



## Assessment of JARC/New Freedom Programs in the National Capital Region

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# Purpose of Presentation

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- Review key findings and resulting recommendations (Highlights from Chapters 6 and 7)
- Next Steps
- Comments from Task Force Members



# Examples of Program Challenges

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- FTA guidelines (i.e. eligible projects, match, procurement procedures, reporting requirements) present challenges
- It is difficult or impossible to sustain projects beyond the initial grant cycle unless projects are provided additional grant funds.
- Keeping track of clients, depending upon their relationship to the sponsor, can also be difficult.
- Flexibility in implementation is important, as more staff may be needed than anticipated, or conditions otherwise change.

# Examples of Program Benefits

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- Travel training provides benefits that accrue and grow over time.
- Every trip taken by public transit potentially reduces the cost of providing more expensive paratransit.
- Providing door-through-door escorted service for some customers, while labor intensive, can enable that person to remain in their home, avoiding more costly supportive services.
- Low-income persons who have received loans to purchase an automobile have increased their quality of life, and in their ability to seek and retain jobs in locations not served by public transit.
- District residents and visitors who use wheelchairs are able to use the same taxi cab service as other members of the public

# Principles Used to Develop Recommendations

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- **Responds to an initial finding** and build upon an existing program strength, or responds to a perceived shortcoming
- **Is feasible to implement**; meaning that it has support from the range of stakeholders responsible to plan for, fund and implement projects
- **Will improve program oversight, administration, and/or service delivery**
- **Benefits the customer** or end user of the service

# KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

# Key Findings and Recommendations in 4 categories:

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- **TPB Program Administration and Oversight**
- **Project Solicitation and Selection Process**
- **Project Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation**
- **Suggested Revisions to JARC and New Freedom Program Guidelines**

## Key Findings: TPB Program and Administrative Oversight

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- Compared to most of its peers, TPB takes a more proactive role in program administration.
- The region has allocated all of its JARC and New Freedom funds, which is not necessarily a common practice.
- Administration of the JARC and New Freedom grant process is straightforward, clear and effective.
- One relatively unique aspect of TPB's management of the JARC and New Freedom programs is that the agency functions as both the recipient of the funds (and program manager) and a project sponsor

## Recommendations: TPB Program and Administrative Oversight

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- *The TPB should build on identified program strengths, and continue to articulate best practices to local stakeholders and future potential project sponsors.*
- *Update Task Force membership to ensure there is a good balance between agencies representing low-income persons, and persons with disabilities.*

## Key Findings: Project Solicitation and Selection Process

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- The TPB attracts range of project sponsors and a broad spectrum of project types,
- Opportunities build on the pre-proposal conference to include more technical information and potentially peer-to-peer exchanges
- Selection process is straightforward and clearly defined in the project application process.
- About 1/2 of Priority Projects have been funded have been funded (approximately 80% of JARC and New Freedom funds)
- Compared to its peers, the TPB has not focused on providing expanded fixed route or paratransit services

## Recommendations: Project Solicitation and Selection Process

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- *Explore the possibility of actively recruiting agencies providing public transportation services to sponsor priority projects*
  - *Providing service underserved neighborhoods, serving key employment sites (JARC)*
  - *Same-day paratransit service ( New Freedom)*
- *Revise the project selection process to favor projects that would result in implementation of priority projects.*
- *Use existing (or create new) project templates to articulate the priority projects.*
- *Templates suggested:*
- *New Freedom:*
  - *Travel Training*
  - *Volunteer Driver Program*
- *JARC:*
  - *Vanpools and Ridesharing*
  - *Auto Loans*

## Recommendations: Project Solicitation and Selection Process

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- *Ensure Selection Committee members are rotated and that there is adequate representation by organizations that serve both low-income persons and persons with disabilities.*
  - *At the same time, allow for continuity and consistency of approach.*
- *Maintain predictable schedule with established steps; however, conduct project selection process every two years rather than on an annual basis.*

## Key Findings: Project Reporting and Monitoring

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- Projects are considered “pilot projects” or intended to test new service (learning curve is higher).
- Many projects are labor intensive
- Comparing one project to another is comparing “apples to oranges”
- Current FTA reporting mechanisms do not capture qualitative benefits
- Grant data on costs and trips provided is lacking or not consistently reported

## Key Findings: Project Reporting and Monitoring

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- Projects completed to date did not meet the original service goal stated in the applications; the majority of projects are still in progress so final outcomes are not known.
- About 1/3 of project sponsors have requested no-cost time extensions
- There are no consequences or opportunities for a “mid-course correction” for projects not meeting service goal
- Peer agencies also report on the difficulty in performance tracking and reporting.

# Recommendations: Project Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation

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- *Modify existing FTA-required performance reports so they better document actual program outcomes. Tailor them for the type of project, and include both qualitative and quantitative outcomes.*
- *Clearly document expectations for performance measuring in the project application and subsequent subgrant agreement.*
  - *For projects that do not meet original project objectives in the subgrant agreement and are not meeting their milestones, require a mitigation plan, and provide technical assistance to help the sponsor achieve the revised goals.*
- *Conduct ongoing evaluation activities either in-house (through the TPB) or by retaining outside consultant assistance. Use evaluation results to inform upcoming funding cycle(s).*

## Key Findings: JARC and New Freedom Program Guidelines

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- Project eligibility is a challenge: JARC cannot be used to purchase bus passes, and New Freedom funds must be used for “new” projects.
- Meeting match requirement is most frequently mentioned challenge (also by peers)
- Procurement requirements are considered cumbersome and time-consuming.

# Recommendations: JARC and New Freedom Program Guidelines

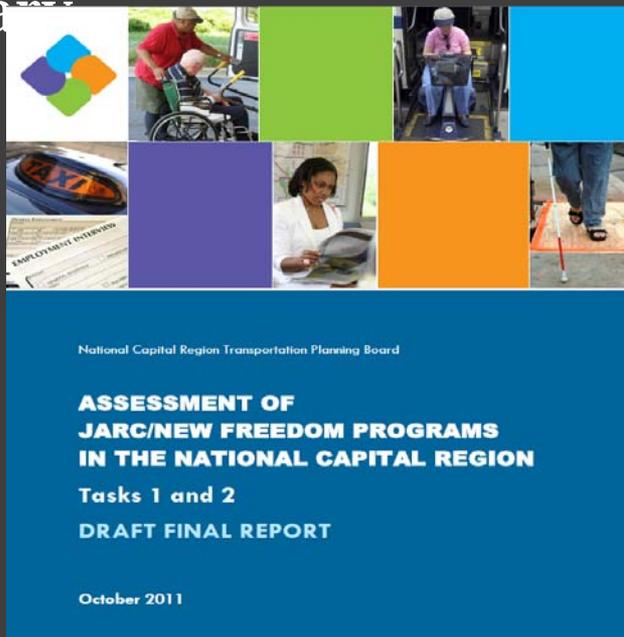
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- *Support a reduced match requirement for JARC and NF operating projects to be 20 % for all projects.*
- *Streamline and reduce administrative requirements designed for larger program structures (such as procuring transit capital) on focused programs.*
- *Expand the eligible activities for JARC funding. Eligible JARC activities are limited, and do not adequately address the transportation concerns of lower-income workers, particularly those with young children.*

# COMMENTS/NEXT STEPS

# Next Steps

- Receive comments from TPB and Task Force Members by November 18
- Presentation of Project Templates in December
- Final Report presented to TPB Technical Committee in January



# Questions for Task Force

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- What do you think are the most significant findings and/or recommendations?
- Are there additional program recommendations you would propose?
- Overall, are the recommendations feasible to implement?



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