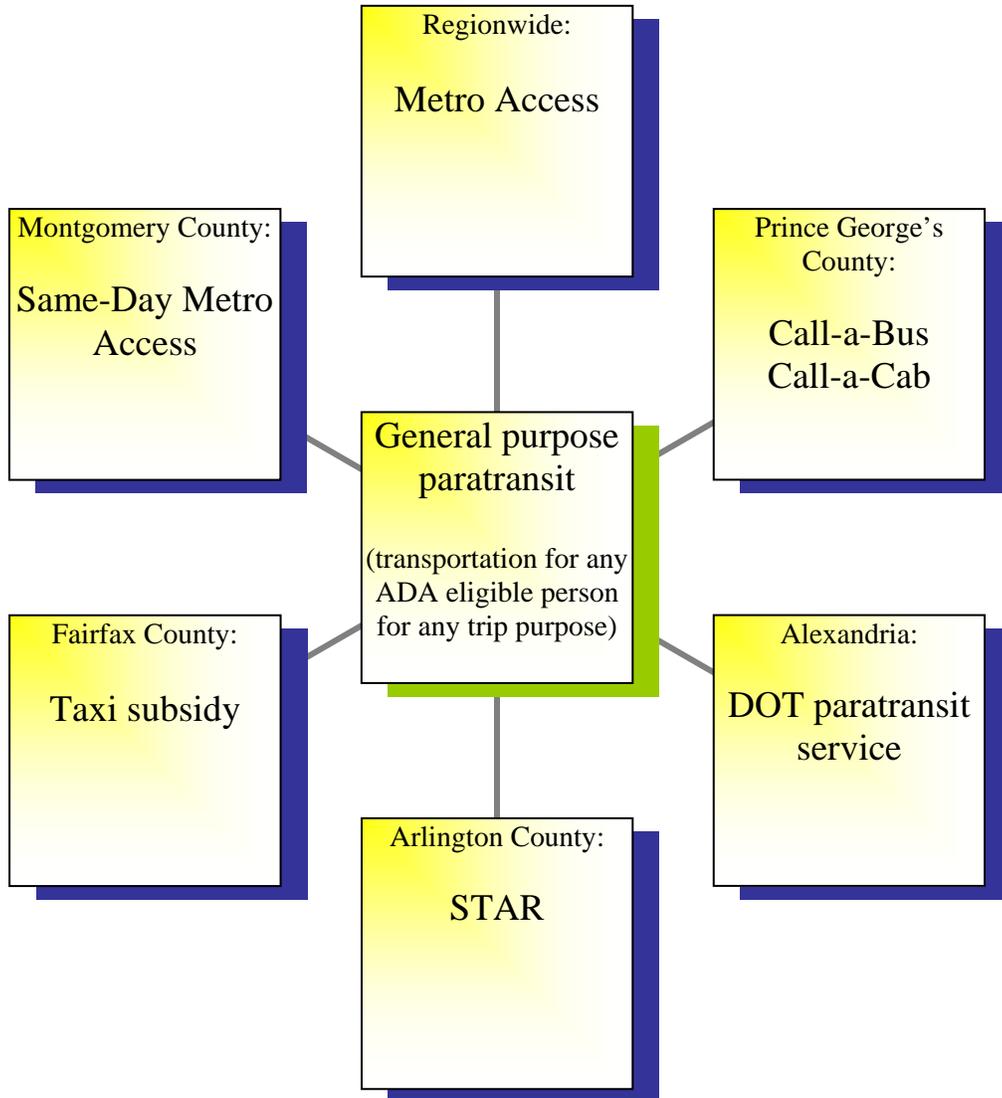
SECTION 4: SUMMARY OF EXISTING SERVICES

Again building on prior reports, the Task Force identified major providers of transportation services across all jurisdictions in the region for persons with disabilities, those with limited incomes and older adults. A complete inventory is listed in Appendix 5. Services include all purpose specialized transportation services, Medicaid transportation, limited scope specialized services and fixed-route transit services.

Figure 5 represents the general purpose specialized transportation services in the region. General purpose paratransit is transportation provided for any ADA-eligible person for any trip purpose – medical, shopping or otherwise. Throughout the region, WMATA operates MetroAccess, its shared-ride service. Montgomery County operates Same-Day MetroAccess service, and in Prince George’s County, residents can choose from among the county-wide Call-a-Bus and Call-a-Cab programs and similar services at the local level. Arlington County provides Specialized Transit for Arlington Residents (STAR) and Alexandria’s program is called DOT Paratransit. Fairfax County offers taxi subsidies to ADA-eligible individuals. Lastly, the District of Columbia has no general purpose paratransit service.

Complementing the general purpose specialized transportation services is a network of private and nonprofit providers that provide additional transportation options. These providers include taxi companies, human service agencies, nonprofit organizations and educational and healthcare institutions.

Figure 5 – Specialized Transportation Services



***The District of Columbia has no general purpose paratransit service**

Complementing the general purpose paratransit services are other services more limited in scope or purpose. Of these, the biggest one in terms of budget is Medicaid transportation, which is provided in all three states to all Medicaid eligible individuals for medical trips. Table 5 shows how Medicaid transportation programs vary across jurisdictions:

Table 5 - Medicaid Transportation Programs

Jurisdiction	Managed Care Enrollment	Transportation Expenditures per Capita	Brokerage Model	Transportation as “Medical” Expense	Non-Medical Trips
District of Columbia	45%	\$114		√	√
Maryland	67%	\$27	√		
Virginia	60%	\$72	√	√	

Table 6 – Limited Scope Specialized Transportation Services

Jurisdiction	Program	Purpose
District of Columbia	DC Office of Aging	District residents 60+ for limited trip purposes
Fairfax County	FASTRAN	Human service agency clients and low-income residents, for limited trip purposes
Montgomery County	Call ‘n Ride Taxi Program	Low-income seniors and people with disabilities

Fixed-route systems throughout the region offer additional options for accessible transportation. These include: WMATA’s Metrobus and Metrorail; Arlington ART; Fairfax County Connector; Alexandria DASH; Prince George’s County The Bus; Montgomery County RideOn; Fairfax City CUE; and Prince William County Omni Ride.

SECTION 5: STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED SERVICE AND COORDINATION

“Our insurance company and attorneys have cautioned us that when we go from serving and supporting people with disabilities ... to transporting people not directly associated with [us], we are now in the ‘transportation business’. This opens a whole new can of worms with liability, licensing, certifications, etc.

For example, we began transporting one person who lived in a [group] home and needed to go to an Adult Day Care.... The ‘agreement’ was held up with lawyers for several weeks. In the meantime, the gentleman fell at his group home and his parents began a lawsuit.... When this happened and we still did not have a signed agreement, I discontinued his transport.

Lessons learned... we have not tried coordinating since.”

-- Joyce Taylor,
The Arc of Montgomery County
and TPB Task Force member

Barriers to Coordination

Coordination in public transportation service delivery is a desirable, if not always easy, thing to achieve. Several barriers exist that make sharing resources or combining services difficult, if not impossible. As the story in the text box illustrates, well-meaning efforts at coordination can have unexpected and counterproductive consequences.

Common barriers to coordination include lack of resources, different training requirements or vehicle specifications, and funding requirements. Some, like the sharing of information across jurisdictions, are more easily addressed through the structure of regular meetings among agencies and providers.

Other barriers present greater challenges. Issues like insurance and liability are more complex challenges that require ongoing efforts and dialogue with numerous agencies, providers, nonprofits and insurers. As a Phase II of this Coordinated Plan, the Task Force will continue to convene and facilitate these discussions, inviting the appropriate and necessary organizations to the table to design workable solutions and alternatives.

Over the past 30 years, federal, state and local governments have implemented various programs aimed at improving coordination of publicly funded transportation services for transportation disadvantaged populations, including people with disabilities, Medicaid recipients, and other human service agency clients. Unfortunately, many of the barriers to coordination stem from the administrative and eligibility requirements imposed by the Federal and State governments. The 2003 GAO report “Transportation Disadvantaged Populations”⁷ found that “obstacles impeding coordination include concern among administrators that their own participants might be negatively affected, program rules that limit use by others, and limited guidance and information on coordination.... to mitigate these obstacles, officials and experts suggested making federal standards more consistent...providing financial incentives or instituting mandates to coordinate”.

⁷ United States General Accounting Office (GAO) Report “Transportation Disadvantaged Populations: Some Coordination Efforts Among Providing Transportation Services, but Obstacles Persist”. GAO-03-697. June 2003.

In fact, areas that have had the most success in coordination occur when the state has mandated coordination and provided institutional support to make the coordination happen. Given that this area includes two states and the District of Columbia, each with its own set of transportation programs and accompanying rules, coordination between the three separate states is challenging.

A 2003 University of Minnesota report prepared for the Federal Transit Administration⁸ found that the term “coordination” is used to refer to a multitude of different activities. In many instances coordination efforts appear to simply cut services or shift costs, rather than result in true efficiency improvements. A 2003 report by the Transit Cooperative Research Program defines coordination as “a political process that requires shared power—including shared responsibility, management, and funding—and notes that achieving desired results through coordination may require significant time and energy”.⁹

Strategies for Improved Service and Coordination

The Task Force developed a set of strategies and related actions that will help to address the unmet needs and fill the gaps in human service transportation. The recommended priority actions are described in the following section. Project proposals will need to address at least one of the four strategies. In developing strategies and actions to address unmet needs, some projects will have a greater overall impact on unmet needs than others and are thus a greater priority for funding.

The four strategies are:

- Tailor transportation services to better respond to the individual needs of low-income workers, people with disabilities and older adults. This strategy emphasizes increased awareness about how various types of disability – cognitive, physical and visual – impact people’s ability to travel, especially among transit providers.
- Provide improved, user-friendly information to customers and social service and non-profit agencies about the types of transportation programs available to low-income workers, people with disabilities and older adults.
- Develop services that increase the reliability and augment existing paratransit and fixed-route service, ensuring a back-up system for people who rely heavily on transportation. The strategy emphasizes the need to offer alternate services available for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income workers who may experience lack of reliability with their everyday transportation service.

⁸ Barnes, Gary, *Improving Transportation Services for Disadvantaged Populations*, FTA-MN-26-7004 (Springfield, VA: 2003).

⁹ Transit Cooperative Research Program, *Economic Benefits of Coordinating Human Service Transportation and Transit Services*, TCRP Report 9, page 2.

- Develop and implement new programs to provide additional transportation choices for persons with disabilities, individuals with limited incomes and older adults. Additional funding should also be identified and secured to support these programs.

SECTION 6: RECOMMENDED PRIORITY ACTIONS

The following projects respond to the unmet transportation needs identified in this Plan and are the recommended priority actions. These projects can be augmented or changed depending on the proposing agency's budget or other programmatic constraints. These projects are not a comprehensive list, and other projects that respond to the strategies identified by the Task Force could be submitted for funding consideration.

Accessible Taxi Service Subsidy Pilot

What it is: A pilot program to provide the minimum financial subsidies and incentives necessary to encourage taxi companies to provide and maintain a sufficient supply of wheelchair-accessible service in jurisdictions that don't currently have accessible taxis (such as DC and Prince George's County). Incentives to companies include subsidies to offset the cost of vehicle purchase, maintenance and insurance. To be effective, incentives must be aimed at both companies and drivers to ensure that accessible vehicles are not only purchased, but also put to use and available to customers with disabilities.

To have an impact, the program would need to include financial incentives for drivers, such as a stipend for attending sensitivity training to account for lost fares, and financial incentives to drive an accessible taxi. Drivers of accessible cabs could also be matched with schools, senior centers, or other organizations that might want to reserve regular taxi trips.

Good example: The City of Chicago made \$1 million available to cab companies to defray the incremental cost of an accessible ramp-equipped van versus a new Ford Crown Victoria. In Virginia, Red Top Cab buys accessible cabs and leases them to their drivers at the same rate as standard cabs.



Type of Project:
Capital

Funding Program:
5310 or New Freedom

Approximate Cost:
\$200,000 - \$500,000 total

Local Match:
\$40,000 - \$100,000

Sources of Match:
Local jurisdictions

A new wheelchair-accessible cab, the Standard Taxi, will be available in 2007 or 2008 at a lower-cost than accessible vans. The prototype vehicle is popular with both drivers and consumers.

www.standardtaxi.com

Sensitivity Training for Transportation Providers

What it is: Regional sensitivity trainings could be offered to bus drivers, Metro station managers, paratransit drivers, taxicab drivers, and other front-line transportation employees on general guidelines for serving customers with disabilities and older adults. Trainings would be targeted to those who don't currently receive it.

Specific guidelines for serving customers who use wheelchairs or service animals would be addressed, as would guidelines for customers with visual or auditory disabilities. The training could include a role playing component in which operators use wheelchairs to board and disembark vehicles. A portion of the money should be set aside to pay stipends to drivers to make up for fares lost while attending training.

Door-Through-Door Service

What it is: A local jurisdiction could conduct a demonstration project of door-through-door service to people who qualify for MetroAccess. Service could be provided by personal care attendants to travel with eligible individuals. The program would be limited either through eligibility or through a cap on the number of trips.

Type of Project:

Operating

Funding Program:

New Freedom

Approximate Cost:

\$10,000 - \$100,000 total

Local Match:

\$5,000 - \$50,000

Sources of Match:

Transportation providers could split the cost of the match based on the amount of training they would like.

Type of Project:

Operating

Funding Program:

New Freedom

Approximate Cost:

\$200,000 - \$500,000 total

Local Match:

\$100,000 - \$250,000

Sources of Match:

Human service agencies, Adult Day Care centers, other non-profits

Brochure for Low-Income Workers

What it is: The publication would be tailored to a specific geographic area with a high concentration of low-income commuters (e.g., Langley Park, Route 1 in Virginia, Anacostia).

Information would include fixed-route service, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, car sharing, commercial transportation services, specialized transportation services, commuter services subsidy and incentive programs, and maps. Distribution could include Metro stations, local community newspapers, neighborhood chambers of commerce, transportation management associations, and employer groups.

Type of Project:
Operating

Funding Program:
JARC

Approximate Cost:
\$100,000 - \$300,000

Local Match:
\$50,000 – \$150,000

Sources of Match:
Local transit agencies
Local employment-related agencies
Federal programs aimed at providing job training

 **MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND** 

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR SENIORS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND NON-PROFIT TRANSPORTATION
DECEMBER 27TH, 2006

Isiah Leggett, County Executive

SEE BACK FOR INFORMATION ON REQUESTING ALTERNATIVE FORMATS SUCH AS BRAILLE AND LARGE PRINT.

Type of Project:
Operating

Funding Program:
JARC

Approximate Cost:
\$100,000 - \$300,000

Local Match:
\$50,000 – \$150,000

Sources of Match:
Federal TANF, County
Social service programs,
Department of Labor,
Department of Education

Expanded Guaranteed Ride Home Program for Low-Income Workers

What it is: The program would extend the Commuter Connections' Guaranteed Ride Home to offer rides up to eight times per year for workers with certain income limitations who are facing an urgent circumstance, or for up to five days of job training. The program would be limited through an income ceiling or receipt of TANF funds. Workers wishing to use the program for job training must provide employer documentation of the training.

The program could be marketed to workforce development and job training agencies, local human service agencies, and technical schools.

Establish a Same-Day Service Pilot

What it is: A local jurisdiction could sponsor a same-day service pilot for paratransit users. The program could expand on a county taxi voucher program, or a new pilot could be established. The program would need to be limited to meet the available budget.

Participants would pay a sliding scale fare between \$2.50 – 10.00. The pilot could be coupled with an accessible taxi pilot program or done in a jurisdiction that has accessible taxis. The pilot could operate for a set period of time or until a certain financial threshold is reached. The pilot project would need to establish sound parameters for determining who would be eligible for the pilot service.

The program would provide an opportunity to review any policy issues or obstacles that arise (including the reasonable limits, to both provider and user, of the sliding scale fee), and test solutions for resolving them.

Type of Project:
Operating

Funding Program:
New Freedom

Approximate Cost:
\$500,000 - \$1,000,000 total

Local Match:
\$250,000 - \$500,000

Sources of Match:
County transportation programs,
Medicaid, WMATA

Accessible Infrastructure Support for Transit Stations

What it is: Adequate walking infrastructure can have a profound effect on individual mobility, especially for those with disabilities, limited incomes or older adults. A funding pool would be established to provide accessible infrastructure support around commuter and transit stations – such as Metrorail, commuter rail and bus stops.

The project would involve improvements to sidewalks, crosswalks, signals, and other infrastructure that enable individuals using various mobility devices to access transit stations independently. Other improvements could include lighting and safety improvements. Station areas with a high percentage of people with mobility impairments would be given priority. The project could involve private sector partners using advertising revenue as the local match.

Good example: Clear Channel partnership in DC and Montgomery County. Clear Channel pays for advertising space in bus shelters and that revenue is then used for bus stop improvements.

Type of Project:
Capital

Funding Program:
New Freedom

Approximate Cost:
\$50,000 - \$200,000 total

Local Match:
\$25,000 - \$100,000

Sources of Match:
Local jurisdictions, private
sector

Loan Program for Low-income Workers to Purchase Cars

Type of Project:
Operating

Funding Program:
JARC

Approximate Cost:
\$250,000 - \$500,000 total

Local Match:
\$125,000 - \$250,000

Sources of Match:
TANF funds, private funds

What it is: A loan fund would be established to enable workers with certain income limitations to purchase cars. The program would focus on suburban and outer suburban commuters whose jobs or homes are inaccessible by transit. Special consideration would be given to new entrants to the workforce who also transport children to daycare.

Loans would be repaid to the fund, keeping it self-sustaining and replenishing it for additional use. The program would set aside a percentage of funds to cover skills training related to budgeting and car maintenance expenses, obtaining a driver's license, and other issues related to car ownership.

Good Example: Vehicles for Change, which has awarded more than 1,600 cars since 1999. VfC has awarded cars in Carroll, Prince George's, Anne Arundel, and Montgomery Counties, Baltimore City, the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia and Richmond.¹⁰ Fairfax County also has a program that could be emulated.

Shuttle Service or Van Pools to Employment Sites

What it is: Employer-based funding pools could be developed to provide shuttle service or van pools to better serve shift workers and reverse commuters. The program could focus on large suburban employment centers such as the Dulles corridor, Potomac Mills or the I-270 corridor, and could extend evening and weekend bus service from existing providers. The program could also provide carpool matching services.

Type of Project:
Operating

Funding Program:
5310 or JARC

Approximate Cost:
\$100,000 - \$500,000 total

Local Match:
\$50,000 - \$250,000

Sources of Match:
Private funds

¹⁰ Vehicles for Change: www.vehiclesforchange.org.

Provide a range of travel training to older adults and persons with disabilities.

What it is: A travel training curriculum on the bus and rail system could be developed for all types of disabilities and offered region-wide. The curriculum would be coordinated with WMATA, local transit agencies and human service agencies to expand training services to ensure that they are widely available to all who need them, and to ensure that people with all different types of disabilities can obtain training sufficiently suited to their needs so that they can safely use the bus and rail system.

Good examples: Fairfax County teaches seniors how to use Metro; Montgomery County has limited instruction for Ride-On, and the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission has a pilot program to measure the effectiveness of training and is reaching out to 60 seniors throughout Northern Virginia.

Type of Project:
Operating

Funding Program:
New Freedom

Approximate Cost:
\$20,000 - \$200,000 total

Local Match:
\$10,000 - \$100,000

Sources of Match:
WMATA, local transit agencies, human service agencies

SECTION 7: COMPETITIVE SELECTION PROCESS AND SOLICITATION

Framework for Competitive Selection Process

Projects funded under the current JARC and New Freedom programs must be selected competitively. The Task Force has developed criteria to guide the selection of projects. The criteria:

- Prioritize projects that address unmet needs,
- Reflect the importance of coordination, innovation and replicability,
- Encourage the involvement of private sector partners, and
- Standardize the selection process among committee members.

The selection criteria are listed in Appendix 6. The criteria award a maximum of 125 points. The weighting of some categories higher than others reflects Task Force priorities for projects.

Solicitation for Projects

The solicitation is scheduled for April or May. Proposals would need to respond to one or more of the four strategies, and would be rated according to the selection criteria listed in Appendix 6. Special emphasis will be given to priorities listed in the plan.

Geographic Boundary Issues

As described earlier, this Coordinated Plan covers the TPB planning area, while the funding available through JARC and New Freedom must be used for service within the Washington, DC-MD-VA Urbanized Area. (Refer to map on p.3 for description of Urbanized Area and TPB planning area.) Funding under JARC and New Freedom for other Urbanized Areas¹¹ is available through the state departments of transportation.

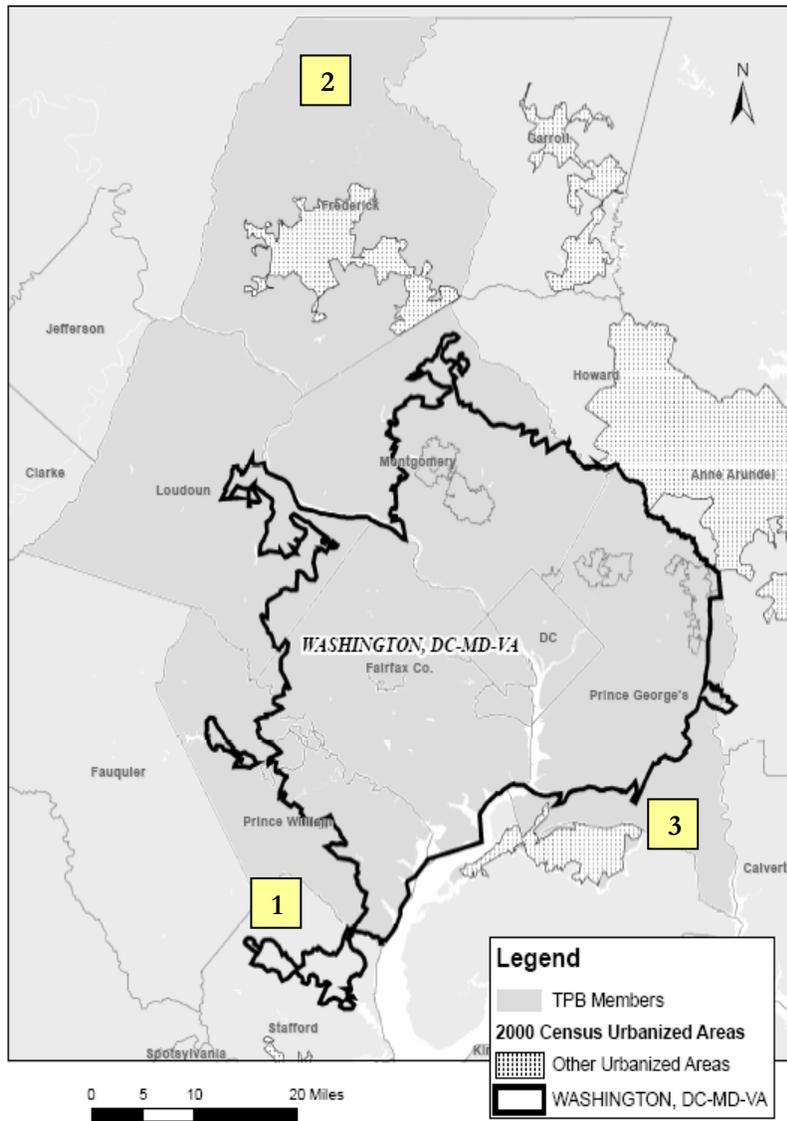
What this means is that any agency or transportation provider wishing to submit a funding request to the TPB can do so only for a service that operates in the Washington, DC-MD-VA Urbanized Area. Services that are intended to operate outside of this Urbanized Area should be submitted to the states for funding from the Other Urbanized and rural are funding. Table 7 provides examples of projects and where they would apply for funding:

¹¹ FTA has established separate JARC and New Freedom programs for Urbanized Areas of less than 200,000 persons. These programs are administered by the Maryland Transit Administration and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation for their respective states. The District of Columbia is contained entirely within the Washington, DC-MD-VA Urbanized Area.

(See http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_JARC_Fact_Sheet_Sept05.pdf for JARC and http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_New_Freedom_Fact_Sheet_Sept05.pdf for New Freedom).

Table 7 – Sample Project Submissions

	Jurisdiction	Proposal	Apply To
1	Stafford County	Proposal to run shuttle from northern Stafford County into the Urbanized Area of Stafford	TPB
2	Frederick County	Proposal to provide shuttle service from Northern Frederick County into the City of Frederick	Maryland Transit Administration
3	Charles County	Proposal to provide shuttle service into the Urbanized Area of Prince George’s County	TPB



SECTION 8: CONCLUSION

Coordination is a complex and ongoing process, and Phase I of this Coordinated Plan has established the framework for greater coordination and collaboration efforts in subsequent years. The TPB will continue its role as convener, and the Task Force will continue to meet to build upon this framework and facilitate sustained coordination in the region.

Phase II will commence with the evaluation of this inaugural effort – the Plan, the projects, the competitive selection criteria and the project timeframe. Phase II efforts will consider how well strategies in the Coordinated Plan address the unmet needs and how well, or if, the projects funded had a positive impact on improving service delivery. Input from consumers and agency representatives will be sought to help evaluate the first year of the Coordinated Plan. The evaluation will consider:

- How well did the projects funded under the program address the unmet needs identified in the Coordinated Plan?
- To what extent did the Coordinated Plan and the projects funded under the three FTA programs contribute to greater coordination in human service transportation?
- Was there an increase in the number of communities with easier access to transportation services for people with disabilities, individuals with lower incomes, and older adults?
- Was there a noticeable increase in the quality of transportation services for people with disabilities, older adults, or individuals with lower incomes?
- Are the projects funded under the program and implemented being continued beyond the initial trial period or replicated elsewhere in the region? If not, what are the barriers to continuation or replication?
- What lessons were learned in the development of the Coordinated Plan that will be applied to future planning efforts?
- What lessons were learned in the implementation of projects funded under the program, and how will they be applied to future competitive selections or project implementations?

Phase II will also include greater outreach and education efforts. These efforts will be aimed at addressing some of the more structural impediments that represent barriers to significant coordination. Insurance issues are but one example. Additionally, the TPB can play a major role in helping to strengthen relationships between and among agencies and providers. By coming together to the table, agencies and providers alike will begin to identify issues they have in common and establish the trust necessary to break down those barriers.