

**Montachusett Coordinated Public Transit-Human
Services Transportation Plan**

Solicitation for Projects

**Montachusett Regional Planning Commission
Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization**

June 3, 2009

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Authorization Bill that was passed in August 2005 (SAFETEA-LU) requires that metropolitan planning regions created a locally Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for those regions that wish to utilize Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom funding. The Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) has developed such a plan to identify gaps and duplication in service. The MRPC is now seeking strategies and projects that are designed to fill the identified gaps.

The following application is provided to enable government entities, transportation service providers, and private non-profit agencies to apply for funding to implement projects that will address the gaps in human service transportation. These strategies will compete for funding and will be prioritized based upon criteria developed during the planning process.

The list below contains a summary of that needs that have been identified through the Coordinated Planning process. Any application for funding must identify which gap it is intended to serve. A project may serve more than one gap:

- Limited service hours in the evening
- Limited locations of service
- Limited or no access to employment in suburban locations
- Limited or no intermodal connections among various service providers
- Limited or no service to new shopping and/or recreational locations
- Limited ability for riders to obtain information about the full spectrum of services

While the identified gaps are broad, the available funding is for the JARC and New Freedom programs only.

JARC funding is available for projects that assist low income individuals in accessing jobs. *Job Access* grants are intended to provide new transit service to assist welfare recipients and other low-income individuals in getting to jobs, training, and child care. *Reverse Commute* grants are designed to develop transit services to transport workers to suburban job sites. Only new projects should be submitted in response to this solicitation. Eligible activities for the JARC program are listed on the following pages.

New Freedoms program funds are available for capital and operating expenses that support new public transportation services beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and new public transportation alternatives beyond those required by the ADA. Eligible activities for the New Freedom program are listed on the following pages.

For both JARC and New Freedom projects, grants for capital projects may not exceed 80 percent of the net capital costs of the project and grants for operating assistance may not exceed 50 percent of the net operating costs of the project.

Please note that any projects funded with JARC or New Freedom funds require certain Federal Transit Administration third party contracting mandates (including alcohol and drug testing.) If you are unfamiliar with these mandates, refer to the federal statutes.

This application is intended to provide MRPC staff with an overview of interest in projects that could be funded by JARC or New Freedom. If your project is selected for funding, we may require more information.

Should you have any further questions, contact Brad Harris or George Kahale at 978-345-7376, ext. 311 or 307, respectively, or via email at bharris@mrpc.org or gkahale@mrpc.org.

JARC Program: Eligible Activities

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES. Funds from the JARC program are available for capital, planning and operating expenses that support **the development and maintenance of transportation services designed to transport low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment and to support reverse commute projects.** In the conference report accompanying SAFETEA-LU, the conferees stated an expectation that FTA would “continue its practice of providing maximum flexibility to job access projects that are designed to meet the needs of individuals who are not effectively served by public transportation, consistent with the use of funds described in the *Federal Register*, Volume 67 (April 8, 2002)” (H.R. Report 190-203, at Section 3018 (July 28, 2005)). Therefore, eligible projects may include, but are not limited to capital, planning, and operating assistance to support activities such as:

- a. Late-night and weekend service;
- b. Guaranteed ride home service;
- c. Shuttle service;
- d. Expanding fixed-route public transit routes;
- e. Demand-responsive van service;
- f. Ridesharing and carpooling activities;
- g. Transit related aspects of bicycling (such as adding bicycle racks to vehicles to support individuals that bicycle a portion of their commute or providing bicycle storage at transit stations);
- h. Local car load programs that assist individuals in purchasing and maintaining vehicles for shared rides;
- i. Promotion, through marketing efforts, of the:
 - (1) Use of transit by workers with non-traditional work schedules;
 - (2) Use of transit voucher programs by appropriate agencies for welfare recipients and other low-income individuals;
 - (3) Development of employer-provided transportation such as shuttles, ridesharing, carpooling; or
 - (4) Use of transit pass programs and benefits under Section 132 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
- j. Supporting the administration and expenses related to voucher programs. This activity is intended to supplement existing transportation services by expanding the number of providers available or the number of passengers receiving transportation services. Vouchers can be used as an administrative mechanism for payment to providers of alternative transportation services. The JARC program can provide vouchers to low-income individuals to purchase rides, including (1) mileage reimbursement as part of a volunteer driver program, (2) a taxi trip, or (3) trips provided by a human service agency. Providers of transportation can then submit the voucher to the JARC project administering agency for payment based on pre-determined rates or contractual arrangements. Transit passed for use on fixed route or Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) complementary paratransit service are not eligible. Vouchers are an operational expense which requires a 50/50 (Federal/Local) match;
- k. Acquiring Geographic Information System (GIS) tools;
- l. Implementing Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), including customer trip information technology;
- m. Integrating automated regional public transit and human service transportation information, scheduling and dispatch functions;
- n. Deploying vehicle position-monitoring systems;
- o. Subsidizing the costs associated with adding reverse commute bus, train, carpool van routes or service from urbanized areas to suburban work places;
- p. Subsidizing the purchase or lease by a non-profit organization or public agency of a van or bus dedicated to shuttling employees from their residences to a suburban workplace;
- q. Otherwise facilitating the provision of public transportation services to suburban employment opportunities;
- r. Supporting new mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation. Mobility management is an eligible capital cost. Mobility management techniques may enhance transportation access for populations beyond those served by one agency or organization within a community. For example, a non-profit agency could receive JARC funding to support the administrative costs of sharing services it provides to its own clientele with other low-income individuals and coordinate

usage of vehicles with other non-profits, but not the operating costs of the service. Mobility management is intended to build coordination among existing public transportation providers and other transportation service providers with the result of expanding the availability of service.

Mobility management activities may include:

- (1) The promotion, enhancement, and facilitation of access to transportation services, including the integration and coordination of services for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and low-income individuals;
- (2) Support for short term management activities to plan and implement coordinated services;
- (3) The support of State and local coordination policy bodies and councils;
- (4) The operation of transportation brokerages to coordinate providers, funding agencies and customers;
- (5) The provision of coordination services, including employer-oriented Transportation Management Organizations' and Human Service Organizations' customer-oriented travel navigator systems and neighborhood travel coordination activities such as coordinating individualized travel training and trip planning activities for customers;
- (6) The development and operation of one-stop transportation traveler call centers to coordinate transportation information on all travel modes and to manage eligibility requirements and arrangements for customers among supporting programs; and
- (7) Operational planning for the acquisition of intelligent transportation technologies to help plan and operate coordinated systems inclusive of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping, Global Positioning System technology, coordinated vehicle scheduling, dispatching and monitoring technologies as well as technologies to track costs and billing in a coordinated system and single smart customer payment systems (acquisition of technology is also eligible as a stand alone capital expense.)

New Freedom Program: Eligible Activities

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES. New Freedom program funds are available for capital and operating expenses that support **new public transportation services beyond those required by the ADA and new public transportation alternatives beyond those required by the ADA** designed to assist individuals with disabilities with accessing transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services. For the purpose of the New Freedom program “new” service is any service or activity that was not operation before August 10, 2005 and did not have an identified funding source as of August 10, 2005, as evidenced by inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) or the State Transportation Improvement Pan (STIP). In other words, if not for the New Freedom program, these projects would not have consideration for funding and proposed service enhancements would not be available for individuals with disabilities.

Both new public transportation services and new public transportation alternatives are required to go beyond the requirements of the ADA and must (1) be targeted toward individuals with disabilities; and (2) meet the intent of the program by removing barriers to transportation and assisting persons with disabilities with transportation, including transportation to and from jobs and employment services.

Maintenance of Effort: Recipients or subrecipients may not terminate paratransit enhancements or other services funded as of August 10, 2005, in an effort to reintroduce the services as “new” and then receive New Freedom funds for those services.

- a. New Public Transportation Services Beyond the ADA. The following activities are examples of eligible projects meeting the definition of new public transportation.
 - (1) Enhancing public transportation services beyond minimum requirements of the ADA. Paratransit services can be eligible under New Freedom in several ways as long as the services provided meet the definition of “new”.
 - (a) Expansion of paratransit service parameters beyond the ¾ mile required by the ADA;
 - (b) Expansion of current hours of operation for paratransit services that are beyond those provided on the fixed route services;
 - (c) The provision of same day service;
 - (d) Enhancement of the level of service by providing escorts or assisting riders through the door of their destination;
 - (e) Acquisition of vehicles and equipment designed to accommodate mobility aids that exceed the dimensions and weight ratings established for common wheelchairs under the ADA and labor costs aides to help drivers assist passengers with over-sized wheelchairs. This would permit the acquisition of lifts with a larger capacity, instead of just modifications to lifts with a 600 lb design load, as well as the acquisition of heavier-duty vehicles for paratransit and/or demand-response service; and
 - (f) Installation of additional securement locations in public buses beyond what is required by the ADA.
 - (2) Feeder services. New “feeder” service (transit service that provides access) to commuter rail, commuter bus, intercity bus stations, for which complementary paratransit service is not required under the ADA.
 - (3) Making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations. Improvements for accessibility at existing transportation facilities that are not designated as key stations under 49 CFR 37.47,37.51 or 37.53 and that are not required under 49 CFR 37.43 as part of an alteration or renovation to an existing station, so long as

the projects are clearly intended to remove barriers that would otherwise have remained. New Freedom funds are eligible to be used for new accessibility enhancements that remove barriers to individuals with disabilities so they may access greater portions of public transportation systems, such as fixed-route bus service, commuter rail, light rail and rapid rail. This may include:

- (a) Building an accessible path to a bus stop that is currently inaccessible, including curbscuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals or other accessible features,
- (b) Adding an elevator or ramps, detectable warnings, or other accessibility improvements that are not otherwise required under the ADA to a non-key station,
- (c) Improving signage, or wayfinding technology, or
- (d) Implementation of other technology improvements that enhance accessibility for persons with disabilities.

(4) Travel training. New training programs for individual users on awareness, knowledge, and skills of public and alternative transportation options available in their communities. This includes travel instruction and travel training services.

b. New Public Transportation Alternatives Beyond the ADA. The following activities are examples of projects that are eligible as new public transportation alternatives beyond the ADA under the New Freedom program

(1) Purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, ride sharing, and/or vanpooling programs. New Freedom funds can be used to purchase and operate accessible vehicles for use in taxi, ridesharing and/or van pool programs provided that the vehicle has the capacity to accommodate a passenger who uses a “common wheelchair” as defined under 49 CFR 37.3, at a minimum, while remaining in his/hers personal mobility device inside the vehicle, and meeting the same requirements for lifts, ramps and securement systems specified in 49 CFR part 38, subpart B.

(2) Supporting the administration and expenses related to new voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers. This activity is intended to support and supplement existing transportation services by expanding the number of providers available or the number of passengers receiving transportation services. Only new voucher programs or expansion of existing programs are eligible under the New Freedom program. Vouchers can be used as an administrative mechanism for payment of alternative transportation services to supplement available public transportation. The New Freedom program can provide vouchers to individuals with disabilities to purchase rides, including: (a) mileage reimbursement as part of a volunteer driver program; (b) a taxi trip; or (c) trips provided by a human service agency. Providers of transportation can then submit the voucher for reimbursement to the recipient for payment based on pre-determined rates or contractual arrangements. Transit passes for use on existing fixed route or ADA complementary paratransit service are not eligible. Vouchers are an operational expense which requires a 50/50 (Federal/local) match.

(3) Supporting new volunteer driver and aide programs. New volunteer driver programs are eligible and include support for costs associated with the administration, management of driver recruitment, safety, background checks, scheduling, coordination with passengers, and other related support functions, mileage reimbursement, and insurance associated with volunteer driver programs. The costs of new enhancements to increase capacity of existing volunteer driver program are also eligible. FTA notes that any volunteer program supported by New Freedom must meet the requirements of both “new” and “beyond” the ADA. FTA encourages communities to offer consideration for utilizing all available funding resources as an integrated part of the design and delivery of any volunteer driver/aide program.

(4) Supporting new mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation. Mobility management techniques may enhance transportation access for populations beyond those served by one agency or organization within a community. For example, a

non-profit agency could receive New Freedom funding to share services it provides to its own clientele with other individuals with disabilities and coordinate usage of vehicles with other non-profits. Mobility management is intended to build coordination among existing public transportation providers and other transportation service providers with the result of expanding the availability of service. Mobility management activities may include:

- (a) The promotion, enhancement, and facilitation of access to transportation services, including the integration and coordination of services for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and low income individuals;
- (b) Support for short term management activities to plan and implement coordinated services;
- (c) The support of State and local coordination policy bodies and councils;
- (d) The operation of transportation brokerages to coordinate providers, funding agencies and customers;
- (e) The provision of coordination services, including employer-oriented Transportation Management Organizations' and Human Service Organizations' customer-oriented travel navigator systems and neighborhood travel coordination activities such as coordinating individualized travel training and trip planning activities for customers;
- (f) The development and operation of one-stop transportation traveler call centers to coordinate transportation information on all travel modes and to manage eligibility requirements and arrangements for customers among supporting programs; and

Operational planning for the acquisition of intelligent transportation technologies to help plan and operate coordinated systems inclusive of Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, Global Positioning System technology, coordinated vehicle scheduling, dispatching and monitoring technologies as well as technologies to track costs and billing in a coordinated system and single smart customer payment systems (acquisition of technology is also eligible as a stand alone capital expense).

APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

Please return this application to Brad Harris, MRPC, 1427R Water Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420 by **Tuesday, June 30, 2009**.

Any questions, contact Brad Harris or George Kahale at 978-345-7376 ext. 311 or 307, respectively or via email at bharris@mrpc.org or gkahale@mrpc.org.

Section 1: Agency Contact Information and Project Summary

Legal Name of Agency: _____

Address: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Identify your agency as one of the following:

_____ State or Local Government

_____ Operator of public transportation services (private or publicly owned)

_____ Private, non-profit organization

Project Title: _____

1. Are you requesting operating or capital financial assistance? _____
2. Are you applying for Job Access Reverse Commute or New Freedoms Funds? _____
3. Please indicate the cost of this project: \$ _____

Section 2: Project Information: Operating Assistance Grant Requests

- 4. Please provide a detailed description of your project and the population it will serve. Be sure to identify which gaps in service this project will address.

- 5. Does this project preserve an existing service? If so, please describe the service and the population it serves, and how your project will expand upon, or improve the existing service.

- 6. Does this service currently utilize federal financial assistance for operating purposes? If so, which programs currently fund your service, and is your agency in danger of losing said funding?

- 7. Is this a new project? If yes, how will it be coordinated with existing services in the area?

- 8. When can this project start up?

- 9. Financial information: Please attach a breakdown of the budget for this project. Give a breakdown of the project expenses and a breakdown of the expected revenues (including this grant money).

Section 3: Project Information: Capital Assistance Grant Requests

10. Is this project for equipment replacement or for a fleet expansion? Please describe how the equipment will be used and identify which service gap it is intended to fill.

11. Please indicate your equipment request, include a description of the equipment, quantity, expected unit cost, total cost, any applicable taxes. Indicate the local match and net request for this project.

Equipment Description	ADA Accessible?	Quantity	Replace (R) Expand (E)	Unit Cost	Total Cost
				Sub Total	
				Other Expenses	
				Total	
				Less Local Matching Funds for this Project	
				Total Equipment Request for this Project	

12. For those vehicles which you propose to replace, complete the table below:

Vehicle Type	Make/Model	Year	VIN	Current status Active (A) Spare (S)	Current Mileage

Section 4: All Projects

13. How will you make the target population aware of the new service? Does the project have community support?

14. How will this service be coordinated with existing services?

15. What is the expected usage of the new service? Provide an estimate of additional daily passengers.

16. Where do you plan to obtain the required local match for the project? (Note: For New Freedom projects, grants for capital projects may not exceed 80 percent of the net capital costs of the project and grants for operating assistance may not exceed 50 percent of the net operating costs of the project. To date, the state has provided the local match for JARC projects.)
