

Chapter 9. Implementation Priorities for Long Island

Introduction

To meet Federal requirements, coordinated plans must identify implementation priorities among the various strategies that have been developed to address service gaps and needs. The potential strategies for meeting the transportation needs of older adults, persons with disabilities, and persons with low income on Long Island, which were described in Chapter 8, were given preliminary implementation priorities by the Long Island Stakeholder Advisory Committee using the criteria listed below.

Strategy Prioritization Criteria

1. Meets Documented Need

How well does the strategy address transportation gaps or barriers identified through the Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan? The strategy should:

- Provide service in a geographic area with limited transportation options;
- Serve a geographic area where the greatest number of people need a service;
- Improve the mobility of clientele subject to state and Federal funding sources (i.e. persons with low income, older adults, persons with disabilities);
- Provide a level of service not currently provided with existing resources; and
- Preserve and protect existing services.

2. Feasibility of Implementation

How likely is the strategy to be implemented successfully? The strategy should:

- Be eligible for SAFETEA-LU or other grant funding;
- Result in efficient use of available resources;
- Have a potential project sponsor with the operational capacity to carry out the strategy; and
- Have the potential to be sustained beyond the grant period.

3. Coordination

How would the strategy build upon existing services? The strategy should:

- Avoid duplication and promote coordination of services and programs; and
- Allow for and encourage participation of local human service and transportation stakeholders.

Those preliminary rankings are shown in Figure 9-1.

Figure 9-1 Recommended Strategies for Long Island by Priority Rating

High Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Mobility Management and Mobility Manager Support</i> ● <i>Centralized Transportation Resource Directory</i> ● <i>Vehicle Replacements</i> ● <i>Improved Access to Fixed-Route Bus Stops</i> ● <i>Accessibility Improvements at Non-Key Rail Stations</i> ● <i>Job Access Strategies</i> ● <i>Transit Service Expansion and Improvements</i>
Medium Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Paratransit Feeder Service to Fixed-Routes</i> ● <i>Accessible Taxi Program</i> ● <i>Publicize Online Trip Planning Services</i> ● <i>Coordinated Municipal Demand-Response Services</i>
Low Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Travel Voucher Program</i> ● <i>Taxi Subsidy Program</i> ● <i>Bicycle Amenities at Transit Facilities and on Transit Vehicles</i> ● <i>Reverse Commute Strategies</i>

The following sections outline steps that will move forward the implementation of the high priority strategies, as a guide for organizations that may wish to apply for Section 5310, JARC, or New Freedom funding in response to future grant solicitations. While only the strategies that have been selected by local stakeholders as those of the highest priority are discussed in detail, the lower priority strategies also represent effective ways to meet the transportation needs of the target populations, and would be eligible for funding from one or more of these grant programs.

Implementation of High Priority Strategies

Figure 9-2 lists all strategies for Long Island, in priority order. For each strategy, an entity (or entities) that could possibly take the lead in implementation is identified. As estimate of the time needed for implementation following the securement of project funding is presented, along with estimates of operating and/or capital cost. Potential funding sources, including but not limited to the three Federal funding programs covered by this coordinated plan, are also identified.

Implementation plans for each of the strategies ranked as high priority actions for Long Island are presented after Figure 9-2.

Figure 9-2 Prioritized Human Service Transportation Plan Strategies for Long Island

Strategy (to address need/gap)*	Possible Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe†	Estimated Costs (Capital and/or Operating) ‡	Potential Funding Sources	Strategy Overview
High Priority Strategies					
Mobility Manager and Mobility Manager Training/Support MM	Various county or municipal agencies or departments	3-6 months	Annual salary \$30,000 - \$60,000 Annual training and administrative costs \$50,000 - \$100,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JARC New Freedom 	A Mobility Manager could be an individual, a group of individuals or an organization that provides a wide variety of mobility management functions for consumers, human service agency staffs, and/or for community transportation providers.
Centralized Transportation Resource Directory MM	LITM Nassau County Planning Dept Suffolk County Dept. of Public Works, Transportation Division Other county or municipal departments Non-profit human service agencies	6-12 months	Development costs for basic directory – up to \$50-75,000 Printing s and distribution costs vary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JARC New Freedom 	A hard copy transportation resource directory could be printed annually or bi-annually; an online version could also be made available. The transportation information in a directory covering each or both counties could be used by the Nassau County Department of Senior Citizen Affairs and the Suffolk County Office for the Aging in their directories of services for older adults, as well as by service providers to increase coordination.

* MM in this column refers to project or strategy that may be led by a Mobility Manager.

† Timelines are indicative and based on time required once funding is secured.

‡ Dollar figures reflect differences in subregional economies.

Strategy (to address need/gap)*	Possible Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe†	Estimated Costs (Capital and/or Operating) ‡	Potential Funding Sources	Strategy Overview
Improve Access to Fixed-Route Bus Stops	Suffolk County Dept. of Public Works, Transportation Division (SCT) Nassau County Planning Department Municipalities – especially traffic safety departments	8-12 months	Costs per: Accessible Pedestrian Signals – \$8,000 to \$12,000 Bus shelter with bench – \$3,000 – \$5,000 Curb cuts – \$1,000 or less each Sidewalks - \$500,000 to \$1M per mile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Freedom • Section 5307, 5311 capital programs 	Improvements to the accessibility of bus stops and added amenities benefit all riders and encourage use of the existing transit system; bus stop improvements were mentioned as a need during public and stakeholder workshops
Vehicle Acquisition	Community transportation providers	NA	\$40,000 - \$100,000 per vehicle, depending on type; Federal share no more than 80%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JARC • Section 5310 • New Freedom 	Continued use of Section 5310 funds to support capital purchases of community transportation providers, with priority given to applicants who are using 5310 vehicles in a coordinated manner. Addition of JARC and New Freedom funds to purchase vehicles and continue/expand services.
Improvements at Non-Key Rail Stations	MTA LIRR	>24 months	Station accessibility improvements are expensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Freedom 	New Freedom funding is currently being used by MTA LIRR to make improvements at a number of stations. Additional improvements would facilitate greater use of rail service and improve mobility.

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Strategy (to address need/gap)*	Possible Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe†	Estimated Costs (Capital and/or Operating) ‡	Potential Funding Sources	Strategy Overview
Job Access Strategies MM	MTA Long Island Bus Suffolk County Dept. of Public Works, Transportation Division HART LITM Community transportation providers	3-6 months	Operating costs for shuttle services typically range between \$55 and \$65 per hour Vanpool and ridesharing options are less expensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JARC New Freedom (if specifically for persons with disabilities) 	JARC funding has been used by MTA Long Island Bus and Suffolk County Transit in the past to extend routes and service hours and expand capacity, especially on weekends, to better serve employment locations. Strategies for improving access to jobs could include additional fixed-route or service hour extensions, or new shuttle services to employment sites, ridesharing or vanpool services, or support services such as a guaranteed ride home program or child care transportation.
Transit Service Expansion and Improvements	MTA Long Island Bus Suffolk County Department of Public Works, Transportation Division (SCT) HART	12-24 months	Public Transit – up to \$150 per hour Van/shuttle services – between \$55 and \$65 per hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JARC (if used to support employment) New Freedom (if specifically for persons with disabilities) 	Create new services and/or expand existing services to provide service to new areas, expand service hours and/or expand options in areas with limited service. New/expanded services may include new options for late night or weekend service. Build on opportunities to coordinate existing services to maximize efficiency and ridesharing. (See other strategies for specific service expansion/improvement ideas.)

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Strategy (to address need/gap)*	Possible Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe†	Estimated Costs (Capital and/or Operating) ‡	Potential Funding Sources	Strategy Overview
Medium Priority Strategies					
Paratransit Feeder Service to Fixed-Route Stop and Stations	MTA Long Island Bus, Able-Ride Suffolk County Dept. of Public Works, Transportation Division (SCAT) Municipal operators of demand-response service	6-12 months	Minimal planning and implementation costs Operating costs at same hourly or per-trip rate as other services provided by service operator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JARC New Freedom 	Feeder service would provide access to the fixed-route network for those who are currently unable to use it because origins and/or destinations are not close enough to stops. Such service encourages use of existing transit services, and can offer an option for our-of-area trips that an individual could not otherwise make.
Accessible Taxi Program MM	MTA Long Island Bus Suffolk County Department of Public Works, Transportation Division Nassau County Planning Department Municipal departments of senior citizen affairs	6-12 months	Roughly \$28,000 per vehicle – 80% of an accessible minivan costing approximately \$35,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JARC New Freedom Section 5310 	Accessible taxis could provide service when fixed-route or demand-response services are not in operation, and for types of trips that are not eligible under other transportation programs. Assistance to taxi operators to encourage them to acquire accessible vehicles could be used to complement a taxi subsidy program.

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Strategy (to address need/gap)*	Possible Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe†	Estimated Costs (Capital and/or Operating) ‡	Potential Funding Sources	Strategy Overview
Publicize Existing Online Trip Planners MM	NYS DOT MTA Long Island Bus County departments of senior citizen affairs, aging, social services Town departments of senior citizen affairs	3 months	Minimal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JARC • New Freedom 	Online trip planning for Long Island residents is currently available through several sources: Google Transit (MTA LIRR and LI Bus), New York State 511 service (transit and paratransit services in both counties), and Trips123 (MTA LIRR and MTA LI Bus)
Coordinated Municipal Demand-Response Services MM	Suffolk County – Long- distance medical service shared by Southold, Riverhead and Brookhaven; multi- community service covering five non-East End towns Nassau County – Multi- community service covering all three towns	Joint long-distance medical service – 6 months to one year Multi-community service – 1-2 years	Start-up costs for planning and implementation and public information/market ing Operating costs negotiated with service operator by the vehicle hour or passenger trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JARC • New Freedom • Section 5310 (capital expenses) 	Operating municipal demand-response services in multi-community areas rather than a single city or town would facilitate inter-community travel and increase operating efficiency. A less comprehensive approach would be the joint operation of specific services, such as out-of-town medical trips, between municipal demand-response programs.

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Strategy (to address need/gap)*	Possible Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe†	Estimated Costs (Capital and/or Operating) ‡	Potential Funding Sources	Strategy Overview
Lower Priority Strategies					
Bicycle Amenities at Transit Facilities and on Transit Vehicles	MTA LIRR MTA Long Island Bus Suffolk County Dept. of Public Works, Transportation Division	6-12 months	Bike racks for vehicles – \$1,000 or less each Bike parking racks - \$500 or less each Bike cages (up to 150 bikes) - \$115,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JARC 	Facilitating and encouraging the use of bicycles for access to and from bus stops and rail stations would increase the usefulness of transit service for work trips
Travel Voucher Program MM	County departments of social services Nassau County Department of Senior Citizen Affairs Suffolk County Office for the Aging Municipal departments of senior citizen affairs and/or human services	3-6 months	Level of subsidy per user and total annual subsidy can be set by participating sponsor agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JARC New Freedom 	A travel voucher program would make maximum use of existing transportation providers, as well as volunteers and family members, thus increasing mobility for eligible users.

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Strategy (to address need/gap)*	Possible Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe†	Estimated Costs (Capital and/or Operating) ‡	Potential Funding Sources	Strategy Overview
Taxi Subsidy Program MM	Nassau County Department of Senior Citizen Affairs Nassau County Office for the Physically Challenged Suffolk County Office for the Aging Suffolk County Office for Handicapped Services County or municipal departments of human services Municipalities Long Island Center for Independent Living Suffolk County Independent Living Organization Healthcare facilities	6-8 months	Start-up and administrative costs may range from \$50,000 - \$75,000 Agency sponsors control subsidy per trip and overall annual subsidy amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JARC • New Freedom 	A taxi subsidy program can offer a flexible, cost-effective means of meeting a variety of trip needs, and can be used to replace or supplement existing agency transportation services. Acquisition of accessible taxis in partnership with taxi operators is a useful complementary strategy.

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Strategy (to address need/gap)*	Possible Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe†	Estimated Costs (Capital and/or Operating) ‡	Potential Funding Sources	Strategy Overview
Reverse Commute Strategies – Shuttle Services to/from Rail Stations or Bus Stops; Vanpools MM	LITM Nassau County Dept. of Senior Citizen Affairs Nassau County Dept. of Social Services (Medicaid) Long Island CIL Suffolk County Dept. of Social Services, Medical Services Bureau MTA LI Bus Home healthcare worker employment agencies	3-6 months	Shuttle services might cost \$50 - 60/hour Vanpool costs could be covered by fares or subsidized for low income individuals by a sponsor organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JARC • New Freedom • Employers (or agencies) • County Medicaid agencies • Organizations administering the Consumer Directed Assistance Program in each county 	Reverse commute strategies could be used to address the difficulty that home care workers have with reaching clients' homes in part of Nassau County
Real-time Transit Information	MTA Long Island Bus Suffolk County Dept. of Public Works, Transportation Division - - SCT	1-2 years	Costs include hardware, software, and ongoing operating and maintenance costs; can range from tens of thousands for small systems to tens of millions for large ones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JARC • New Freedom • Mobility Services for All Americans initiative 	Providing real-time information about transit vehicle location or arrival times has been shown to improve customer service and customer satisfaction. The availability of accurate arrival information can help to reduce the inconvenience of infrequent bus service, and may attract new transit riders.

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Strategy (to address need/gap)*	Possible Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe†	Estimated Costs (Capital and/or Operating) ‡	Potential Funding Sources	Strategy Overview
Expanded Volunteer Driver/Escort Services MM	Nassau County Dept. of Senior Citizen Affairs Suffolk County Office for the Aging Municipal departments of seniors citizen affairs or human services Non-profit or human service agency transportation providers	6-12 months	Costs include efforts to recruit, train, screen, and recognize volunteers Mileage reimbursement may also be provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Freedom (new programs) • Older Americans Act Title III (b) 	Volunteers can provide a flexible source of transportation that can be called upon as needed; volunteer escorts can provide additional assistance to customers who need it. Insurance and liability issues may be a concern, but can usually be addressed. Independent volunteer matching organizations may be able to coordinate requests for service with available drivers.

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Mobility Management and Mobility Manager Support

An approach to coordinating transportation services that is being promoted at the Federal level and adopted in more and more local areas is mobility management. The term mobility management can mean a number of different things, but is used in this plan to mean an individual (or staff of individuals) in an organization who helps consumers (or agencies) to find available resources to meet their transportation needs, and/or implements coordination strategies and programs to address more general transportation issues and improve access to services.

A Mobility Manager can take on a variety of different functions that are best suited for the area and that range from very simple to very complex functions. A Mobility Manager might also serve to be the driving force behind coordination planning efforts, perhaps including organizing or chairing a coordination council. A Mobility Manager might be responsible for developing, maintaining, and disseminating a centralized directory of community transportation resources. The Mobility Manager who takes on such a function might also staff a help line, much like a travel agent, and perhaps provide trip planning and/or ombudsman/evaluation services as well. A Mobility Manager could also become responsible for providing ride-matching functions or other services more commonly associated with ridesharing agencies or Transportation Management Associations (TMAs). In addition to assisting individuals and agencies, a Mobility Manager might help coordinate support functions for community transportation providers, perhaps eventually taking on the call center function for multiple community transportation providers and/or becoming the broker of a coordinated system. A Mobility Manager might also serve to organize and manage a taxi subsidy or travel voucher program on behalf of sponsoring organizations.

The easiest way to introduce mobility management to Long Island might be to begin with an individual in an agency who is a resource for both individuals who have questions about the transportation services that are available and those which they are eligible to use, and agency staff members who are seeking information about transportation options for clients. County departments (of human/social services, disability services, or senior citizen affairs, for example), transit providers, or universities, which already make information about transportation and other services available for their own customers and clients, would make good locations for a Mobility Manager who would provide assistance to all types of customers. Municipalities may also want to consider the creation of a Mobility Manager position, as the Town of Brookhaven has done. Local One-Stop Employment Centers, such as the center operated by the Suffolk County Department of Labor in Riverhead and the Massapequa Employment Center in Nassau County, would also make ideal locations for a Mobility Manager.

The first step for establishing a Mobility Manager in one or more agencies would be developing a job description for the individual to be hired, and then applying for JARC and/or New Freedom funds to support the position. Once hired, the first project for the Mobility Manager might be to develop a transportation resource directory, as outlined further below.

Later, the Mobility Manager function could be expanded to become more of a coordination manager for one or both counties, establishing and overseeing a number of transportation services and programs designed to meet the needs of older adults, persons with disabilities, and persons with low income. This type of Mobility Manager would work most effectively with guidance from a coordinating council or committee composed of a variety of stakeholders and project sponsors. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee for the development of this coordinated plan would be a good nucleus for an intercounty coordinating committee. The group could be expanded to include a broader spectrum of stakeholders and prospective sponsors of individual

transportation programs or services designed to fill service gaps or a more comprehensive coordinated transportation system. The new group would meet regularly to share information, expand awareness of transportation issues, and identify opportunities for better coordination and operation of service, including the establishment of an overall Mobility Manager to develop and implement service improvements such as those mentioned above.

Individuals or organizations that are hired to provide mobility management functions often require training and ongoing technical support from key institutions and organizations to be effective. Training would be especially useful if Mobility Managers are established at several agencies or in several areas as a means of providing a consistent set and level of skills and offering networking opportunities. NYSDOT might consider undertaking the training and support role if Mobility Managers are created in multiple locations throughout the New York region or the state.

An individual Mobility Manager could probably be established within three to six months of a successful grant application.

The annual salary cost of a (single) Mobility Manager (overhead and program function cost additional) might range between \$30,000 and \$60,000, depending on whether the Mobility Manager is part- or full-time. The cost to train and support Mobility Managers is estimated to be between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per year, and might best be accomplished through a consulting contract unless in-house expertise in this area is developed.

The cost of funding a Mobility Manager or mobility management activities is allowed under the JARC and New Freedom programs (as well as under all FTA programs with a capital assistance component). In each case, this is considered to be a capital cost, and hence, Federal funds from these programs are available at an 80/20 match.

Transit Service Expansion and Improvements

A common theme raised during public workshops and focus group meetings in Nassau and Suffolk counties was the limited bus service available during non-peak hours, particularly in the evenings and on weekends. Participants noted that many jobs in the service, healthcare, and retail sectors require working beyond the traditional hours of 9 AM to 5 PM; bus service is generally not a viable commuting option for such jobs. Individuals in Suffolk County also indicated that a higher level of bus service is needed during spring and summer months when jobs are more available. Geographic service gaps that were identified during the development of this plan included northeastern Nassau County, the East End of Suffolk County, and north-south corridors in both counties. Extension of bus service areas or hours would enhance mobility for residents of Long Island in general, but especially for individuals seeking or trying to maintain jobs with non-traditional hours. An added benefit to the expansion of transit service would be that use of transit service by the general public would increase as well as by members of the target populations.

Expanding service, temporally or spatially, is one of the more expensive strategies prioritized in this process. Funding streams include JARC, if the service is used to support employment, and potentially New Freedom, if the service is used to solely support persons with disabilities and goes beyond the requirements of ADA. Rule-making for the New Freedom program clearly says that expanding transit service to the public at large is not fundable under New Freedom. JARC funding, on the other hand, can be used to fund transit services that benefits the public at large if those services increase access to employment or job training. In addition, JARC funds may be

matched by other Federal programs as long as the funds do not originate from the US Department of Transportation (DOT). Thus, Department of Labor (Welfare to Work), Health and Human Services (Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF)) and Medicaid funds can be used as local match.

Generally speaking, establishing new transit services and/or expanding existing services is challenging, especially if the new services will be operated by existing transit service providers. Public transit services in Nassau and Suffolk counties are expensive to operate with operating costs of up to roughly \$150 per hour. Locally, agencies are often reluctant to commit the ongoing funding required to support operating programs. Furthermore, operating costs are subsidized at a 50percent level, as compared with capital projects which are funded at 80percent. A final challenge facing providers is an existing queue of prioritized potential new services, which may or may not include JARC routes. It is possible that new service brought to the table with grant funds and local funding partners may be implemented, as demonstrated by the successful use of JARC funding by MTA Long Island Bus in the past.

Centralized Transportation Resource Directory

At present, the Nassau County Department of Senior Citizen Affairs and the Suffolk County Department for the Aging each compile and publish a directory of services for older adults, which includes transportation services. The Suffolk County Department of Public Works, Transportation Division, currently staffs a Transportation Information Hotline that disseminates information about all transportation modes five days a week, from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Otherwise, there is no central directory containing information about transportation options on Long Island that individuals, family members, or human service agency staffs can consult when planning a trip. The lack of a comprehensive, accessible source of information about transportation services was noted as a need in the workshops and focus group meetings conducted in both counties. That residents are not always aware of the transportation services available to them was illustrated several times during the provider/stakeholder and public workshops held in both counties, when attendees mentioned a lack of service to a particular location and then learned from service provider representatives that a bus route or volunteer driver program provided service to that location. Providing accurate, widely available, accessible information about available services in one location would encourage use of existing services and increase mobility. Consequently, this strategy received a high priority ranking from local stakeholders.

At a minimum, a printed directory would be published annually or bi-annually, and should be made available in several languages and accessible formats. Online access could also be provided, either through posting the directory on key websites or creating a searchable online database to supplement the printed directory. The directory should cover rail, bus, ADA paratransit, taxi, and community transportation services, and include key information such as service area, days and hours of service, rider and trip eligibility (if applicable), fares, accessibility features, service policies, how to access the service, and where to find more detailed information. One directory covering all of Long Island would be most effective, since travel patterns and transportation providers' service areas sometimes cross county lines. Separate directories could be prepared for Nassau and Suffolk counties; however, in that case, data collection and schedules for updating the information should be standardized and coordinated to maximize the directories' usefulness.

The development of a useful directory typically requires a comprehensive data collection effort. Resources will also need to be devoted to publicizing the existence of the directory, distributing it

widely through human service agencies and other public outlets, and perhaps publishing a version in local newspapers so that as many older adults, persons with disabilities, and persons with low income as possible have access to its information. The inventory prepared as part of this plan (presented in Chapter 4) could be used as the basis for the first version of the directory, thus decreasing the amount of initial work needed. The entity that takes the lead in developing, publishing, and distributing the directory, however, must be prepared to commit time to updating and maintaining the directory on a regular basis. Another important component of the project will be the ability to seek and obtain support from private sector and institutional sources, in the form of donations and/or advertising, to underwrite some of the costs of updating and printing the directory.

A countywide or regional entity with the ability to work with numerous transportation providers to obtain and update service information, and the capacity to publicize and distribute the directory would be the ideal project leader. Successful transportation directories in other areas have been developed by county planning departments, regional economic development organizations, non-profit information and referral organizations, and regional transportation coordinators or Mobility Managers. On Long Island, development of a centralized directory might be a logical extension of the Transportation Information Hotline operated by the Suffolk County Department of Public Works, Transportation Division. County planning departments, LITM, and non-profit organizations who serve the target populations would also be possible lead entities. Note that the creation, maintenance, and distribution of a centralized directory of transportation resources are tasks that could be undertaken by a Mobility Manager.

A centralized transportation resource directory could likely be developed in a six to twelve-month timeframe. As mentioned above, the inventory included as part of this plan could provide data for the initial edition. It is recommended that the directory be updated annually or at six-month intervals, by verifying the contact information for each provider and then sending the current listing to the provider to identify any necessary changes.

Development of a basic directory might range from \$50,000 to \$75,000. Working with planning organizations or college/university students for development of maps or a design format is likely to reduce the cost.

Printing costs will vary depending on the number of copies to be printed, the method of distribution, and possible contributions from partners. In earlier versions of the Orange County transit guide described previously, the publisher of the local newspaper printed 90,000 copies of the guide at a cost of approximately \$21,000 and inserted them into an edition of the paper. In the MetroWest section of the Boston metropolitan area, a local developer contributed \$100,000 for the creation of a map illustrating all the transportation services available in the area. The local planning organization provided the GIS services needed to develop the map at a cost of \$2,000. The local newspaper printed 10,000 copies at no charge and included them as inserts in the Sunday edition. Information would also be made available online through free travel services such as 511 NY.

Central resource directories facilitate enhanced access to services by the general public, including older adults, persons with low income, and persons with disabilities. This activity is expressly permitted under the JARC and New Freedom programs as a mobility management strategy.

Vehicle Acquisition

Capital funding supports community transportation services by helping providers purchase vehicles. The primary Federal funding program to support non-profit and some public entities is Section 5310, which helps agencies purchase vehicles by paying 80percent of the cost of vehicle. In New York, this program is administered statewide by NYSDOT and currently, the number of agencies that apply for this funding exceeds the available funds.

Stakeholders felt strongly that the capital funds are needed to maintain existing service levels as well as support development of new programs and services. There was also a sense that vehicle purchase programs should substantively support ongoing coordination efforts. Given these requirements, stakeholders prioritized efforts to continue capital funding and to recognize efforts on the part of applicants to participate in coordinated services as funding decisions are made. Another proposed enhancement to capital assistance activities is the creative use of other Federal programs, including both JARC and New Freedom, to purchase vehicles.

Section 5310 is a longstanding FTA program that helps non-profit and public agencies purchase vehicles. As mentioned, the program is administered statewide, so demand for funding is high and competition strong. Stakeholders expressed a desire to strengthen the coordination requirements of the application process, noting that while the requirements have long been a part of the application process, they are rarely implemented. Stronger coordination requirements would reward coordinated programs and, in cases where existing agencies are working together, help them replace aging vehicles. Influencing the application process is a policy decision that is clearly stated in SAFETEA-LU regulations, which require agencies to coordinate service as a prerequisite to receiving funding. Nassau County and Suffolk County agencies, and potentially Mobility Managers, may continue to work with NYS DOT to strengthen this part of the process.

Agencies that will use vehicles to increase access to jobs or provide new services for persons with disabilities may use JARC or New Freedom funds to purchase vehicles. Furthermore, there is more opportunity in the JARC and New Freedom programs for local control over how the applications are prioritized, the type of vehicle that is purchased, and which agencies ultimately receive vehicles. Ideally, NYSDOT would be involved in this process so that all parties understand that the region is using JARC and New Freedom funds only after opportunities to use 5310 funds have been exhausted.

Using JARC and New Freedom programs to purchase vehicles is fairly straightforward. Applicants may apply for funds as they would for other projects. Organizations applying for JARC funds to purchase vehicles must demonstrate that they will be used to link individuals to employment opportunities (or work-related activities); applicants for New Freedom funds must demonstrate that the vehicles will enable service providers to go above and beyond ADA requirements.

Vehicles purchased by either program must be accessible. Accessible vans and small passenger vehicles typically range between \$40,000 and \$60,000 each, while buses may cost between \$100,000 and \$500,000, depending on vehicle size, engine technology, and other components.

Improved Access to Fixed-Route Bus Stops

The need for more user-friendly and accessible bus stops was widely expressed in public workshops and focus groups in both Nassau and Suffolk counties. Suggested improvements

included accessibility for persons who use wheelchairs and individuals with vision impairments; benches and shelters; and signage and other transit service information. In addition, the difficulty of traveling to bus stops due to distance from the home or destination; sidewalks that are in poor condition or missing; dangerous crosswalks and intersections; short pedestrian light cycles; and lack of pedestrian refuge islands was raised numerous times. The severity of these issues led stakeholders to rank improvements to bus stops and paths of travel as a high priority for Long Island.

Upgrading pathways to bus stops and the amenities available at the stops themselves would increase the ease of use of bus service for all riders, but particularly for older adults and persons with disabilities. With a fixed-route system that is easier to get to, some individuals may be able to shift some or all of their trips away from the more costly paratransit services.

Improving the accessibility of and access to fixed-route bus stops involves first examining bus stops (and especially those used or potentially used by significant numbers of older adults and/or persons with disabilities) and determining whether improvements could help make stops more accessible. Easter Seals Project ACTION's Bus Stop Accessibility and Safety Toolkit has helped transit agencies develop an inventory of bus stops, assess the accessibility and safety of each bus stop, and create an action plan to address shortcomings. Enhancements that make travel easier for pedestrians, such as accessible pedestrian signals and improved sidewalks, could be installed along paths between bus stops and major destinations (such as the Nassau Mall on Hempstead Turnpike, for example) to address some of those concerns.

Lead agencies for accessibility improvements and the addition of passenger amenities to fixed-route bus stops would be the Nassau County Planning Department, the Town of Huntington/HART, and Suffolk County Department of Public Works/SCT. Nassau County Planning Department placement of shelters and benches is often dependent on the approval of property owners, however. Another consideration concerning this type of project is that bus stop improvements require ongoing maintenance, which would be an additional expense (although maintenance costs could be covered through advertising revenue, agreements with local organizations, or an Adopt-a-Stop program).

The lead agencies for the addition of new sidewalks or repair of existing sidewalks, or the addition of pedestrian signals and other intersection improvements would likely be municipal departments of public works or traffic safety, or county departments of public works.

Bus stop and pedestrian pathway improvements would be medium-long range projects, requiring between eight and twelve months to plan and construct or install. Many improvements require prioritization, funding and commitment from local authorities, which might increase the time needed to complete them. Costs would generally be in the low to medium range, and would vary according to the specific type of improvement that is added. For example, the cost of retrofitting an intersection with Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) on four crosswalks can range from \$8,000 to \$12,000; improving multiple intersections at one time or including APS when a signalized intersection is originally created may lower the cost. The cost of a bus shelter can vary greatly depending on size, type, and features. The average cost of a standard, pre-manufactured shelter with a bench might be in the range of \$3,000-5,000; custom-designed shelters might cost \$15,000 and up apiece. The cost of adding a new curb cut might be \$1,000 or less. An accessible bus stop is one which is designed to allow a person with a disability to travel to the sidewalk or building served by the stop without encountering a barrier, includes wayfinding principles and aids, is safe, and provides warning of hazards to users. Conducting a thorough

inventory of the conditions at and around a bus stop can identify improvements that are needed to ensure accessibility; costs of adding accessibility are dependent on the specific changes that need to be made.

Accessibility improvements at transit facilities that have not been designated as key stations are eligible projects for New Freedom funding. Such improvements include adding curb cuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals, and making other changes so that a bus stop becomes accessible. The cost of capital improvements to bus stops would also be eligible uses of FTA capital funding from the Section 5307 (urban area formula funds) or 5311 (small urban and rural area funds) programs.

Accessibility Improvements at Non-Key Rail Stations

Sixteen LIRR stations on the eleven LIRR branches that serve Long Island have been designated as “key stations” and meet all ADA requirements for full accessibility, with elevator access to platforms from the street. Eight other stations also provide access to platforms via elevator, even though they are not key stations. At a number of non-key stations, 81 ramps and/or elevators provide accessibility for individuals who use wheelchairs.

In many situations, improving the accessibility of non-key rail stations in a service area may play a significant role in easing the travel burden for people with disabilities. Non-key stations are much more likely to be inaccessible due to their location and traffic volume as compared to key stations. However, often it is the non-key station that is most critical to the travel pattern of these transportation disadvantaged individuals.

In the 2008 round of New Freedom program funding administered by NYMTC, MTA LIRR was recommended for an award of funds to implement new accessibility features compliant with the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (ADAAG) at a number of stations, including Merrick, Bellmore, Farmingdale, Bethpage, Freeport, Westbury, Valley Stream, Queens Village and Wyandanch stations in Nassau and Suffolk counties.

Several stations on the Babylon Branch are equipped with escalators only, and are therefore not wheelchair-accessible:

- Amityville
- Copiague
- Lindenhurst
- Massapequa Park
- Seaford
- Wantagh

Accessibility improvements at those stations would be eligible for New Freedom projects, if MTA LIRR does not currently have plans to make such improvements. Limited accessibility of some LIRR stations was raised as a concern at stakeholder and public workshops.

MTA LIRR would be the agency to undertake any accessibility improvements to rail stations in Nassau or Suffolk counties.

The cost of station improvements falls into the high range; in fact, the cost of improvements is likely to exceed the amount of funding that would be available through the New Freedom program. Projects would most likely take two years or longer to complete, per station.

Making accessibility improvements to transit and inter-modal stations not designated as key stations is considered to meet the eligibility for New Freedom funds, so long as the projects are clearly intended to remove barriers that would otherwise have remained.

Job Access Strategies

Projects in this category include changes to existing transportation services or the development of new services that link people, especially those with low income, with job opportunities. Some possible job access projects include:

- Increased capacity, frequency, or hours of service on bus routes that serve employment sites;
- Establishing shuttle services that link transit hubs to employment sites/areas;
- Ridesharing and vanpool services; and
- Supporting strategies such as guaranteed ride home services and child care transportation services.

Local stakeholders selected the development of job access services and service enhancements as a high priority strategy for the region.

Stakeholders in Nassau County identified one specific job access need (which actually involves a reverse commute), which is the difficulty that home healthcare workers or personal care attendants who live in Queens or western Nassau County have in reaching clients' homes in northern Nassau County where less public transportation service is available, particularly the homes of older adults and persons with disabilities. Services are needed to provide connections between rail stations or bus stops and final destinations, and to provide a travel option during early morning hours when transit services may not be in operation. Strategies such as feeder shuttle service to/from rail stations and reverse commute vanpools may be effective solutions to this problem. Focus group participants indicated that an employer van service from the Roosevelt/Hempstead area to key job centers would be useful, and identified the following Nassau County communities in which desirable job opportunities are located, but that may be difficult to reach: Manhasset, Syosset, Farmingdale, Jericho, and Hicksville.

In Suffolk County, suggestions for fixed-route service enhancements that would increase the use of public transportation for work trips included longer hours of service in the evening and on Sunday, and a higher level of service during spring and summer months when the availability of service sector jobs increases.

JARC funding has been used by MTA Long Island Bus in the past to increase or extend the hours of operation of service on key bus routes that serve major employment areas, such as the Nassau Hub area, the Route 110 corridor, and to provide connections to employment for individuals living in communities such as Hempstead, Freeport, Westbury, Long Beach, Uniondale, Elmont, Glen Cove, Inwood, and Valley Stream. MTA Long Island Bus, HART, and SCT would be potential lead entities for enhancements to existing bus services to provide more connections to specific employers or employment corridors.

Partnerships could be formed between transportation providers, employers, and human service agencies to plan shuttle services to specific employers or employment areas and seek funding for their operation. Reverse commute vanpools could be established by Long Island Transportation Management (LITM), which administers the Easy Street vanpool program in Nassau and Suffolk counties, in partnership with employers using commuting subsidies as a means of recruiting employees or human service agencies wishing to provide support to a particular client group.

A Mobility Manager could not only address the mobility challenges of individuals needing transportation to work or training, but could also work with employers (on behalf of their employees and prospective employees) to offer a wide range of ridesharing and vanpool services. A Mobility Manager could also establish and manage supporting services such as a guaranteed ride home program for those who are stranded at the workplace and a child transportation program for those workers who rely on child care services.

Job access strategies could be implemented within three to six months of receiving funding; changes to existing bus routes would probably require less time to implement than the development of new services. Costs would depend on the type of service implemented, but would fall in the low to medium range. The costs associated with shuttle services to and from rail stations or bus stops would be similar to the normal cost per vehicle hour of the service operator (MTA Long Island Bus or a contract service provider, for example), and might be in the range of \$50-60/hour. Vanpool expenses (fuel, insurance, maintenance and repairs) are typically covered by the fares paid by vanpool members; drivers often commute free of charge. The Easy Street NY program operates in that manner. Alternatively, costs could be covered by a separate entity or a subsidy is provided by a sponsoring agency to eligible low income vanpool members to help cover the fare.

A wide range of programs and services to provide connections to work and training opportunities are eligible expenses under the JARC program. If services are specifically designed to increase commuting options for persons with disabilities, the New Freedom program would be another potential funding source. Employers may also be willing to contribute to services that enable workers to reach the employer's facilities.